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## New energy regulations in Greece

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#### **Introduction**

In July 2021 Law 4819/2021 (OJ A' 129/23.7.2021) (the Law) introduced certain immediate measures into the Greek energy sector. These measures particularly provide for:

- the suspension of new applications and licences for renewable energy source (RES) hybrid plants and RES plants with storage;
- the obligation of RES production certificate holders to provide letters of guarantee;
- amendments regarding the priority of applications for connection to the grid; and
- exceptions for connection to saturated grids.

#### **Suspension of new applications and licences**

Up until 31 December 2024, the Law suspends submitting applications to the Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE) and issuing new production certificates for hybrid RES plants on the interconnected islands or islands that are to be connected to the interconnected system in 2019–2028. In addition, up until 31 December 2021, the Law suspends submitting applications and issuing production licences,

environmental approvals and binding offers for the connection to the grid to RES production plants with storage system. Plants with pumping storage are excluded. The above suspension does not apply to applications amending already issued production licences, and certificates for projects on Crete and other non-interconnected islands.

### **Obligation to provide to letter of guarantee to RAE**

The Law introduces the obligation to provide the RAE with a letter of guarantee as a condition of the issuance of a producer certificate or a special projects production certificate. The amount of the guarantee required depends on the capacity of the future plant for which the production certificate is issued, and it is equal to €35,000 per megawatt. The amount of guarantee may be amended by a decision of the minister of environment and energy.

This obligation also applies to holders of RES production certificates that were issued before the Law entered into force if such holders did not manage to submit the application for issuing the final connection terms to the grid operator for up until 28 February 2022. If the holders fail to provide the letter of guarantee for up until 28 February 2021, the respective production certificates will automatically be invalidated.

The main exceptions from this obligation are:

- plants with a maximum production capacity below or equal to 1 megawatt;
- plants that were, before the Law entered into force, approved to be strategic investments in compliance with Law 3894/2010 (A' 204) or Law 4608/2019 (A' 66); and
- certain local government authorities and entities fulfilling publicly beneficial purposes, other than energy communities, such as hospitals, health centres and all schools.

The above guarantees are returned to the production certificate holder following:

- the holder submitting an application for issuing the final connection terms with all of the required documents to the grid operator, which should be confirmed in writing by the grid operator; or
- the production certificate holder applying for the return of the letter of guarantee; in which case, the respective production

certificates will automatically be invalidated.

### **Amendments regarding priority of applications for connection to grid**

The Law authorises the minister of environment and energy to provide a framework for prioritising applications regarding granting the final terms for connection to the grid to RES and high-efficiency cogeneration of heat and power plants by the distribution network operator or the transmission system operator, as the case may be. This ministerial decision should set out:

- terms, conditions and restrictions for certain categories of producers;
- time margins; and
- any other details regarding the priority of applications.

### **Applications for connection of photovoltaic plants to saturated grids**

By way of derogation, the Law stipulates the circumstances for granting access to saturated grids. Thus, any natural or legal person can submit only one application for a final connection offer for a photovoltaic solar plant of up to 400 kilowatts to each saturated network – specifically, the additional capacities of various regions are limited as follows:

- Peloponnese – 86 megawatts;
- the Cyclades (Paros, Naxos, Mykonos, Syros, Andros and Tinos) – 45 megawatts;
- Evia – 40 megawatts; and
- Crete – 140 megawatts.

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