

Directive (EU) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council  
of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity  
and amending Directive 2012/27/EU (recast) (Text with EEA relevance)

*CHAPTER IV*

***DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATION***

*Article 32*

**Incentives for the use of flexibility in distribution networks**

1 Member States shall provide the necessary regulatory framework to allow and provide incentives to distribution system operators to procure flexibility services, including congestion management in their areas, in order to improve efficiencies in the operation and development of the distribution system. In particular, the regulatory framework shall ensure that distribution system operators are able to procure such services from providers of distributed generation, demand response or energy storage and shall promote the uptake of energy efficiency measures, where such services cost-effectively alleviate the need to upgrade or replace electricity capacity and support the efficient and secure operation of the distribution system. Distribution system operators shall procure such services in accordance with transparent, non-discriminatory and market-based procedures unless the regulatory authorities have established that the procurement of such services is not economically efficient or that such procurement would lead to severe market distortions or to higher congestion.

2 Distribution system operators, subject to approval by the regulatory authority, or the regulatory authority itself, shall, in a transparent and participatory process that includes all relevant system users and transmission system operators, establish the specifications for the flexibility services procured and, where appropriate, standardised market products for such services at least at national level. The specifications shall ensure the effective and non-discriminatory participation of all market participants, including market participants offering energy from renewable sources, market participants engaged in demand response, operators of energy storage facilities and market participants engaged in aggregation. Distribution system operators shall exchange all necessary information and shall coordinate with transmission system operators in order to ensure the optimal utilisation of resources, to ensure the secure and efficient operation of the system and to facilitate market development. Distribution system operators shall be adequately remunerated for the procurement of such services to allow them to recover at least their reasonable corresponding costs, including the necessary information and communication technology expenses and infrastructure costs.

3 The development of a distribution system shall be based on a transparent network development plan that the distribution system operator shall publish at least every two years and shall submit to the regulatory authority. The network development plan shall provide transparency on the medium and long-term flexibility services needed, and shall set out the planned investments for the next five-to-ten years, with particular emphasis on the main distribution infrastructure which is required in order to connect new generation capacity and new loads, including recharging points for electric vehicles. The network development plan shall also include the use of demand response, energy efficiency, energy storage facilities or other resources that the distribution system operator is to use as an alternative to system expansion.

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4 The distribution system operator shall consult all relevant system users and the relevant transmission system operators on the network development plan. The distribution system operator shall publish the results of the consultation process along with the network development plan, and submit the results of the consultation and the network development plan to the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority may request amendments to the plan.

5 Member States may decide not to apply the obligation set out in paragraph 3 to integrated electricity undertakings which serve less than 100 000 connected customers or which serve small isolated systems.