Commission Regulation (EU) 2016/631 of 14 April 2016 establishing a network code on requirements for grid connection of generators (Text with EEA relevance)

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EC) No 714/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 on conditions for access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1228/2003[(1)], and in particular Article 6(11) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) The swift completion of a fully functioning and interconnected internal energy market is crucial to maintaining security of energy supply, increasing competitiveness and ensuring that all consumers can purchase energy at affordable prices.

(2) Regulation (EC) No 714/2009 sets out non-discriminatory rules governing access to the network for cross-border exchanges in electricity with a view to ensuring the proper functioning of the internal market in electricity. In addition Article 5 of Directive 2009/72/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council[(2)] requires that Member States or, where Member States have so provided, regulatory authorities ensure, inter alia, that objective and non-discriminatory technical rules are developed which establish minimum technical design and operational requirements for the connection to the system. Where requirements constitute terms and conditions for connection to national networks, Article 37(6) of the same Directive requires regulatory authorities to be responsible for fixing or approving at least the methodologies used to calculate or establish them. In order to provide system security within the interconnected transmission system, it is essential to establish a common understanding of the requirements applicable to power-generating modules. Those requirements that contribute to maintaining, preserving and restoring system security in order to facilitate proper functioning of the internal electricity market within and between synchronous areas, and to achieve cost efficiencies, should be regarded as cross-border network issues and market integration issues.

(3) Harmonised rules for grid connection for power-generating modules should be set out in order to provide a clear legal framework for grid connections, facilitate Union-wide trade in electricity, ensure system security, facilitate the integration of renewable electricity sources, increase competition and allow more efficient use of the network and resources, for the benefit of consumers.

Changes to legislation: *Commission Regulation (EU) 2016/631 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 28 December 2020. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

(4) System security depends partly on the technical capabilities of power-generating modules. Therefore regular coordination at the level of the transmission and distribution networks and adequate performance of the equipment connected to the transmission and distribution networks with sufficient robustness to cope with disturbances and to help to prevent any major disruption or to facilitate restoration of the system after a collapse are fundamental prerequisites.

(5) Secure system operation is only possible if there is close cooperation between power-generating facility owners and system operators. In particular, the functioning of the system under abnormal operating conditions depends on the response of power-generating modules to deviations from the reference 1 per unit (pu) values of voltage and nominal frequency. In the context of system security, the networks and the power-generating modules should be considered as one entity from a system engineering point of view, given that those parts are interdependent. Therefore, as a prerequisite for grid connection, relevant technical requirements should be set for power-generating modules.

(6) Regulatory authorities should consider the reasonable costs effectively incurred by system operators in the implementation of this Regulation when fixing or approving transmission or distribution tariffs or their methodologies or when approving the terms and conditions for connection and access to national networks in accordance with Article 37(1) and (6) of Directive 2009/72/EC and with Article 14 of Regulation (EC) No 714/2009.

(7) Different synchronous electricity systems in the Union have different characteristics which need to be taken into account when setting the requirements for generators. It is therefore appropriate to consider regional specificities when establishing network connection rules as required by Article 8(6) of Regulation (EC) No 714/2009.

(8) In view of the need to provide regulatory certainty, the requirements of this Regulation should apply to new generating facilities but should not apply to existing generating modules and generating modules already at an advanced stage of planning but not yet completed unless the relevant regulatory authority or Member State decides otherwise based on evolution of system requirements and a full cost-benefit analysis, or where there has been substantial modernisation of those generating facilities.

(9) The significance of power-generating modules should be based on their size and their effect on the overall system. Synchronous machines should be classed on the machine size and include all the components of a generating facility that normally run indivisibly, such as separate alternators driven by the separate gas and steam turbines of a single combined-cycle gas turbine installation. For a facility including several such combined-cycle gas turbine installations, each should be assessed on its size, and not on the whole capacity of the facility. Non-synchronously connected power-generating units, where they are collected together to form an economic unit and where they have a single connection point should be assessed on their aggregated capacity.

(10) In view of the different voltage level at which generators are connected and their maximum generating capacity, this Regulation should make a distinction between

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different types of generators by establishing different levels of requirements. This Regulation does not set the rules to determine the voltage level of the connection point to which the power-generating module shall be connected.

(11) The requirements applicable to type A power-generating modules should be set at the basic level necessary to ensure capabilities of generation with limited automated response and minimal system operator control. They should ensure that there is no large-scale loss of generation over system operational ranges, thereby minimising critical events, and include requirements necessary for widespread intervention during system-critical events.

(12) The requirements applicable to type B power-generating modules should provide for a wider range of automated dynamic response with greater resilience to operational events, in order to ensure the use of this dynamic response, and a higher level of system operator control and information to utilise those capabilities. They ensure an automated response to mitigate the impact of, and maximise dynamic generation response to, system events.

(13) The requirements applicable to type C power-generating modules should provide for a refined, stable and highly controllable real-time dynamic response aiming to provide principle ancillary services to ensure security of supply. Those requirements should cover all system states with consequential detailed specification of interactions of requirements, functions, control and information to utilise those capabilities and ensure the real-time system response necessary to avoid, manage and respond to system events. Those requirements should also provide for sufficient capability of generating modules to respond to both intact and system disturbed situations, and should provide the information and control necessary to utilise generation in different situations.

(14) The requirements applicable to type D power-generating modules should be specific to higher voltage connected generation with an impact on control and operation of the entire system. They should ensure stable operation of the interconnected system, allowing the use of ancillary services from generation Europe-wide.

(15) The requirements should be based on the principles of non-discrimination and transparency as well as on the principle of optimisation between the highest overall efficiency and lowest total cost for all involved parties. Therefore those requirements should reflect the differences in the treatment of generation technologies with different inherent characteristics, and avoid unnecessary investments in some geographical areas in order to take into account their respective regional specificities. Transmission system operators ('TSOs') and distribution system operators ('DSOs') including closed distribution system operators ('CDSOs') can take those differences into account when defining the requirements in accordance with the provisions of this Regulation, whilst recognising that the thresholds which determine whether a system is a transmission system or a distribution system are established at the national level.

(16) Due to its cross-border impact, this Regulation should aim at the same frequency-related requirements for all voltage levels, at least within a synchronous area. That is necessary because, within a synchronous area, a change in frequency in one Member State would immediately impact frequency and could damage equipment in all other Member States.

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(17) To ensure system security, it should be possible for power-generating modules in each synchronous area of the interconnected system to remain connected to the system for specified frequency and voltage ranges.

(18) This Regulation should provide for ranges of parameters for national choices for fault-ride-through capability to maintain a proportionate approach reflecting varying system needs such as the level of renewable energy sources ('RES') and existing network protection schemes, both transmission and distribution. In view of the configuration of some networks, the upper limit for fault-ride-through requirements should be 250 milliseconds. However, given that the most common fault clearing time in Europe is currently 150 milliseconds it leaves scope for the entity, as designated by the Member State to approve the requirements of this Regulation, to verify that a longer requirement is necessary before approving it.

(19) When defining the pre-fault and post-fault conditions for the fault-ride-through capability, taking into account system characteristics such as network topology and generation mix, the relevant TSO should decide whether priority is given to pre-fault operating conditions of power-generating modules or to longer fault clearance times.

(20) Ensuring appropriate reconnection after an incidental disconnection due to a network disturbance is important to the functioning of the interconnected system. Proper network protection is essential for maintaining system stability and security, particularly in case of disturbances to the system. Protection schemes can prevent aggravation of disturbances and limit their consequences.

(21) Adequate information exchange between system operators and power-generating facility owners is a prerequisite for enabling system operators to maintain system stability and security. System operators need to have a continuous overview of the state of the system, which includes information on the operating conditions of power-generating modules, as well as the possibility to communicate with them in order to direct operational instructions.

(22) In emergency situations which could endanger system stability and security, system operators should have the possibility to instruct that the output of power-generating modules be adjusted in a way which allows system operators to meet their responsibilities for system security.

(23) Voltage ranges should be coordinated between interconnected systems because they are crucial to secure planning and operation of a power system within a synchronous area. Disconnections because of voltage disturbances have an impact on neighbouring systems. Failure to specify voltage ranges could lead to widespread uncertainty in planning and operation of the system with respect to operation beyond normal operating conditions.

(24) The reactive power capability needs depend on several factors including the degree of network meshing and the ratio of in-feed and consumption, which should be taken into account when establishing reactive power requirements. When regional system characteristics vary within a systems operator's area of responsibility, more than one profile could be appropriate. Reactive power production, known as lagging, at high

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voltages and reactive power consumption, known as leading, at low voltages might not be necessary. Reactive power requirements could put constraints on the design and operation of power-generating facilities. Therefore it is important that the capabilities actually required for efficient system operation be thoroughly assessed.

(25) Synchronous power-generating modules have an inherent capability to resist or slow down frequency deviations, a characteristic which many RES technologies do not have. Therefore countermeasures should be adopted, to avoid a larger rate of change of frequency during high RES production. Synthetic inertia could facilitate further expansion of RES, which do not naturally contribute to inertia.

(26) Appropriate and proportionate compliance testing should be introduced so that system operators can ensure operational security.

(27) The regulatory authorities, Member States and system operators should ensure that, in the process of developing and approving the requirements for network connection, they are harmonised to the extent possible, in order to ensure full market integration. Established technical standards should be taken into particular consideration in the development of connection requirements.

(28) A process for derogating from the rules should be set out in this Regulation to take into account local circumstances where exceptionally, for example, compliance with those rules could jeopardise the stability of the local network or where the safe operation of a power-generating module might require operating conditions that are not in line with the Regulation. In the case of particular combined heat and power plants, which bring wider efficiency benefits, applying the rules set out in this Regulation could result in disproportionate costs and lead to the loss of those efficiency benefits.

(29) Subject to approval by the relevant regulatory authority, or other authority where applicable in a Member State, system operators should be allowed to propose derogations for certain classes of power-generating modules.

(30) This Regulation has been adopted on the basis of Regulation (EC) No 714/2009 which it supplements and of which it forms an integral part. References to Regulation (EC) No 714/2009 in other legal acts should be understood as also referring to this Regulation.

(31) The measures provided for in this Regulation are in accordance with the opinion of the Committee referred to in Article 23(1) of Regulation (EC) No 714/2009

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION: