

Acceleration of permit-granting procedures

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The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Niels FUGLSANG (S&D, DK) on the 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.

The committee responsible recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the proposal as follows:

Digital portal

The report called on Member States to set up a **single digital portal** at national level for all the steps of the permit-granting procedures for renewable energy, storage, grid projects, and recharging stations and recharging pools, serving as a single-entry point for applicants and ensuring the coordinated handling of applications across all competent authorities. Member States should ensure that the single digital portal is interoperable with relevant administrative systems, including existing portals of system operators. Moreover, they should ensure that permit-granting procedures are **fully digital by default**, using structured and machine-readable data formats and interoperable systems.

Applicants should submit permit applications and all relevant documents required for the permit-granting procedure only through the single digital portal. Access to the single digital portal should be granted to competent authorities and relevant project developers. Access to information contained therein should be governed by applicable EU and national rules on public access to documents, ensuring the protection of commercially sensitive and other confidential information.

Timelines

The permit-granting procedure for the repowering of renewable energy power plants, for new installations with an electrical capacity of less than 300 kW and for co-located energy storage, as well as for the connection of such plants, installations and storage to the grid, located outside renewables acceleration areas should not exceed 6 months, including with regard to environmental assessments where required by the relevant law. However, in the case of offshore renewable energy projects, the permit-granting procedure should not exceed one year. Where duly justified on the ground of extraordinary circumstances, Member States may extend the **six-month period by up to three months and the one-year period for offshore renewable energy projects by up to six months**. Member States shall inform the project developer clearly of the extraordinary circumstances that justify such an extension.

Solar and wind power installations

Member States may, in justified circumstances, in particular to achieve the objectives of climate neutrality and renewable energy, **exempt** the refurbishment, modernisation and repowering of generators of solar and wind installations: (i) from an impact assessment on Natura 2000 sites and (ii) from the impact assessment on the protection of species.

Member States may not require any administrative permits, including on environmental aspects, with the exception of grid connection permits or agreements, for the installation of solar energy equipment and co-located energy storage with a total installed capacity of **200 kW** or less.

Heat pumps

In addition to renewable energy projects, including energy storage and recharging stations and recharging pools, and related grid infrastructure, heat pumps are of crucial importance to ensure European energy independence, the electrification of European industry and households and reaching the Union's energy and climate targets. Therefore, the report stated that permit-granting procedures for heat pumps should also be accelerated while ensuring technical compatibility and safety. To ensure efficiency of the process, Member States should also ensure that, in jurisdictions where the concept of tacit approval exists under national law, it is applied to requests for installations of heat pumps below 50 MW.

Lack of financial resources and staffing

Lack of financial resources and staffing in national authorities and the reduced digitalisation of permit-granting procedures results in delays in the permitting of electricity system infrastructure and generation assets. Member States should ensure that such authorities have adequate human financial and technical resources, including skills, and digital management tools and systems that enable them to render decisions within the deadlines provided in the Directive. To that end, Member States should make effective use of relevant Union funds.

Transparency

Transparency regarding the use of distribution network capacity is essential for identifying inefficiencies and unlocking additional connection capacity for generation and demand. Distribution system operators should be required to publish, at least once a year, information on reserved but unconnected injection and withdrawal capacity, on the actual use of connected distributed generation and energy storage facilities relative to their contracted capacity, and on the potential for making additional connection capacity available through more efficient use of the network. Where such information reveals significant potential for efficiency gains, the Member State concerned should adopt concrete measures to address the identified causes of inefficient use, following transparent consultation with all relevant system users.