



CEDEC Brief News—February 2021

EC presents: First roadmap for the revision of gas network rules

Highlight(s): CEDEC Report on Hydrogen – Challenge and opportunity for local energy companies

Council: agreement on negotiating mandate for “Cookie Law”

The European Clean Hydrogen Alliance opens for business

Spotlight on: the environmental impact of Covid-19

From our members: open for new stories!

Reading of the month

Ongoing consultations

Upcoming meetings & events

EC presents: First roadmap for the revision of the gas network rules

On the 10th of February, the European Commission unveiled the first piece of the gas regulatory framework review: the [roadmap/inception impact assessment](#) on the revision of the gas network rules on market access. In practice the Commission is informing about its plan to address decarbonisation of the gas grids and inviting stakeholders to comment on it. In the 8-page document the EC reiterates the ideas behind the Energy System Integration and the Hydrogen strategies, and lays down options to ensure a suitable market framework for the 55% GHG emissions reduction by 2030 and the climate neutrality by 2050. While it states that the reforms should enable fair competition between smart electrification, energy efficiency, renewable and low-carbon gases and CCUS technologies, direct electrification is assumed to be the most cost-effective and energy efficient way to decarbonise final energy demand, and – when this is not feasible – future *competitive decarbonised gas markets* will contribute to the overall energy system decarbonisation. Therefore, the initiative will aim at addressing four key issues: 1) support the emergence of *hydrogen infrastructure and hydrogen markets*; 2) facilitate access of local and decentralised production of *renewable and low-carbon gases to the infrastructure and the market*; 3) strengthening *consumer rights, competition, transparency and security of supply*; 4) fix the *lack of integrated energy markets, in particular through a more holistic and inclusive network planning*.

Stakeholders can provide feedback on this roadmap until 10 March 2021.

Highlight(s): CEDEC Report on Hydrogen—Challenge and opportunity for local energy companies

The CEDEC report on hydrogen and local energy companies is out, perfectly in time for the gas directive review! While the Hydrogen Strategy developed by the European Commission focuses exclusively on large-scale renewables projects directly connected with energy-intensive industry, at CEDEC we believe there is promising potential of generating and using hydrogen at local level, for heating, mobility and energy storage. The purpose of this paper is to gather our members knowledge and case studies to demonstrate that an integrated energy systems approach and fully exploiting the potential of hydrogen at local level, will be key elements for a cost- efficient transition to a decarbonized economy and society. Timely for the revision of the gas regulatory framework, this paper will form the basis for our communication with policy-makers and stakeholders. Read the full version [here!](#)



Council: agreement on negotiating mandate for “Cookie Law”

The saga on the ePrivacy rules or “Cookie law” in the Council has come to an end, after EU ambassadors agreed on a [negotiating mandate](#) for revised rules on the protection of privacy and confidentiality in the use of electronic communications services (cf. [Council press release](#)). After the EP adopted its [position](#) in October 2017, not long after the [EC proposal](#) was published in January 2017, it took the EU Member States four years to come to a final agreement. After many failed attempts by previous Council Presidencies, the Portuguese Presidency achieved to lift the blockage and strike a deal last Wednesday (10/2), paving the way for the negotiations with the EP.

The ePrivacy Regulation, also known as Cookie Law, as it mainly aims to define clearer rules on tracking technologies, also foresees strict conditions for the collection and processing of information stored in end-user’s terminal equipment, such as smart meters (Art. 8). Contrary to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the ePrivacy rules are not limited to personal

data, but also extend to non-personal data. Also, whereas the GDPR foresees justifications for data processing (i.e. where necessary for the performance of a contract), the Council mandate does not follow the same logic, creating legal uncertainty as well as a separate regime for terminal equipment information.

The current wording of Art. 8 can have serious negative impacts on the use of smart meters, hampering the collection of data needed for DSOs to perform their tasks as well as the uptake of innovative business models in the energy sector.

It is expected that negotiations will start as quickly as possible, but discussions might not be easy, as the rapporteur which will lead the discussions for the EP, Birgit Sippel (S&D, DE) already signaled that she is not ready to accept a race to the bottom undermining the current level of data protection and privacy.

Spotlight on: the environmental impact of Covid-19

From the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic many studies and articles have [highlighted](#) how the pandemic, and the resulting measures to fight it, impact the environment directly and the EU efforts to shift to a zero-carbon future. The positive side of it has been visible since the first months of the lockdown when wildlife took back the streets of less disturbed urban and rural areas, and skies of big cities were [cleared](#) of pollution. The contraction of the economy due to the pandemic-related crisis has led to an unprecedented [reduction](#) of GHG emissions in 2020 compared to 2019. Planet earth should not pop the champagne cork too soon though. The other side of the coin appears much more negative and carries more long-term effects. First of all, the boom of [single-use plastic](#) items (masks, gloves, hand sanitisers bottles, etc.) resulted in cheaper-fossil-fuels-based production and tons of impossible-to-dispose-sustainably waste. Secondly, [vaccines](#). While their cruciality to beat the virus cannot be derogated from, the side-effects on the environment cannot be denied either through the huge amount of medical waste, the freezers used to keep them cold and the transportation.

Hydrogen: the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance opens for business

In occasion of the publication of the New Industrial Strategy for Europe in March 2020, and the Hydrogen Strategy in July 2020, the European Commission has launched the [European Clean Hydrogen Alliance](#). Following the objective to foster the deployment of hydrogen technologies in the EU across the whole value chain, the Alliance provides a framework in which public authorities, industry and civil society collaborate in *developing an investment agenda and a pipeline of concrete projects*. Structured in 6 thematic roundtables – production, transmission and distribution, industrial applications, residential applications, mobility, and energy sector – the work of the Alliance kick started in the last weeks with the first meetings taking place both at “Sherpa” and CEOs level.

Calling for a balanced representation of DSOs, CEDEC has been accepted to become a member of the roundtable on “residential applications”, coordinated by the European Heating Industry association. Members of this roundtable will focus on heating and cooling applications connected to the gas distribution grids, decentralised applications such as CHP, district heating and cooling, therefore demonstrating the potential of hydrogen in buildings and at the distribution-level.



From our members: open for new stories!

If sharing good practices about your business’ innovative projects is among your good resolutions for the new year, this section is for you. Should you wish your project to be published in our next Brief News, don’t hesitate to inform us about what your company and/or association is doing. That might serve as inspiration to other CEDEC members and readers. To share your

Reading of the month

Jacques Delors Institute – [Europe needs a political strategy to end energy poverty](#)

Upcoming meetings & events

- CEDEC WG EU DSO Entity: 18 February 2021
- CEDEC TF Local Broadband: 22 February 2021

Ongoing consultations

[Public consultation on the review of the Broadband Cost Reduction Directive](#) – deadline 2 March 2021

[Public consultation on the review of the guidelines for the TEN-E guidelines](#) – deadline 8 March 2021

[Roadmap consultation on revision of gas networks rules on market access](#) – deadline 10 March 2021

[Public consultation on new rules on preventing methane leakage in the energy sector](#) – deadline 1 May 2021