

**COMMISSION DECISION**  
**of 9 March 2016**  
**setting-up a Commission expert group on electricity interconnection targets**  
(2016/C 94/02)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Whereas:

- (1) The European Council of 20 and 21 March 2014 called for speedy implementation of all the measures to meet the target of achieving interconnection of at least 10 % of their installed electricity production capacity for all Member States. The European Council invited the Commission to propose specific interconnection objectives to be attained until 2030.
- (2) The Communication from the Commission entitled 'European Energy Security Strategy' <sup>(1)</sup> proposed to extend the current 10 % electricity interconnection target to 15 % by 2030 while taking into account the cost aspects and the potential of commercial exchanges in the relevant regions.
- (3) The European Council of 23 and 24 October 2014 invited the Commission to report regularly to the European Council with the objective of arriving at a 15 % target by 2030, as proposed by the Commission, and that the target be attained, primarily, via the implementation of Projects of Common Interest.
- (4) In its Communication on a 'Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy' <sup>(2)</sup> the Commission recalled that a specific minimum interconnection target has been set for electricity at 10 % of installed electricity production capacity of the Member States, which should be achieved by 2020. In the same Communication, the Commission stated that it will report in 2016 on the necessary measures to reach a 15 % target by 2030.
- (5) In its Communication on 'Achieving the 10 % electricity interconnection target' <sup>(3)</sup>, the Commission highlighted that the completion of the internal electricity market, notably ending the isolation of electricity islands, secure energy supplies for all consumers and a greater share of electricity generation based on variable renewable energy sources require more than 10 % interconnection capacity, and efforts by the EU and Member States must be guided by the need for all Member States to reach at least a 15 % interconnection capacity by 2030.
- (6) The European Council of 19 and 20 March 2015 called for the acceleration of infrastructure projects, including interconnections in particular to peripheral regions, for electricity and gas to ensure energy security and a well-functioning internal energy market.
- (7) At the same time, differences between Member States in terms of geographic location and structure of energy mix and supply means that a case-by-case approach based on a thorough assessment of bottlenecks, taking into account the costs, is needed. The regional cooperation structures — the Regional Groups for electricity established by Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(4)</sup> (TEN-E Regulation) and the relevant High Level Groups for energy infrastructure — will be a valuable setting for discussing and agreeing on the way forward.
- (8) These High Level Groups add a political dimension, strategic steer and policy guidelines for the technical work, and help pinpoint and promote priority projects for the regions concerned. In addition to the existing Baltic Energy Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) High Level Group, which was reformed in 2015, two new High Level Groups were set up in 2015: the High Level Group on Interconnections for South-West Europe (Iberian Peninsula) and the High Level Group for Central and South Eastern Europe Gas Connectivity (CESEC)

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2014) 330 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> COM(2015) 80 final.

<sup>(3)</sup> COM(2015) 82 final.

<sup>(4)</sup> Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1364/2006/EC and amending Regulations (EC) No 713/2009, (EC) No 714/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009 (OJ L 115, 25.4.2013, p. 39).

- (9) The Group should be established to provide the Commission and the regional cooperation structures with technical advice on how best to conceptualise the 15 % interconnection target into regional, country and/or border level targets as well as on key technical issues related to the implementation of the necessary interconnections, including those related to the achievement of the 10 % interconnection target.
- (10) The structure of the expert group should aim at ensuring a balanced representation of relevant areas of expertise and areas of interest, as well as a balanced representation of gender and geographical origin. The Group should therefore be composed of representatives of the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER), the European Networks of Transmission System Operators in particular for Electricity (ENTSOs) as well as experts and relevant organisations representing industry, academia and non-governmental sector with relevant expertise in internal energy market and electricity interconnection issues.
- (11) Rules on disclosure of information by members of the Group should be laid down.
- (12) Personal data should be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(1)</sup>,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

#### *Article 1*

##### **Subject matter**

The group of experts on electricity interconnection targets ('the Group') is hereby set up.

#### *Article 2*

##### **Tasks**

1. The Group's tasks shall be:
  - (a) after identifying the factors potentially impacting exchange of electricity between Member States, to provide the Commission with technical advice on a methodology conceptualising the 15 % interconnection target into regional, country and/or border level targets to be achieved by 2030 while taking into account the cost aspects and the potential of commercial exchanges in the relevant regions;
  - (b) to provide, if so requested, technical advice on achieving the 10 % target, to identify risks that could lead to the target not being met by 2020, and to propose solutions to the Commission to overcome any implementation bottlenecks, related in particular to the financing of projects and the permit granting procedures.
2. While carrying out the tasks set out in paragraph 1, the Group shall regularly consult the regional cooperation structures, i.e. Regional Groups for electricity established by Regulation (EU) No 347/2013, as well as the relevant High Level Groups on energy infrastructure.

#### *Article 3*

##### **Consultation**

The Commission and the Directorate-General for Energy may consult the Group on any matter relating to electricity interconnection.

#### *Article 4*

##### **Membership**

1. The Group shall be composed of up to 15 members selected from:
  - (a) The Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER),
  - (b) The European Networks of Transmission System Operators for electricity and for gas (ENTSO-E and ENTSO-G),
  - (c) European industry organisations and associations,
  - (d) Academic and research organisations specialised in internal energy market and energy infrastructure issues with a focus on electricity,

<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8, 12.1.2001, p. 1).

- (e) Relevant European non-governmental and international organisations specialised in internal energy market and energy infrastructure issues with a focus on electricity.
  - (f) Individuals appointed in a personal capacity as experts having outstanding expertise in the field referred to in Article 2(1).
2. Provision may be made for the same number of alternates as members to be appointed. Alternates shall be appointed in accordance with the same conditions as members; alternates automatically replace any members who are absent or indisposed.
  3. Members who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the group's deliberations, who resign or who do not comply with the conditions set out in paragraph 1 of Article 5, or Article 339 of the Treaty shall no longer be invited to participate in the Group's meetings and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.
  4. Members appointed in a personal capacity shall act independently and in the public interest.
  5. Personal data shall be collected, processed and published in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001.

#### Article 5

### Appointment

1. Members shall be appointed by the Director-General for Energy from specialists with competence in the areas referred to in Article 2 and who have responded to the call for applications.

Organisations referred to in points (c), (d) and (e) of Article 4 shall each propose a representative and his or her alternate. The Director-General for Energy may refuse a representative or an alternate proposed, if he or she does not meet the requirements specified in the call for applications. In such cases, the organisation concerned shall be asked to designate another representative or alternate.

Members referred to in points (a) and (b) of Article 4 shall not undergo the public call and be appointed directly.

2. Members are appointed for a period of two years and half, renewable once.
3. As regards members appointed in a personal capacity, provision may be made for the same number of alternates as members to be appointed. Alternates shall be appointed in accordance with the same conditions as members. Alternates automatically replace any members who are absent or indisposed.
4. The names of organisations and names of individuals appointed in a personal capacity shall be published in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register').

#### Article 6

### Operation

1. The Group shall be chaired by a representative of the Directorate-General for Energy.
2. In agreement with the Directorate-General for Energy, the Group may set up sub-groups to examine specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by the Group. Such sub-groups shall be disbanded as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.
3. The Commission's representative may invite experts from outside the Group with specific competence in a subject on the agenda to participate in the work of the Group or sub-group on an ad hoc basis. In addition, the Commission's representative may give observer status to individuals, organisations as defined in Rule 8(3) of the horizontal rules on expert groups and candidate countries.
4. Representatives of the members of the Group and their alternates, as well as invited experts and observers, shall comply with the obligations of professional secrecy laid down by the Treaties and their implementing rules, as well as with the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of EU classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 <sup>(1)</sup> and 2015/444 <sup>(2)</sup>. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.
5. The meetings of the Group and sub-groups shall be held on Commission premises. The Commission shall provide secretarial support. Other Commission officials with an interest in the proceedings may attend meetings of the Group and its sub-groups.

<sup>(1)</sup> Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

<sup>(2)</sup> Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

6. The Group shall adopt its rules of procedure on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups.
7. All relevant documents (such as agendas, minutes and participants' submissions) shall be made available either in the Register of expert groups or via a link from the Register to a dedicated website. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. Exceptions to publication shall be foreseen where disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(1)</sup>.

#### *Article 7*

##### **Meeting expenses**

1. Participants in the activities of the Group shall not be remunerated for the services they render.
2. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the Group shall be reimbursed by the Commission in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission <sup>(2)</sup>.
3. Those expenses shall be reimbursed within the limits of the available appropriations allocated under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

#### *Article 8*

##### **Applicability**

This Decision shall apply for 5 years from the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels, 9 March 2016.

*For the Commission*

Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE

*Member of the Commission*

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<sup>(1)</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents (OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43). These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

<sup>(2)</sup> Commission Decision C(2007) 5858 of 5 December 2007 on the rules on the reimbursement of expenses incurred by people from outside the Commission invited to attend meetings in an expert capacity