Ref. Ares(2025)3806419 - 12/05/2025

European Commission

CALL FOR EVIDENCE
FOR AN EVALUATION AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT RUN IN PARALLEL

This document aims to inform the public and stakeholders about the Commission's work so they can provide feedback on the intended initiative and participate effectively in consultation activities.

We ask these groups to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions, and to give us any relevant information they may have, including on the possible impacts of the different options.

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	European Grids Package
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	Directorate-General for Energy, Unit C4: Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Legislative and non-legislative measures
INDICATIVE PLANNING	Q4-2025
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Commission webpages covering the policy area: • Energy infrastructure in the EU - European Commission • Trans-European Networks for Energy • Enabling framework for renewables

This document is for information purposes only. It does not prejudge the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by this document, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Political context, evaluation, problem definition & subsidiarity check

Political context

Secure supplies of clean and affordable energy are critical for European competitiveness, preparedness, security and the EU's decarbonisation efforts for 2030 and 2050. Ensuring a **well-integrated and optimised European energy grid** is crucial to accelerating a cost-efficient, clean energy transition. The mission letter to Commissioner Jørgensen calls for work for the **production of 'more clean energy'** and 'the **upgrade of the grid infrastructure**'. Specifically, the Commissioner is requested to 'look at the legal framework on European grids with the aim to help upgrade and expand grids to support rapid electrification [and] speed up permitting'. The letter also highlights the need to 'upgrade our grid infrastructure and develop a resilient, interconnected and secure energy system'. The Draghi and Letta reports further underline the essential role of grids in the energy transition and the EU's contribution in that regard. Additionally, Member States have called for a stronger European role in long-term grid planning, including in the recent Council Conclusions of 20 May 2024 on advancing sustainable electricity grid infrastructure and most recently in response to recent price surges in Southeast Europe. Furthermore, the time needed to grant permits needs to be reduced for renewable power generation projects.

To match the priority given to grid infrastructure in the Commissioner's mission letter and given the critical role of grids for integrating affordable renewable energy and supporting electrification, a European Grids Package was announced as part of the Competitiveness Compass for the EU and the Clean Industrial Deal. The Action plan for affordable energy underlines that an efficient network is an enabler of the energy transition, helping everyone to benefit from energy at affordable and competitive prices. This requires the modernisation of the existing infrastructure to make it more efficient and an expansion of grids based on optimised network planning. In addition, the Action Plan for Affordable Energy sets out that the European Grid Package will include legislative proposals to accelerate permitting for grids, storage and renewables, including streamlining environmental assessments and reducing the time to issue permits.

Evaluation

The Trans-European Networks for Energy (TEN-E) Regulation[1] is the main act providing the legal framework for cross-border energy infrastructure and was fully evaluated in 2020. The revised TEN-E Regulation entered into

[1] Regulation (EU) 2022/869 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2022 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/869/oj.

force in 2022 and was fully aligned with the European Green Deal's objectives. The main changes concerned the inclusion of hydrogen infrastructure in its scope as well as a strengthened focus on offshore grids to facilitate achieving the offshore ambitions set out in the EU offshore renewable strategy. The TEN-E framework now also includes Projects of Mutual Interest (PMIs) with non-EU countries.

Since its entry into force, one EU list of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs) and PMIs[2] has been adopted. Therefore, an implementation report will assess in a proportionate way the performance of the specific provisions of the revised TEN-E Regulation instead of a full evaluation. The report will address the Regulation's effectiveness, efficiency, coherence (with other related initiatives, such as the Electrification Action Plan), EU added value and relevance (given the new political context to secure affordable, efficient and clean energy for all Europeans). The report will also focus on the outputs and, where possible, the results considering the short implementation timeframe since 2022. The main focus of the report will be on infrastructure planning, permitting, cost sharing and simplification. All Member States and relevant non-EU countries (in the case of PMIs) will be covered.

In 2023, the Commission reported to the Council on the emergency regulation (Council Regulation (EU) 2022/2577 of 22 December 2022) laying down the framework for accelerating the deployment of renewable energy.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

Despite the significant progress made on cross-border infrastructure projects since 2013, and considering the extended scope of the revised TEN-E framework, grids face the following key **problems**:

(i) a significant gap between grid expansion needs and current grid development projects prevents a decarbonised, affordable and secure energy system – at both the transmission and distribution grid level; for electricity, half of cross-border electricity needs (32 of 66 GW) are currently not addressed for 2030, and this gap is expected to increase to 37 GW by 2040[3];

(ii) implementation of renewable generation, storage and infrastructure projects, including innovative solutions, has been too slow (e.g. on average 14 years for transmission grid projects to meet the needs on the supply and demand side); re-dispatching costs are increasing significantly while distribution grids are congested, leading to increasing queues for connection requests;

(iii) and insufficient security of cross-border infrastructure.

Basis for EU action (legal basis and subsidiarity check)

Article 170 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) stipulates that the 'Union shall contribute to the establishment and development of trans-European networks', including in the area of energy infrastructure. In addition, the 'Union shall aim at promoting the interconnection … of national networks'. The TEN-E Regulation is based on Article 172 TFEU, which provides for the legal basis to adopt guidelines covering the objectives, priorities and broad lines of measures envisaged in the sphere of trans-European networks as set out in Article 171.

Article 194 TFEU stipulates that 'in the context of the establishment and functioning of the internal market and with regard for the need to preserve and improve the environment, Union policy on energy shall aim … to: (a) ensure the functioning of the energy market; (b) ensure security of energy supply in the Union; (c) promote energy efficiency and energy saving and the development of new and renewable forms of energy; and (d) promote the interconnection of energy networks.' At the same time, Article 192 TFEU provides the legal basis to decide on actions in line with EU policy on the environment.

Legal basis

Article 170, 171, 172, 192 and 194 TFEU

Practical need for EU action

[2] Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1041 of 28 November 2023 amending Regulation (EU) 2022/869 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the Union list of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest, http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2024/1041/oj.

[3] ACER(2024): Electricity infrastructure development to support a competitive and sustainable energy system, 2024 Monitoring Report.

Energy transmission infrastructure and, increasingly, electricity distribution grids have a trans-European or at least cross-border nature or impact. National regulation and planning is not sufficient as individual national administrations do not have the power to deal with cross-border infrastructure planning. Such planning would help integrate pan-EU clean energy sources as well as meeting electricity market needs, which would help the EU reach its energy and climate targets by 2030 and beyond.

More closely coordinating national and European planning is necessary due to the character of the EU's meshed network and to build a more efficient energy system. The internal network elements significantly influence the possibilities of cross-border infrastructure development, which in turn affects cross-border trade. A more integrated market can also better encourage the development and uptake of innovative technologies for transmission and distribution of energy as well as contribute to system flexibility and security of supply. This can result in a more efficient network and reduce the need for additional grid expansion and related costs.

Accelerated, coherent and simplified permitting procedures for renewable energy generation, infrastructure and storage reduces the time, cost and uncertainty of making the necessary investments. Streamlining permits and the intermediary steps, such as environmental assessments, is therefore instrumental to accelerating the EU's energy transition, in line with its energy and climate targets.

B. Objectives and policy options

If left unaddressed, the problems with sub-optimal and slow infrastructure development will persist. The negative impacts on the cost-efficiency of the energy transition can be expected to exacerbate, making it more difficult to accelerate the decarbonisation and electrification of the EU's energy system.

In this context, the European Grids Package aims to streamline the legal framework for European grids (e.g. Trans-European Networks for Energy (TEN-E)) and ensure the cross-border integrated planning and delivery of projects, especially on interconnectors. It seeks to strengthen distribution grid planning for better coordination across the different levels of network planning and contribute to the more efficient use of existing infrastructure in line with the 'energy efficiency first principle'. The latter includes strengthened digitalisation and innovation. The package will adopt a planning approach that better integrates regional and EU needs and interests, including across sectors, ensuring that the planning aligns with the EU and Member States' climate and energy objectives. It also aims to increase visibility of manufacturing supply needs, develop effective cost and benefit sharing mechanisms (e.g. projects that have a cross-border impact), and address energy infrastructure financing. The package will also help better protect critical cross-border energy infrastructure, building on the Grid Action Plan, and taking into account the impact of climate change.

Furthermore, the package will strive to accelerate project implementation for networks, renewables and storage through shorter permitting processes by streamlining and simplifying procedures. This includes streamlining environmental assessments, where appropriate, and shortening deadlines for permits, taking into account the provisions already included in Directive EU 2023/2413 (the revised Renewable Energy Directive) amending Directive EU 2018/1999.

Lastly, the package will look at supporting the development of hydrogen and carbon dioxide infrastructure and overcoming barriers to investment to facilitate the flow of renewable and low-carbon hydrogen within the European system. This will help the decarbonisation of hard-to-abate sectors and boost the competitiveness of European industry.

C. Likely impacts

The initiative is likely to have positive economic impacts, supporting accelerated investments in energy infrastructure, storage and renewable energy generation, boosting cross-border energy trade, improving grid efficiency, and reinforcing EU energy system security of supply. Increased overall system efficiency will limit costs to all consumers and therefore contribute to the objective of ensuring affordable energy prices and increasing overall competitiveness.

Coordinated grid development has proven to have a positive impact. In terms of environmental impacts, this initiative aims to support the faster integration of renewable and low-carbon energy sources, the electrification of demand and ultimately support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining high levels of environmental protection. In terms of social impacts, this initiative should positively impact energy affordability, job creation and energy security. In terms of simplification and administrative burden, the initiative is expected to simplify and reduce the administrative burden on permitting authorities, system operators related to EU-wide infrastructure planning, renewable and storage project developers and the PCI/PMI selection process. This initiative is not expected to have negative impacts on fundamental rights and equality.

D. Better Regulation instruments

Impact assessment and evaluation
An impact assessment and an evaluation (in the form of an implementation report) are being conducted in parallel to support the preparation of this initiative. The Commission will also collect evidence through external studies.
Consultation strategy
The Commission will publish this call for evidence and launch a public consultation on the Have Your Say portal. The consultation will seek feedback on the current implementation and impact of the EU regulatory framework for grids, including the permitting frameworks for grids, renewable energy generation and storage, and explore the need for action and possible solutions. In addition to this call for evidence and public consultation, the Commission will take into account external studies on network development planning. If necessary, an additional targeted consultation will be launched, for instance, to further explore specific policy options and impacts. The Commission will also consult expert groups (e.g. TEN-E regional groups or high-level groups, the platform of national authorities for permitting, the Copenhagen Infrastructure Forum, etc.). A factual summary report will be published on the consultation page eight weeks after the closure of the public consultation.
Why we are consulting?
The aim of this consultation is to collect in-depth and high-quality evidence, information, data and feedback on how the TEN-E Regulation and other relevant legal provisions have performed. It also aims to determine whether additional EU action is needed to achieve its objectives.
Target audience
All individuals and organisations are welcome to contribute to this call for evidence and reply to the public consultation. The following stakeholders are likely to be most interested in this initiative: (i) governments, including the national authorities in charge of energy infrastructure and permitting at all levels; (ii) transmission system operators and distribution system operators; (iii) project promoters of grid infrastructure project; (iv), energy producers and industry associations operating in the field of energy infrastructure; (v) the energy infrastructure industry, such as original equipment manufacturers; (vi) non-governmental associations; (vii) academia and think tanks; (viii) local governments; (ix) local communities; and (x) financial institutions (such as the European Investment Bank Group, international financial institutions and national promotional banks and institutions).