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Title – The Future Role of European DSOs

One of the main difficulties in establishing a European position within CEER on the future role of distribution service operators (DSOs) lies in the fact that conditions vary greatly across Member States in terms of the characteristics of distribution networks, sizes and numbers of DSOs, the activity profile of operators and tariff design. Most recently, a significant game changer has been the different levels of RES penetration connected to the distribution network in Member States. This, along with a general decrease in final electricity demand, will make the identification of an innovative regulatory framework all the more crucial. It must also be able to adequately balance the financial needs of all interested parties.

Among the objectives of CEER in its recent consultation paper¹ was to define a set of general principles that can be valid across Europe, while still recognizing that one size does not fit all. Furthermore, CEER proposed a flexible framework approach to guide decisions on how to determine if an activity is to be carried out by a DSO (regulated) or by a commercial actor (market).

The particular conditions of the Italian electricity sector, namely a full smart meter roll-out and a high penetration of RES, has placed the Italian regulator, AEEGSI, in the position to contemplate the future role of DSOs before the trend swept across Europe. AEEGSI is currently at an advanced stage in terms of “smart regulation” and is working towards an output based regime that should further promote large-scale smart grid implementation and the dissemination of advanced solutions for both grid operation and for end-users.

¹ CEER Ref: C14-DSO-09-03