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Title - Future Role of Distribution Companies

Distribution System Operators (DSOs) are today in charge of maintaining the electricity system stable for the benefits of all customers. This task is more challenging now than in the past decades: renewable energy sources are being massively connected to distribution grids, consumers are installing solar panels on their roof, new market players are starting to sell flexibility services, smart meters are being rolled-out, and electric vehicles are starting to appear on the roads. All of these evolutions are impacting the way DSOs operate grids and will affect them in the years to come. To be smooth and painless for all consumers, this shift towards a decentralised energy system requires active cooperation and coordination between network operators. This cooperation should also be conducive to the development of new market players and new services, increasing consumer choice.

We need a new market design model where flexibility is possible and DSOs are able to procure services necessary to securely operate their networks; where DSOs manage the data and make it available to the market so that suppliers can offer new services to consumers; where DSOs can invest on innovative solutions and wear the risk.

EU policies so far have encouraged the development of decentralized electricity generation, electric vehicles, energy storage, flexible demand and the energy transition but has not yet foreseen to develop the system accordingly.