BRIEF NEWS

November 2026

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Grids Package: co-legislators strike deal on permitting procedures

IIn the late hours of 17 November, the European Parliament and the Irish Council Presidency reached a provisional agreement on the **Permitting Directive**, closing the trilogues on this part of the Grids Package. The agreed text has not yet been published, so the elements below are based on the institutions' press releases and still need to be verified in detail.

Member States held their line on categorically refusing the Commission proposal on tacit approval: for administrative permitting steps it remains voluntary and covers only intermediate decisions, not final ones. The conclusion on tacit approval by DSOs for grid connection requests is yet to be confirmed – media reporting suggests it was dropped, but this needs verification from the agreed text. In exchange, Council moved on digitalisation (including a single national digital portal), thresholds and deadlines, including a three-month deadline for grid connection procedures, extendable to six if duly justified, with a derogation for small and isolated systems. Other key elements of the deal:

- distribution lines to be permitted within one year, extendable by one year;
- permitting deadlines: three months for solar equipment and co-located storage (excl. hydrogen), six months for stand-alone storage and recharging stations, two years for pumped hydro storage;
- permitting exemption threshold for small-scale solar, storage and recharging stations raised from 100 kW to 200 kW, and no permit required for recharging stations up to 1 MW on artificial structures;
- a mandatory single national digital portal or connected portals covering all permitting steps;
- mandatory benefit-sharing threshold lowered from 10 MW to 7 MW, with renewable energy communities exempt.

The permitting agreement now goes to the ITRE committee in the Parliament for a vote, followed by formal endorsement by the plenary and the Council.

On the **TEN-E revision**, co-legislators agreed on 10 November that the central scenario for infrastructure planning will be designed through an implementing act, leaving Member States in more control of the process. Scenarios will be updated every four years. A final TEN-E trilogue is expected on 1 December.

Spotlight on: European Commission 2027 work programme

The European Commission published its 2027 work programme on 4 November. For energy, the only new initiative listed is a post-2030 framework and simplification package, which the Commission says will "achieve simplification, while ensuring that the 2040 framework delivers on decarbonisation objectives", entailing revisions to the Renewable Energy Directive as well as the Energy Efficiency Directive. The package was initially expected in December, but the Commission now pushed its publication to Q1 2027.

To address high energy prices, the Commission also announces a postponement of certain Methane Regulation obligations as well as a review of the Temporary State Aid framework for the most exposed industrial sectors. On heating, it says it "will explore the possibility to introduce a clean heat market mechanism" to support heat pump deployment, albeit with no date attached, nor listed as an item in the annexes. A "Cooling and Heating Action Plan", as announced in the Electrification Action Plan from July this year, does not find any mention in the Programme.

Several files of direct relevance for CEDEC member companies remain priorities for agreement and formal adoption, including the European Grids Package, the proposal on future-proof electricity bills, the Public Procurement Act, ETS review and the Digital Networks Act.

Overview of relevant initiatives

New (Annex I)
- Post-2030 energy framework – legislative, Q1 2027

Pending files (Annex II)
- European Grids package – permitting and TEN-E revision
- Network charges and taxation – future-proofing electricity bills
- ETS review, including revised heat and fuel benchmarks for 2026–2030
- Public Procurement Act
- Digital Networks Act

Electricity bills: Member States seek to keep control over network charges

Member States are advancing quickly with negotiations on the legislative proposal on "future-proof electricity bills". In the third compromise text from 5 November, national experts have further pushed back on the Commission's proposal to design grid tariff methodologies at EU level. For the time being, the Irish Presidency has deleted the empowerment for the Commission to adopt a delegated act on methodology design.

Two further changes go in the same direction. Certain mandatory tariff design elements in the proposal become more flexible: capacity and time-of-use elements now apply only where they are relevant for the cost-effective operation of the system, and regulators must apply all design principles proportionately to operators, system users and network levels. As for the efficiency comparison of DSOs, the text limits benchmarking to DSOs with at least 100,000 connected customers; for smaller DSOs, regulators may work with a representative sample.

With several points still being discussed, the Council is expected to agree its position before the end of the year.

Digital Networks Act: Rapporteur Kobosko presents draft report in Parliament

On 10 November, Michał Kobosko (Renew), the MEP leading work on the Digital Networks Act, presented his draft report to the EU Parliament's ITRE Committee. The Act would replace today's EU telecom rules. The draft grants several long-standing wishes of telecom operators, such as longer licences to use mobile radio frequencies (at least 50 years instead of 40, renewed automatically). The file is a key priority for local broadband operators, including CEDEC member companies.

The other political groups have already reacted. Pilar del Castillo (EPP) supports longer licences but wants to go further in loosening the rules obliging large operators to give competitors access to their cables and ducts – rules she sees as designed thirty years ago for copper networks and former public monopolies. Matthias Ecke (S&D) warns that longer licences could "lock up" the mobile market, and asks for stronger safeguards and sovereignty criteria when frequencies are handed out. He also opposes requiring big online platforms to negotiate with network operators over how internet traffic is exchanged, arguing this market works well.

CEDEC rejects this plan, which could open the door to payments from platforms to network operators (so-called "fair share"), and asks to delete the related cooperation mechanism. Amendments are due on 20 November, with negotiations between the political groups to follow.

ETS review: deal on allowances for energy-intensive industries agreed, main negotiations enter final stretch

On 12 November, Parliament and Council provisionally agreed on the ETS "fallback" benchmarks, which set free allowances on the basis of an installation's heat or fuel consumption where no product-specific benchmark applies. The deal gives industry around 121 million extra free allowances for 2026–2030 and still needs formal adoption.

It covers only one part of the ETS, but signals where the much larger review is heading. The Commission had proposed that from 2031 companies keep their free allowances only if they invest in decarbonisation; both institutions now lean towards keeping free allocation and softening that condition. The Irish Presidency would exempt small installations, Germany wants until 2035 to comply, and rapporteur Peter Liese (EPP) would exempt early movers and apply the requirement to only part of their allowances. A third Council compromise is expected by end-November. The ENVI Committee votes on 1 December, and Member States aim to agree a position on 11 December.

COP31: EU ministers support (non-binding) global electrification target for 2035

At COP31 in Turkey, EU ministers formally backed the global goal of 35% electrification by 2035. Climate Commissioner Hoekstra called clean electrification "the way forward", but supported a technology-neutral wording. At the request of several Member States, the Commission confirmed that it creates no legal obligation for the EU and cannot be used to raise the EU's own ambition or influence the upcoming policy reviews.

Upcoming meetings and events

- CEDEC Board of Directors – 10/12, Berlin.
- Working Group Smart Grids – 19/01, 13:30-15:30: Focus on the outcomes of the negotiations of the Grids Package, updates on the proposal on future-proof electricity bills, grid connection procedures as well as updates on the Smart Energy Expert Group.

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