

Acceleration of granting of permanent connection offers to RES stations

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On 23 December 2020 Ministerial Decision 5693/2020 was published in the *Official Journal* (B' 5693/2020). Among other things, this decision introduces several amendments to Ministerial Decision YPEN/DAPEEK/28857/1083/17.03.2020, which concerns the determination of a special framework of priority for the granting of permanent connection offers to renewable energy source (RES) and high-efficiency cogeneration of heat and power (HP CHP) plants by the electricity network operator (DEDDHE).

In light of the new provisions, DEDDHE has enlisted applications for the granting of a binding offer to connect to the network in order of priority, independently for each region of the network. Saturated networks are excluded – applications for such networks will be accepted only if there is capacity for RES and HP CHP plants, in compliance with the respective Regulatory Agency for Energy (RAE) decision proclaiming such section of the network to be saturated. In addition, provided that certain conditions are met, the network operator may grant a binding offer to connect to the network to a station of lower priority at the same time as a station of higher priority. In such case, the connection of the lower priority station must take place at a high-voltage/medium-voltage (HV/MV) substation (new or existing) which does not serve distribution lines (and loads) of the local network, a 'private' HV/MV substation (new or existing) within the meaning of RAE Decision 787/2012 or a 'new' DEDDHE HV/MV substation within the meaning of RAE Decision 787/2012, according to the procedure set out in Paragraph 3.1 of the aforementioned decision.

Further, a fundamental amendment regarding the examination procedure has been introduced. More precisely, where it is deemed impossible to connect a station to the network, the competent operator must keep the application pending for five years from the date of submission. However, this is contingent on the interested party submitting a formal request to the operator within one month of being notified of the inability to connect. In addition, the operator must receive a written statement from the interested party on an annual basis regarding the maintenance of its application. Further, where the operator ascertains an evident inability to connect to the network, it will automatically issue a negative opinion on the application without carrying out a technical examination and regardless of the aforementioned order of priority for the examination of applications. Conversely, where connection is possible, the competent operator will grant the binding offer to connect to the network to the interested party, based on the order of priority of the initial application.

This new legislative tool is orientated towards the fast evaluation of pending applications and the simplification of the relevant procedure as a whole. Eventually, this will promote the full utilisation of the network's available electrical space by new RES producers.

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