

Directive 2009/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of
13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in natural
gas and repealing Directive 2003/55/EC (Text with EEA relevance)

CHAPTER VIII

NATIONAL REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

Article 41

Duties and powers of the regulatory authority

- 1 The regulatory authority shall have the following duties:
 - a fixing or approving, in accordance with transparent criteria, transmission or distribution tariffs or their methodologies;
 - b ensuring compliance of transmission and distribution system operators, and where relevant, system owners, as well as of any natural gas undertakings, with their obligations under this Directive and other relevant Community legislation, including as regards cross-border issues;
 - c cooperating in regard to cross-border issues with the regulatory authority or authorities of the Member States concerned and with the Agency;
 - d complying with, and implementing, any relevant legally binding decisions of the Agency and of the Commission;
 - e reporting annually on its activity and the fulfilment of its duties to the relevant authorities of the Member States, the Agency and the Commission. Such reports shall cover the steps taken and the results obtained as regards each of the tasks listed in this Article;
 - f ensuring that there are no cross-subsidies between transmission, distribution, storage, LNG and supply activities;
 - g monitoring investment plans of the transmission system operators, and providing in its annual report an assessment of the investment plans of the transmission system operators as regards their consistency with the Community-wide network development plan referred to in Article 8(3)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 715/2009; such assessment may include recommendations to amend those investment plans;
 - h monitoring compliance with and reviewing the past performance of network security and reliability rules and setting or approving standards and requirements for quality of service and supply or contributing thereto together with other competent authorities;
 - i monitoring the level of transparency, including of wholesale prices, and ensuring compliance of natural gas undertakings with transparency obligations;
 - j monitoring the level and effectiveness of market opening and competition at wholesale and retail levels, including on natural gas exchanges, prices for household customers including prepayment systems, switching rates, disconnection rates, charges for and the execution of maintenance services and complaints by household customers, as well as any distortion or restriction of competition, including providing any relevant information, and bringing any relevant cases to the relevant competition authorities;
 - k monitoring the occurrence of restrictive contractual practices, including exclusivity clauses which may prevent large non-household customers from contracting

- simultaneously with more than one supplier or restrict their choice to do so, and, where appropriate, informing the national competition authorities of such practices;
- l respecting contractual freedom with regard to interruptible supply contracts as well as with regard to long-term contracts provided that they are compatible with Community law and consistent with Community policies;
 - m monitoring the time taken by transmission and distribution system operators to make connections and repairs;
 - n monitoring and reviewing the access conditions to storage, linepack and other ancillary services as provided for in Article 33. In the event that the access regime to storage is defined according to Article 33(3), that task shall exclude the reviewing of tariffs;
 - o helping to ensure, together with other relevant authorities, that the consumer protection measures, including those set out in Annex I, are effective and enforced;
 - p publishing recommendations, at least annually, in relation to compliance of supply prices with Article 3, and providing those to the competition authorities, where appropriate;
 - q ensuring access to customer consumption data, the provision for optional use, of an easily understandable harmonised format at national level for consumption data and prompt access for all customers to such data under point (h) of Annex I;
 - r monitoring the implementation of rules relating to the roles and responsibilities of transmission system operators, distribution system operators, suppliers and customers and other market parties pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 715/2009;
 - s monitoring the correct application of the criteria that determine whether a storage facility falls under Article 33(3) or (4); and
 - t monitoring the implementation of safeguards measures as referred to in Article 46;
 - u contributing to the compatibility of data exchange processes for the most important market processes at regional level.

2 Where a Member State has so provided, the monitoring duties set out in paragraph 1 may be carried out by other authorities than the regulatory authority. In such a case, the information resulting from such monitoring shall be made available to the regulatory authority as soon as possible.

While preserving their independence, without prejudice to their own specific competencies and consistent with the principles of better regulation, the regulatory authority shall, as appropriate, consult transmission system operators and, as appropriate, closely cooperate with other relevant national authorities when carrying out the duties set out in paragraph 1.

Any approvals given by a regulatory authority or the Agency under this Directive are without prejudice to any duly justified future use of its powers by the regulatory authority under this Article or to any penalties imposed by other relevant authorities or the Commission.

3 In addition to the duties conferred upon it under paragraph 1 of this Article, when an independent system operator has been designated under Article 14, the regulatory authority shall:

- a monitor the transmission system owner's and the independent system operator's compliance with their obligations under this Article, and issue penalties for non-compliance in accordance with paragraph 4(d);
- b monitor the relations and communications between the independent system operator and the transmission system owner so as to ensure compliance of the independent system operator with its obligations, and in particular approve contracts and act

- as a dispute settlement authority between the independent system operator and the transmission system owner in respect of any complaint submitted by either party pursuant to paragraph 11;
- c without prejudice to the procedure under Article 14(2)(c), for the first ten-year network development plan, approve the investments planning and the multi-annual network development plan presented annually by the independent system operator;
 - d ensure that network access tariffs collected by the independent system operator include remuneration for the network owner or network owners, which provides for adequate remuneration of the network assets and of any new investments made therein, provided they are economically and efficiently incurred; and
 - e have the powers to carry out inspections, including unannounced inspections, at the premises of transmission system owner and independent system operator.
- 4 Member States shall ensure that regulatory authorities are granted the powers enabling them to carry out the duties referred to in paragraph 1, 3 and 6 in an efficient and expeditious manner. For this purpose, the regulatory authority shall have at least the following powers:
- a to issue binding decisions on natural gas undertakings;
 - b to carry out investigations into the functioning of the gas markets, and to decide upon and impose any necessary and proportionate measures to promote effective competition and ensure the proper functioning of the market. Where appropriate, the regulatory authority shall also have the power to cooperate with the national competition authority and the financial market regulators or the Commission in conducting an investigation relating to competition law;
 - c to require any information from natural gas undertakings relevant for the fulfilment of its tasks, including the justification for any refusal to grant third-party access, and any information on measures necessary to reinforce the network;
 - d to impose effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties on natural gas undertakings not complying with their obligations under this Directive or any relevant legally binding decisions of the regulatory authority or of the Agency, or to propose to a competent court to impose such penalties. This shall include the power to impose or propose the imposition of penalties of up to 10 % of the annual turnover of the transmission system operator or of up to 10 % of the annual turnover of the vertically integrated undertaking on the transmission system operator or on the vertically integrated undertaking, as the case may be, for non compliance with their respective obligations pursuant to this Directive; and
 - e appropriate rights of investigations and relevant powers of instructions for dispute settlement under paragraphs 11 and 12.
- 5 In addition to the duties and powers conferred on it under paragraphs 1 and 4 of this Article, when a transmission system operator has been designated in accordance with Chapter IV, the regulatory authority shall be granted at least the following duties and powers:
- a to issue penalties in accordance with paragraph 4(d) for discriminatory behaviour in favour of the vertically integrated undertaking;
 - b to monitor communications between the transmission system operator and the vertically integrated undertaking so as to ensure compliance of the transmission system operator with its obligations;
 - c to act as dispute settlement authority between the vertically integrated undertaking and the transmission system operator in respect of any complaint submitted pursuant to paragraph 11;
 - d to monitor commercial and financial relations including loans between the vertically integrated undertaking and the transmission system operator;

- e to approve all commercial and financial agreements between the vertically integrated undertaking and the transmission system operator, on the condition that they comply with market conditions;
- f to request justification from the vertically integrated undertaking when notified by the compliance officer in accordance with Article 21(4). Such justification shall in particular include evidence to the end that no discriminatory behaviour to the advantage of the vertically integrated undertaking has occurred;
- g to carry out inspections, including unannounced inspections, on the premises of the vertically integrated undertaking and the transmission system operator; and
- h to assign all or specific tasks of the transmission system operator to an independent system operator appointed in accordance with Article 14 in case of a persistent breach by the transmission system operator of its obligations under this Directive, in particular in case of repeated discriminatory behaviour to the benefit of the vertically integrated undertaking.

6 The regulatory authorities shall be responsible for fixing or approving sufficiently in advance of their entry into force at least the methodologies used to calculate or establish the terms and conditions for:

- a connection and access to national networks, including transmission and distribution tariffs, and terms, conditions and tariffs for access to LNG facilities. Those tariffs or methodologies shall allow the necessary investments in the networks and LNG facilities to be carried out in a manner allowing those investments to ensure the viability of the networks and LNG facilities;
- b the provision of balancing services which shall be performed in the most economic manner and provide appropriate incentives for network users to balance their input and off-takes. The balancing services shall be provided in a fair and non-discriminatory manner and be based on objective criteria; and
- c access to cross-border infrastructures, including the procedures for the allocation of capacity and congestion management.

7 The methodologies or the terms and conditions referred to in paragraph 6 shall be published.

8 In fixing or approving the tariffs or methodologies and the balancing services, the regulatory authorities shall ensure that transmission and distribution system operators are granted appropriate incentive, over both the short and long term, to increase efficiencies, foster market integration and security of supply and support the related research activities.

9 The regulatory authorities shall monitor congestion management of national gas transmission networks including interconnectors, and the implementation of congestion management rules. To that end, transmission system operators or market operators shall submit their congestion management rules, including capacity allocation, to the national regulatory authorities. National regulatory authorities may request amendments to those rules.

10 Regulatory authorities shall have the authority to require transmission, storage, LNG and distribution system operators, if necessary, to modify the terms and conditions, including tariffs and methodologies referred to in this Article, to ensure that they are proportionate and applied in a non-discriminatory manner. In the event that the access regime to storage is defined according to Article 33(3), that task shall exclude the modification of tariffs. In the event of delay in the fixing of transmission and distribution tariffs, regulatory authorities shall have the power to fix or approve provisional transmission and distribution tariffs or methodologies and to decide on the appropriate compensatory measures if the final tariffs or methodologies deviate from those provisional tariffs or methodologies.

11 Any party having a complaint against a transmission, storage, LNG or distribution system operator in relation to that operator's obligations under this Directive may refer the complaint to the regulatory authority which, acting as dispute settlement authority, shall issue a decision within a period of two months after receipt of the complaint. That period may be extended by two months where additional information is sought by the regulatory authorities. That extended period may be further extended with the agreement of the complainant. The regulatory authority's decision shall have binding effect unless and until overruled on appeal.

12 Any party who is affected and who has a right to complain concerning a decision on methodologies taken pursuant to this Article or, where the regulatory authority has a duty to consult, concerning the proposed tariffs or methodologies, may, at the latest within two months, or a shorter time period as provided by Member States, following publication of the decision or proposal for a decision, submit a complaint for review. Such a complaint shall not have suspensive effect.

13 Member States shall create appropriate and efficient mechanisms for regulation, control and transparency so as to avoid any abuse of a dominant position, in particular to the detriment of consumers, and any predatory behaviour. Those mechanisms shall take account of the provisions of the Treaty, and in particular Article 82 thereof.

14 Member States shall ensure that the appropriate measures are taken, including administrative action or criminal proceedings in conformity with their national law, against the natural or legal persons responsible where confidentiality rules imposed by this Directive have not been respected.

15 Complaints referred to in paragraphs 11 and 12 shall be without prejudice to the exercise of rights of appeal under Community or national law.

16 Decisions taken by regulatory authorities shall be fully reasoned and justified to allow for judicial review. The decisions shall be available to the public while preserving the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information.

17 Member States shall ensure that suitable mechanisms exist at national level under which a party affected by a decision of a regulatory authority has a right of appeal to a body independent of the parties involved and of any government.