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Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – The European Grids Package

(C/2026/2610)

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Reference documents:	COM (2025) 1005 final COM (2025) 1007 final COM (2025) 1006 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directives (EU) 2018/2001, (EU) 2019/944, (EU) 2024/1788 as regards acceleration of permit-granting procedures

Amendments to Directive (EU) 2018/2001 (Renewable Energy Directive)

Amendment 1

Recital 4 Point a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>Accelerated permitting procedures shall ensure early and effective public participation, including access to relevant information and meaningful consultation, in accordance with Union law;</i>

Amendment 2

Recital 11 Point a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>The simplification of permitting procedures must not lead to any lowering of environmental protection standards or to a weakening of public participation requirements established under Union environmental law;</i>

Amendment 3

Recital 16 Point a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>In order to accelerate permit-granting procedures while ensuring public acceptance and territorial coherence, Member States should support local and regional authorities through a local energy action and delivery (LEAD) approach. Proximity-based administrative</i>

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>support and coordination, with an emphasis on value-added local participation, can significantly reduce delays and improve the quality of permit decisions. The LEAD framework should furthermore promote the incorporation of landscape and cultural impact assessments at the earliest stages of project planning, ensuring that local level energy solutions remain compatible with the preservation of artistic and natural heritage. This will require specific financial support to build capacity for such local participation at the relevant level.</i>

Reason

The LEAD framework will enhance regional capacity in permitting, ensuring LRAs can effectively implement and manage permit workflows.

Amendment 4

Recital 16 Point b (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	(16b) <i>Accelerated permitting for grid infrastructure should be based on integrated energy system planning that ensures coherence between electricity networks, heating and cooling systems, energy-efficiency measures and demand-side flexibility. Involving regional and local planning authorities early in the process can improve project design, local participation, public acceptance and cost-effectiveness as well as ensure that planning takes into account the specific characteristics and protection requirements of landscapes and sites of artistic or historical interest.</i>

Amendment 5

Recital 26 Point a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>Union-wide grid planning follows a bottom-up approach, building on national and regional planning processes and ensuring the active involvement of transmission system operators, while respecting national and local responsibilities for energy system planning;</i>

Amendment 6

Article 1 – Paragraph 3 – Article 15d – Paragraph 3

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall adopt measures to ensure that a share of the benefits of renewable energy projects with an installed capacity above 10 MW is passed on, directly or indirectly, to local citizens and communities in proximity to those projects .	Member States shall ensure that local and regional authorities are formally involved in designing, implementing and monitoring benefit-sharing arrangements for renewable energy projects with an installed capacity above 5 MW, in accordance with their competences under national law. Such involvement shall include the possibility for local and regional authorities to propose, enact or co-design benefit-sharing measures that address local and regional development objectives, local production and consumption (local4local), flexibility, environmental protection or action to mitigate energy poverty, and shall ensure that a proportionate share of the benefits is allocated to citizens and communities located in proximity to the projects, with a view to enhancing social acceptance and territorial cohesion;

Reason

Expanding the scope of benefit-sharing schemes to cover most projects could improve public acceptance.

Amendment 7

Article 1 – Paragraph 3 – Article 15d – Paragraph 4

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall designate and finance an independent facilitator to promote dialogue between the project developer and the general public for renewable energy projects with an installed capacity above 10MW . The facilitator shall only intervene upon request by any of the relevant parties and shall: (a) facilitate public consultations, as necessary, including early consultations during the phase prior to the permit application; (b) engage to find solutions to address potential concerns raised by local communities. (c) ensure support and transparency in the choice of the type of benefit sharing measure , where relevant. Member States may set up a fee, paid by project developers, to finance the services of the facilitator.‘;	Member States shall designate and finance an independent facilitator in cooperation with the competent local and regional authorities to promote dialogue between the project developer and the general public for renewable energy projects with an installed capacity above 5MW . The facilitator shall only intervene upon request by the project developer, the affected local or regional authority or any of the relevant parties and shall: (a) facilitate public consultations, as necessary, including early consultations during the phase prior to the permit application in alignment with existing local and regional consultation and spatial planning procedures; (b) engage to find solutions to address potential concerns raised by local communities. (c) ensure support and transparency in the choice of the type of benefit sharing and/or local production and flexibility measures , where relevant. Member States may set up a fee, paid by project developers, to finance the services of the facilitator provided that such fees are proportionate and do not create undue burdens, in particular for small or community-led projects. (d) Member States shall ensure that local and regional authorities have access to adequate technical assistance and administrative support to effectively perform;

Reason

The amendment strengthens the role of local and regional authorities in education, facilitation and public dialogue in line with subsidiarity, ensuring effective coordination with existing local procedures and proportionate implementation without undue administrative or financial burdens.

Amendment 8

Article 1 – Paragraph 3 – Article 15d – Paragraph 5

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
In Article 15d, the following paragraphs 3 and 4 are added:	In Article 15d, the following paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 are added:[...] 5. Member States shall set up a local energy action and delivery (LEAD) framework to support the implementation of local production, flexibility measures and permit-granting procedures at local and regional levels. Such a framework shall include mandatory consultation mechanisms for authorities responsible for safeguarding artistic and landscape heritage at the initial stages of all grid and renewable energy projects that may exert a significant visual or territorial impact. The LEAD framework shall provide technical, administrative, financial and coordination support to local and regional authorities involved in local production and flexibility measures, as well as permitting procedures under this Directive, standardised tools and capacity-building measures. The Commission shall publish implementing guidance within 12 months of entry into force of this Directive to support Member States in implementing local, proximity-based solutions, including in the areas of energy production and flexibility, and in streamlining permitting procedures.

Reason

The amendment strengthens the role of local and regional authorities in education, facilitation and public dialogue, in line with subsidiarity and ensuring effective coordination with existing local procedures and proportionate implementation without undue administrative or financial burdens

Amendment 9

Article 1 – Paragraph 3 – Article 15d – Paragraph 6 (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	Member States shall ensure that the competent authorities designated under this Article coordinate permit-granting procedures with national, regional and local energy and land use planning processes, including those reflected in national energy and climate plans and relevant regional energy strategies. This coordination shall ensure that grid infrastructure permitting considers integrated energy system planning, including electricity, heating and cooling, energy efficiency, demand-side flexibility and specific local solutions relating to production and flexibility, as well as land use planning.

Amendment 10

Article 1 – Paragraph 3 – Article 15d – Paragraph 7 (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>Member States shall ensure that the costs of network development are fairly shared among all users, while fully protecting low-income households. In addition, Member States shall ensure that regions with above-average shares of renewable energy production are not disproportionately burdened by network development costs, in particular where such investment serves cross-regional or cross-border interests. In such cases, cost-sharing mechanisms shall reflect the distribution of the benefits across regions and Member States, taking account of: (a) the extent to which the grid infrastructure serves multiple regions or enables cross-border energy flows; (b) how much the host region contributes to the EU's climate objectives through the production of renewable energy; (c) the need to avoid competitive disadvantages for energy-intensive industries in regions with high levels of renewable energy production; (d) the principle of solidarity and fair cost sharing as set out in the TEN-E Regulation.</i>

Reason

Integrating large amounts of renewable energy requires significant investment in grid infrastructure. This infrastructure is not used purely for regional supply, but the costs are mainly borne by regional consumers.

Amendment 11

Article 1 – Paragraph 4 – Article 16 – Paragraph 3 – Point a

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall set up a single digital portal at national level for all the steps of the permit-granting procedures for renewable energy, storage and grid projects;	Member States shall set up a single digital portal at national level in coordination with local and regional authorities, local energy agencies and one-stop shops for all the steps of the permit-granting procedures for renewable energy, storage and grid projects; the portal shall also include access to advisory services on artistic landscape heritage, in order to support the compatibility of projects with cultural and landscape values;

Reason

The amendment supports efficient coordination between national, regional and local authorities and reduces unnecessary delays in project implementation.

Amendment 12

Article 1 – Paragraph 7 – Article 16d – Point b

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall not require any administrative permits, including on environmental aspects, with the exception of grid connection permits, for the installation of solar energy equipment and co-located energy storage with a total installed capacity of 100 kW or less. Without prejudice to paragraph 1, Member States shall restrict the application of this paragraph in Natura 2000 areas and other areas under national protection schemes and cultural or historical heritage protected areas;	Member States shall not require any administrative permits, including on environmental aspects, with the exception of grid connection permits, for the installation of solar energy equipment and co-located energy storage with a total installed capacity of 100 kW or less, as long as this in line with local and regional land use planning . Without prejudice to paragraph 1, Member States shall restrict the application of this paragraph in Natura 2000 areas and other areas under national protection schemes and cultural or historical heritage protected areas;

Reason

Solar energy installations of 100 kW can exceed around 500 m² of panels and could substantially impact sensible environments. They must therefore be in accordance to local and regional land use planning, and in accordance with MS legislation.

Amendment 13

Article 1 – Paragraph 9 – Article 16i – Paragraph 2

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall not require any administrative permit, including on environmental aspects, with the exception of grid connection permits, for the installation of recharging stations with a total installed capacity of 100 kW or less.	Member States shall not require any administrative permit, including on environmental aspects, with the exception of grid connection permits, for the installation of recharging stations with a total installed capacity of 100 kW or less, provided that local authorities are notified prior to installation and it is consistent with local and regional land use planning and does not conflict with spatial, environmental or heritage protection requirements .

Amendment 14

Article 2 – Article 8 – Paragraph 4

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall establish or designate one or more contact points for transmission or distribution system operators. Those contact points shall, upon the applicant's request and free of charge, provide guidance to the applicant and facilitate the entire authorisation procedure for the activities referred to in paragraph 1, up to the final decision by the responsible authorities. The applicant shall not be required to contact more than one contact point for the entire process.	Member States shall establish or designate one or more contact points for transmission or distribution system operators. Those contact points shall, upon the applicant's request and free of charge, provide guidance to the applicant and facilitate coordination with all relevant national, regional and local authorities throughout the entire authorisation procedure for the activities referred to in paragraph 1, up to the final decision by the responsible authorities. The applicant shall not be required to contact more than one contact point for the entire process;

Reason

It reinforces subsidiarity by explicitly involving regional and local authorities in the authorisation process.

Amendment 15

Article 3 – Article 8 – Paragraph 1

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
In circumstances where an authorisation, such as a licence, permission, concession, consent or approval, is required for the construction or operation of natural gas facilities, hydrogen production facilities, and hydrogen system infrastructure, Member States or any competent authority they designate, shall grant authorisations to build or operate such facilities, infrastructure, pipelines or associated equipment within their territory, in accordance with paragraphs 2 to 11 and paragraph 16. Member States or any competent authority they designate, may also grant authorisations on the same basis for the supply of natural gas and hydrogen and for wholesale customers.'	In circumstances where an authorisation, such as a licence, permission, concession, consent or approval, is required for the construction or operation of natural gas facilities, hydrogen production facilities, and hydrogen system infrastructure, Member States or any competent authority they designate, including regional and local authorities within their competences , shall grant authorisations to build or operate such facilities, infrastructure, pipelines or associated equipment within their territory, in accordance with paragraphs 2 to 11 and paragraph 16. Member States or any competent authority they designate, including regional and local authorities where relevant , may also grant authorisations on the same basis for the supply of natural gas and hydrogen and for wholesale customers;

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure, amending Regulations (EU) 2019/942, (EU) 2019/943 and (EU) 2024/1789 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2022/869

Amendment 16

Recital 12

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Regional groups (Groups) should be established for the purpose of proposing and reviewing projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest, leading to the establishment of regional lists of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest. In order to ensure broad consensus, those Groups should include and ensure close cooperation between Member States, national regulatory authorities, project promoters and relevant stakeholders. In the context of that cooperation, national regulatory authorities should, where necessary, advise Groups, inter alia, on the feasibility of the national regulatory aspects of proposed projects and on the feasibility of the proposed timetable for regulatory approval.	Regional groups (Groups) should be established for the purpose of proposing and reviewing projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest, leading to the establishment of regional lists of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest. In order to ensure broad consensus, those Groups should include and ensure close cooperation between Member States, national regulatory authorities, local and regional authorities , project promoters and relevant stakeholders, and specifically encourage complementary local production and flexibility solutions . In the context of that cooperation, national regulatory authorities should, where necessary, advise Groups, inter alia, on the feasibility of the national regulatory aspects of proposed projects and on the feasibility of the proposed timetable for regulatory approval.

Amendment 17

Recital 46 – Point a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
	<i>It is necessary to evaluate the local effects of large-scale energy projects and to strengthen the participation of local and regional authorities in the planning and development of cross-border energy infrastructure;</i>

Amendment 18

Article 4 – Paragraph 5 – Point a

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
the urgency and the contribution of each proposed project in order to meet the Union's targets for energy and climate and its 2050 climate neutrality objective, market integration, competition, sustainability, and security of supply;	the urgency and the contribution of each proposed project in order to meet the Union's targets for energy and climate and its 2050 climate neutrality objective, market integration, <i>the territorial dimension (including landscape compatibility and the safeguarding of cultural heritage)</i> , competition, sustainability, <i>lower costs</i> and security of supply <i>of reliable and affordable energy from diverse sources while supporting economic growth and social cohesion;</i>

Amendment 19

Article 5 – Paragraph 1 – Point e

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
(d) the permit-granting process referred to in Article 10(9), point (c).	(d) the permit-granting process referred to in Article 10(9), point (c); <i>(e) local and regional impact assessments.</i>

Amendment 20

Article 5 – Paragraph 4) – Point d (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
(c) where relevant, a revised implementation plan aiming to overcome the delays.	(c) where relevant, a revised implementation plan aiming to overcome the delays; <i>(d) the involvement of local and regional authorities, and cooperation with them where relevant, including any recommendations, concerns or contributions provided by these authorities, including complementary local production and consumption (local4local) flexibility measures and how they have been considered.</i>

Amendment 21

Article 6 – Paragraph 2

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
The Commission shall transmit the report of the European coordinator referred to in point (e) of the first subparagraph to the European Parliament and the Groups concerned	The Commission shall transmit the report of the European coordinator referred to in point (e) of the first subparagraph to the European Parliament, the European Committee of the Regions and the Groups concerned

Amendment 22

Article 7 – Paragraph 9

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
Member States shall ensure public participation regarding the National Development Plan in accordance with Articles 6 and 7 of Directive 2001/42/EC, including identifying the public affected or likely to be affected as well as the Member States that may be affected by the implementation of that Plan and the projects on the Union list falling under the infrastructure categories referred to in point (1) of Annex II to this Regulation included in that Plan.	Member States, in cooperation with local and regional authorities , shall ensure public participation regarding the National Development Plan in accordance with Articles 6 and 7 of Directive 2001/42/EC, including identifying the public affected or likely to be affected as well as the Member States that may be affected by the implementation of that Plan and the projects on the Union list falling under the infrastructure categories referred to in point (1) of Annex II to this Regulation included in that Plan.

Amendment 23

Article 8 – Paragraph 1 – Point a

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
1. Each Member State shall ensure that one single national competent authority is responsible for: (a) acting as the sole point of contact for project promoters in the permit-granting process, replying to their queries, mediating all contacts with the authorities concerned and support them with knowledge and information aiming at the fastest process possible;	1. Each Member State shall ensure that one single national competent authority is responsible for: (a) acting as the sole point of contact for project promoters, while also ensuring structured engagement with local and regional authorities, which shall have the right to be consulted and to provide final recommendations at all stages in the permit-granting process including the incorporation of local production and flexibility solutions, replying to their queries, mediating all contacts with the authorities concerned and support them with knowledge and information aiming at the fastest process possible;

Amendment 24

Article 8 – Paragraph 3

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
3. The national competent authority shall ensure the issuing of the comprehensive decision within the time limits set out in Article 10(1) and (2). Member States shall choose among the following schemes, taking into account which scheme is most effective in light of national law, national planning and permit-granting process specificities, and whether it can be implemented in a manner that contributes to the most efficient and timely issuing of the comprehensive decision: [...]	3. The national competent authority shall ensure, following a mandatory consultation with local and regional authorities, the issuing of the comprehensive decision within the time limits set out in Article 10(1) and (2). Member States shall choose among the following schemes, taking into account which scheme is most effective in light of national law, national planning and permit-granting process specificities, and whether it can be implemented in a manner that contributes to the most efficient and timely issuing of the comprehensive decision: [...]

Amendment 25

Article 11 – Paragraph 3

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
The European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO for Electricity), the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH), the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSO for Gas) and the Member States shall provide, upon request from the Commission, the data and information necessary for the development of the central scenario referred to in paragraph 1. That includes, but is not limited to market and network data, such as demand and supply projections, characteristics of power generation, hydrogen production and networks, flexibility sources, imports assumptions, as well as climatic years data. The Commission shall set a reasonable time limit within which the data and information is to be provided, taking into account the complexity and urgency of the data and information required. Where an addressee does not provide the information requested within the time limit set by the Commission or supplies incomplete information, the Commission may by decision require the information to be provided. The Commission may request the Agency to verify the data submitted to the Commission, including by verifying national data with the relevant national regulatory authorities.	The European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO for Electricity), the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH), the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSO for Gas), the European entity for cooperation between distribution system operators in the European Union (EU DSO Entity) and the Member States shall provide, upon request from the Commission, the data and information necessary for the development of the central scenario referred to in paragraph 1. That includes, but is not limited to market and network data, such as demand and supply projections, characteristics of power generation, hydrogen production and networks, flexibility sources, imports assumptions, as well as climatic years data. The Commission shall set a reasonable time limit within which the data and information is to be provided, taking into account the complexity and urgency of the data and information required. Where an addressee does not provide the information requested within the time limit set by the Commission or supplies incomplete information, the Commission may by decision require the information to be provided. The Commission may request the Agency to verify the data submitted to the Commission, including by verifying national data with the relevant national regulatory authorities.

Reason

The role of distribution system operators must be safeguarded and the flexibility needed for local planning must be preserved.

Amendment 26

Article 12 – Paragraph 1

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
The ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH respectively, shall develop an infrastructure needs identification report to identify infrastructure gaps affecting the Union's objectives related to electricity and hydrogen.	The ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH respectively, and the EU DSO Entity shall develop an infrastructure needs identification report to identify infrastructure gaps affecting the Union's objectives related to electricity and hydrogen.
[...]	[...]
3. The ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH, respectively, shall consult relevant stakeholders on the additional data, assumptions and their use for the development of their infrastructure needs identification report.	3. The ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH, respectively, and the EU DSO Entity shall consult relevant stakeholders on the additional data, assumptions and their use for the development of their infrastructure needs identification report.
4. Within six months of the publication of a central scenario pursuant to Article 11, except where the publication is limited to adding a sensitivity analysis, the ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH shall submit their respective draft infrastructure needs identification report, including the assessment of how projects submitted for inclusion in the Union wide ten-year network development plan match the needs identified, to the TEN-E Group. In case the publication is limited to adding a sensitivity analysis, the Commission may request the ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH to develop a new infrastructure needs identification report in accordance with the procedure laid down in this Article.	4. Within six months of the publication of a central scenario pursuant to Article 11, except where the publication is limited to adding a sensitivity analysis, the ENTSO for Electricity, the ENNOH and the EU DSO Entity shall submit their respective draft infrastructure needs identification report, including the assessment of how projects submitted for inclusion in the Union wide ten-year network development plan match the needs identified, to the TEN-E Group. In case the publication is limited to adding a sensitivity analysis, the Commission may request the ENTSO for Electricity, the ENNOH and the EU DSO Entity to develop a new infrastructure needs identification report in accordance with the procedure laid down in this Article.
[...]	[...]
6. Within one month of being informed by the Agency about the compliance of the draft infrastructure needs identification reports, the TEN-E Group members, taking into account the Agency's input on compliance, may deliver their comments and inform the ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH respectively.	6. Within one month of being informed by the Agency about the compliance of the draft infrastructure needs identification reports, the TEN-E Group members, taking into account the Agency's input on compliance, may deliver their comments and inform the ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH respectively.
7. Within two months of having received the comments from the TEN-E Group members, the ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH shall adapt the draft infrastructure needs identification reports, taking into account the comments of the TEN-E Group and the Agency, to ensure full compliance with the requirements in paragraph 2, and shall submit the final infrastructure identification report to the Commission.	7. Within two months of having received the comments from the TEN-E Group members, the ENTSO for Electricity, the ENNOH and the EU DSO Entity shall adapt the draft infrastructure needs identification reports, taking into account the comments of the TEN-E Group and the Agency, to ensure full compliance with the requirements in paragraph 2, and shall submit the final infrastructure identification report to the Commission.

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
8. The Commission shall submit the final draft infrastructure needs identification report to the decision-making body of the TEN-E Group for endorsement. Before submitting the final draft infrastructure needs identification reports to the decision-making body of the TEN-E Group, the Commission may request updates and improvements with due justification and within a reasonable timeframe, where it finds that the final draft infrastructure needs identification reports do not appropriately reflect the comments from the members of the TEN-E Group and to ensure full compliance with the principles set out in Annex VII. The ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH respectively, shall fully address such requests within one month and re-submit the revised final draft infrastructure needs identification reports to the Commission.	8. The Commission shall submit the final draft infrastructure needs identification report to the decision-making body of the TEN-E Group for endorsement. Before submitting the final draft infrastructure needs identification reports to the decision-making body of the TEN-E Group, the Commission may request updates and improvements with due justification and within a reasonable timeframe, where it finds that the final draft infrastructure needs identification reports do not appropriately reflect the comments from the members of the TEN-E Group and to ensure full compliance with the principles set out in Annex VII. The ENTSO for Electricity and the ENNOH respectively, and the EU DSO Entity , shall fully address such requests within one month and re-submit the revised final draft infrastructure needs identification reports to the Commission.

Reason

The role of the EU DSO Entity is to provide expertise on electricity distribution networks and to strengthen cooperation between distribution system operators and transmission system operators. It needs to be more closely involved in the infrastructure needs assessment report.

Amendment 27

Article 19 – Paragraph 1

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
TSOs shall set aside 25 % of the congestion rents not spent for guaranteeing the actual availability of the allocated capacity pursuant to Article 19(2), point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2019/943 and for compensation to offshore renewable electricity generation plant operators pursuant to Article 19(2), point (c), of Regulation (EU) 2019/943, for network investments into projects on the Union list relevant to reducing interconnector congestion pursuant Article 19(2), point (b), of Regulation (EU) 2019/943.	TSOs shall contribute from the congestion rents not spent for guaranteeing the actual availability of the allocated capacity pursuant to Article 19(2), point (a), of Regulation (EU) 2019/943 and for compensation to offshore renewable electricity generation plant operators pursuant to Article 19(2), point (c), of Regulation (EU) 2019/943, for network investments into projects on the Union list relevant to reducing interconnector congestion pursuant Article 19(2), point (b), of Regulation (EU) 2019/943, for projects that have a direct impact in reducing congestion in the regions contributing to the congestion rents.

Reason

It would be absurd if Member States and regions that have chosen to apply congestion rents to alleviate regional congestion should use the proceeds to pay for projects that have no physical or practical connection to these regions.

Amendment 28

Article 24 – Point j (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	Amendment
(i) the uptake of non-wire solutions in terms of number of projects and respective increase in grid capacity.	(i) the uptake of non-wire solutions in terms of number of projects and respective increase in grid capacity; (j) <i>the territorial dimension of projects, including consultations held with local and regional authorities and the extent to which their input has been considered in planning, designing and implementing projects, including alternative or complementary local production and flexibility solutions, as well as the effectiveness of measures to ensure coordination between national authorities and local stakeholders.</i>

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (COR)

1. welcomes the presentation of the European Grids Package and the Energy Highways initiative as an important step towards modernising the EU energy framework; underlines that achieving the clean energy transition requires urgent action, substantial public and private investment and enhanced coordination to speed up the implementation of energy infrastructure projects, while preventing lengthy permitting procedures and cost overruns; emphasises the need to ensure the resilience, safety and reliability of the power system against natural disasters such as floods, wildfires, droughts and storms, but also from external attacks or hybrid threats; calls on the Commission, Member States and national authorities to support grid operators in increasing the resilience of the grid system; underlines the need to support the work on climate risks assessments, protection of critical infrastructure, cybersecurity tools and the necessary investments to guarantee grids preparedness and recovery;

2. regrets that the proposed centralised scheme, relying largely on a top-down approach, does not sufficiently consider the contribution of local and regional authorities to the identification and planning of local needs for grid infrastructure and to the development of local production and flexibility solutions which help mitigate against excessive infrastructure requirements, thereby limiting the democratisation of the energy system through active local participation, shared ownership and place-based decision-making;

3. stresses the urgent need to strengthen the resilience of the Union's electricity grids, in light of recent largescale disruptions, including the blackout affecting the Iberian Peninsula as well as incidents in Berlin and parts of the Czech Republic, which illustrate the exposure of Europe's interconnected power system to environmental stress, capacity constraints, technical failures and deliberate human interference;

4. calls for the acceleration of permitting procedures for renewable energy projects, recalling that the 2025 Committee of the Regions Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities identifies administrative delays as a persistent barrier to timely deployment; urges the establishment of an EU-wide digital permitting system to reduce administrative burdens and enable faster and more efficient local approvals; calls for the swift implementation of Renewables Acceleration Areas;

5. recommends that the European Commission and Member States formally integrate local and regional authorities (LRAs) into the governance, planning, and implementation of the European Energy Highways Initiative. The Commission shall ensure that the governance of the Energy Highways Initiative upholds environmental safeguards, public consultation and social acceptance, and that simplification and acceleration do not undermine environmental protection, biodiversity, landscape considerations or citizen engagement;

6. welcomes the guidance on efficient grid connections and calls on the European Commission to adopt binding recommendations or regulatory principles that remove administrative barriers, accelerate project implementation, and ensure that grid development supports local energy production and regional decarbonisation objectives;

7. underlines the need to foster cooperation on energy technology and policies for the clean transition, especially in securing stable and secure European supply chains for critical power grids components; recalls the need to respect the principle of technological neutrality and to be applied by TSOs/DSOs in their approach to electricity generation, including RES, nuclear, gas, and also to take into account various impacts on both onshore and offshore infrastructure;

8. underlines that efforts to simplify the TEN-E Regulation and accelerate permitting procedures must not undermine environmental standards, public consultations or the protection of local communities and biodiversity; calls for further fragmentation of EU procedural law to be prevented and for permit-granting procedures in the various areas of EU law to be made as uniform as possible;

Local energy action and delivery

9. calls for a local energy action and delivery (LEAD) framework to support the implementation of permit-granting procedures and complementary solutions at local and regional levels; emphasises that the framework should be part of an Action Plan to empower local and regional authorities to design, adapt and manage permitting solutions in line with local needs and territorial specificities; stresses the need for targeted technical assistance and capacity-building that is locally driven, including one-stop-shops support, standardised yet flexible guidance, and interoperable digital tools under local control; encourages the creation of One Stop Shops to facilitate peer-to-peer exchange and the sharing of best practices; calls for adequate, flexible funding aligned with existing EU energy and cohesion instruments, ensuring that EU support strengthens local decision-making;

10. calls for tailored support for territories with specific constraints. The LEAD framework shall provide targeted measures for small municipalities, islands and outermost regions including advisory services and priority access to funding for local infrastructure and staff costs in line with CoR evidence on funding access barriers;

11. calls for local and regional authorities to be formally recognised as key partners in planning, advocacy, permitting and monitoring, which is indispensable for aligning grid expansion with local development priorities and climate adaptation needs;

12. regrets that, despite the presentation of the grids package, its territorial impacts have not been adequately assessed; calls on the European Commission to ensure that the implementation of the package systematically integrates local and regional decarbonisation plans and is supported by robust territorial impact assessments, in order to align grid development with regional needs, spatial planning and local implementation capacities;

13. calls for local and regional authorities to be mandatory and systematically involved in regional energy-grid planning bodies and in all consultation phases of the Ten-Year Network Development Plans (TYNDPs), ensuring close coordination with transmission and distribution system operators, other regions, and Member States; stresses that reinforcing the regional dimension in energy infrastructure planning is crucial to ensure coherence between local energy policies, grid investments, and electrification objectives;;

14. believes that local and regional authorities must have a formal and permanent role in energy planning at both EU and national levels, including a complementary role in local production and flexibility solutions; urges the Commission to invite the Committee of the Regions to participate in the Energy Union Task Force ⁽¹⁾, ensuring that the local dimension is part of the EU energy decision-making process;

⁽¹⁾ CoR opinion on the *Action Plan for Affordable Energy – How to secure affordable, stable and clean energy for all EU cities and regions*; Rapporteur: Hanna Zdanowska.

15. underlines that the effective and smooth implementation of the European Green Deal and current energy policies depends on well-equipped local and regional energy agencies, appropriately funded local solutions and advocacy and one-stop shops ⁽²⁾;

Energy affordability – the cost of electricity

16. reiterates that energy affordability is at the heart of the energy transition. Given the crucial role that grids play in integrating renewable energy and supporting electrification, grid development must provide real added value while demonstrably helping to bring down energy bills and tackling energy poverty and affordability; underlines that the costs of grid expansion must be shared fairly among all users, with households on low incomes fully protected; stresses the importance of ensuring that no territory is placed at a disproportionate financial disadvantage when grid investments primarily serve wider regional, cross-border or system-level benefits.; emphasises that all major energy consumers should contribute in a manner that reflects the impact of their demand on the electricity system, in line with principles of fairness and cost-reflectiveness; stresses that addressing grid congestion and accelerating flexibility solutions is essential to avoid the curtailment and waste of renewable electricity and reiterates that the infrastructure planning should align generation and storage capacity with areas of highest energy demand;

17. points out that an estimated EUR 1,2 trillion will be needed for the EU's electricity grids between now and 2040, and that such an investment must be subject to rigorous cost benefit analyses, demonstrably contribute to the phase-out of fossil fuels, and must prove a benefit to consumers in terms of affordable and lower electricity costs and enhanced economic benefits at local level; calls for the territorial distribution of benefits to be reflected in cost-benefit analyses and for solidarity-based cost-sharing mechanisms to apply to infrastructure investments serving supra-regional or cross-border purposes;

18. acknowledges the European Commission's proposal to triple the budget of the Connecting Europe Facility, which represents a significant step forward in financing the energy transition; stresses, however, that the energy transition is not merely a technical or financial challenge, but a transformative process that requires deep engagement and ownership at the regional and local levels;

19. calls on the Commission, when revising the TEN-E Regulation, to lay down specific solidarity-based funding mechanisms for cross-border and cross-regional grid infrastructure, ensuring that the costs are shared fairly in line with the geographical distribution of the benefits; suggests that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF-E) should prioritise projects that help regions where renewable energy production is high to integrate it into the network and to expand transmission capacity; stresses that these regions play a key role in decarbonising the European energy system and that their infrastructure investment benefits Europe as a whole;

20. points out that low energy costs are a major locational and competitive advantage. Given the ambitious digital policy objectives and the need to scale up data centres – which are seen as critical infrastructure for the European resilience and competitiveness of digital technologies and at the same time offer significant potential for increased sustainability – remedial actions such as electricity price compensation should be explored. In this context, the CEEAG list also needs to be modernised and adapted to the requirements of the digital age;

21. calls on the European Commission to prioritise support for small- and medium-scale distribution grid projects and local energy production close to end users, following the 'local-to-local' approach, in order to reinforce local energy sovereignty, reduce grid congestion, and maximise the territorial benefits of energy deployment;

⁽²⁾ CoR study on *Speeding up the clean energy transition at local and regional level: the impact of the Fit for 55 Package*.

22. stresses that promoting energy communities requires dedicated measures, under transparent and non-discriminatory conditions, to facilitate their access to the grid, incentives for local production and flexibility solutions which minimise the requirement for new grids, and support for the optimal use of available capacity; underlines the importance of strengthening regional and local acceptance by clearly demonstrating the socio-economic, environmental and territorial benefits of energy communities, including local value creation and citizen participation; emphasises that such measures should support and accelerate the development of a decentralised, resilient and consumer-oriented electricity system;

Addressing grid congestion

23. supports the Commission's proposal to replace the 'first come, first served' model with a 'first ready, first-served' principle for grid connections, prioritising mature projects, projects generating qualified jobs and preventing speculation and grid connection hoarding by disincentivising applications for connection where these are not substantiated by a solid project or where the developer cannot show sufficient commitment to the realisation of a project as possible criteria for connection rights; and underlines that energy communities and local energy sharing projects should, where appropriate, be given priority access to grid capacity, unless a clear system efficiency justification requires otherwise; stresses that prioritisation should reflect local and regional needs and therefore welcomes the Dutch framework, which allocates grid access based on security and societal value criteria;

24. states that contracts for difference (CfD) must be adapted to the specific needs and capacities of municipalities, allowing local authorities to directly invest in co-owned renewable energy projects, reinvesting revenues into local energy efficiency projects and grid upgrades;

25. states that incentives and market mechanisms for flexibility through digitalisation and smart technologies at the local level (distribution system) are critical for maximising the efficiency of the existing distribution grid and for avoiding excessive build costs for inefficient new infrastructure;

26. points out that islands, mountainous areas and outermost regions face specific challenges in grid capacity and congestion that hinder their energy transition and increase costs for consumers; calls on the Commission and Member States to adopt tailored regulatory and investment frameworks that address these specificities;

27. points out that electricity systems in the outermost regions are isolated and cannot be connected to the continental European grid, which limits their flexibility and makes it difficult for them to integrate clean energy from the outside. In this regard, points out that investment in renewable energy infrastructure and in energy storage is essential for ensuring security of supply and optimising renewable energy in these regions, and stresses that the costs involved exceed the amount that these regions can invest on their own;

28. stresses that the outermost regions cannot be excluded from EU policies and funds for the energy transition as this would jeopardise their social and territorial cohesion and their transition to a carbon-neutral economy;

29. recognises the strategic role of large urban and metropolitan areas as key flexibility nodes in the electricity system, where active demand management, the digitalisation of distribution grids, storage and efficient electrification can reduce the need for new infrastructure, improve system stability and strengthen Europe's energy autonomy;;

Fostering public acceptance in the energy transition

30. highlights the fact that the meaningful participation of local and regional authorities is not optional, but a precondition for social acceptance; stresses that local and regional authorities must be involved at the earliest stages of raising awareness, advocacy and planning, with structured and binding consultation mechanisms to reduce opposition to accelerating project delivery;

31. underlines the strategic importance of prioritising ‘made in Europe’ technologies and equipment in grid deployment to reduce dependency and to reinforce EU industry, stimulating local economic development; calls on EU and national authorities to align public procurement standards and certification frameworks to scale up European technologies. However, legal demands must be proportionate, with a limited administrative burden and not infringe on the basic function of procurement to achieve contracts and supplies according to the needs and means of the procuring authority;

32. calls for a stronger role for local and regional authorities in education, facilitation, and public dialogue on energy and grid projects, in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity and emphasises that this must be coordinated with existing local procedures and implemented in a proportionate way, avoiding unnecessary administrative or financial burdens on local authorities;

33. stresses that social acceptance depends on communities delivering and benefiting from local energy infrastructure; calls for enforceable benefit-sharing and proposes a mandatory scheme for all projects above 5 MW; energy projects respecting benefit-sharing principles should be prioritised in permitting and grid connection.

Brussels, 5 March 2026.

The President
of the European Committee of the Regions
Kata TÜTTŐ
