

Fast and resilient permitting procedures

For small- and large-scale PV

Jan Osenberg, Head of System Integration, 14 March 2025

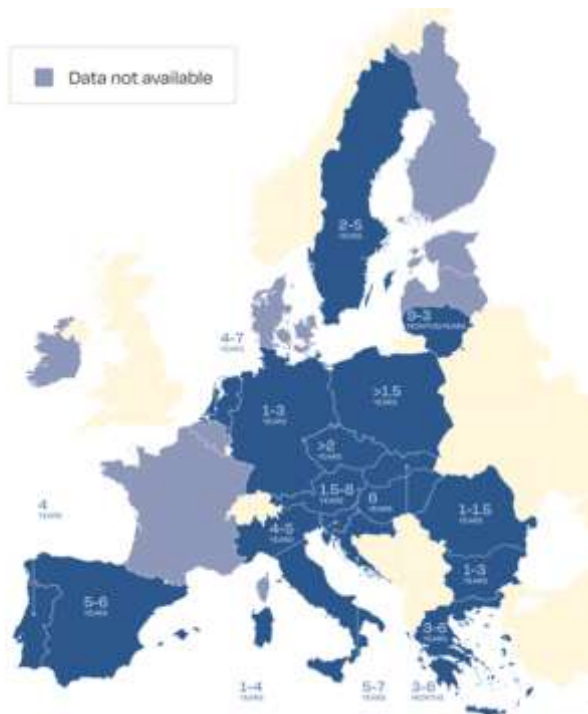


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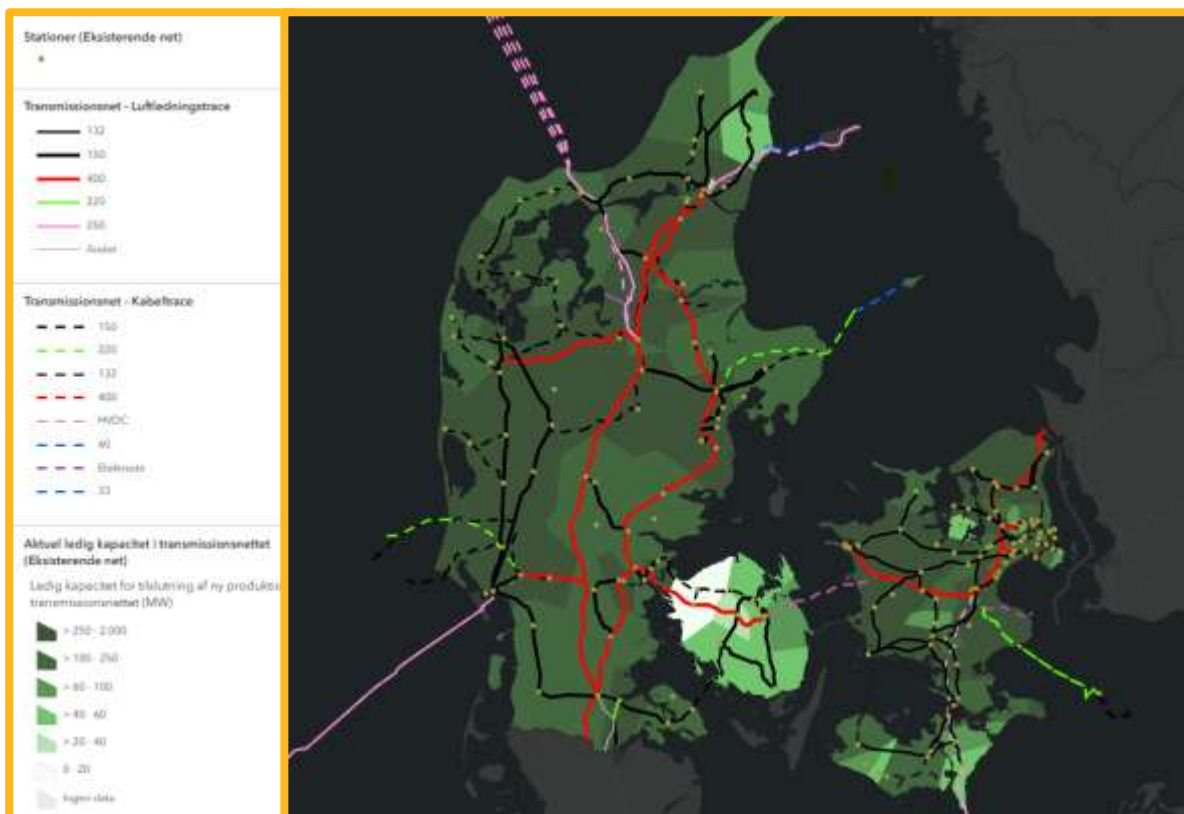
Newly added solar PV capacity growth has fallen dramatically, with a 92% decrease compared to previous years

EU-27 annual solar PV installed capacity 2016-2024



Permitting is key to re-accelerate PV deployment

- The EU's PV industry has developed 65.5 GW in 2024
- But growth dropped to 4% yoy, a 92% growth reduction.
- The entire permitting procedure, including grid connection, still takes too long
 - Four years on average, up to eight years, for ground-mounted PV.
 - 14 countries issue permits for rooftop PV below six months. However, it can still take up to one year.



Source: Green Power Denmark, Energinet

Before permitting: Grid hosting (capacity) maps

- Required under 2023 Electricity Market Design revision, Art. 31(3) and 50(4a)
- Grid maps enhance communication between users and operators, reducing misunderstandings and project queues.
- Required information
 - Transferable power capacity (A/MVA) at substations,
 - Grid congestion analysis and causes
 - Cartography of grid sections (overhead/underground) and substation locations
 - Project queues per substation, with digital grid connection requests (as mapped in the U.S.)
 - Planned capacity reinforcements and timelines (as practiced in Flanders, Belgium, and Denmark).
- Promising implementation in DK, BE, FR.

During permitting: Streamlined procedures → RED Art. 16

One-stop shops and digital permit applications:

- Portugal's EMER task force coordinates public authorities to accelerate applications to meet 2030 NECP targets.
- In Germany, EIA is part of the streamlined procedure.
- Belgium has a digital portal to submit all relevant documents.

Renewables Acceleration Areas (RAA):

- Must avoid: RAAs as exclusive areas for RES deployment (e.g. NL, FR).
- Need to exempt from EIAs in RAAs.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) guidelines:

- France has developed dedicated guidelines for EIAs for solar PV.

Positive silence where a response is lacking:

- Slovakia applies the positive silence for EIAs.
- Sweden applies it for grid-connection procedures for small-scale PV.

Deadlines:

- Lithuania enforces the two-year deadline for new installations and one year for repowering.
- Renewables in RAAs need accelerated procedures.

Government-led permitting task force:

- Portugal's EMER task force also has the mandate to review and improve permitting procedures.

The next frontier: Further opportunities for PV permitting

After permitting: Grid connections

- **Grid queue management:**
 - abolish first-come-first-serve principle.
 - Criteria to enter and remain on the queue.
 - Include criteria to avoid speculation.
- **Enforce the right to Flexible Connection Agreements** in areas with grid shortages.
- ✓ **Prioritisation of hybrid projects** in permitting and grid connection.

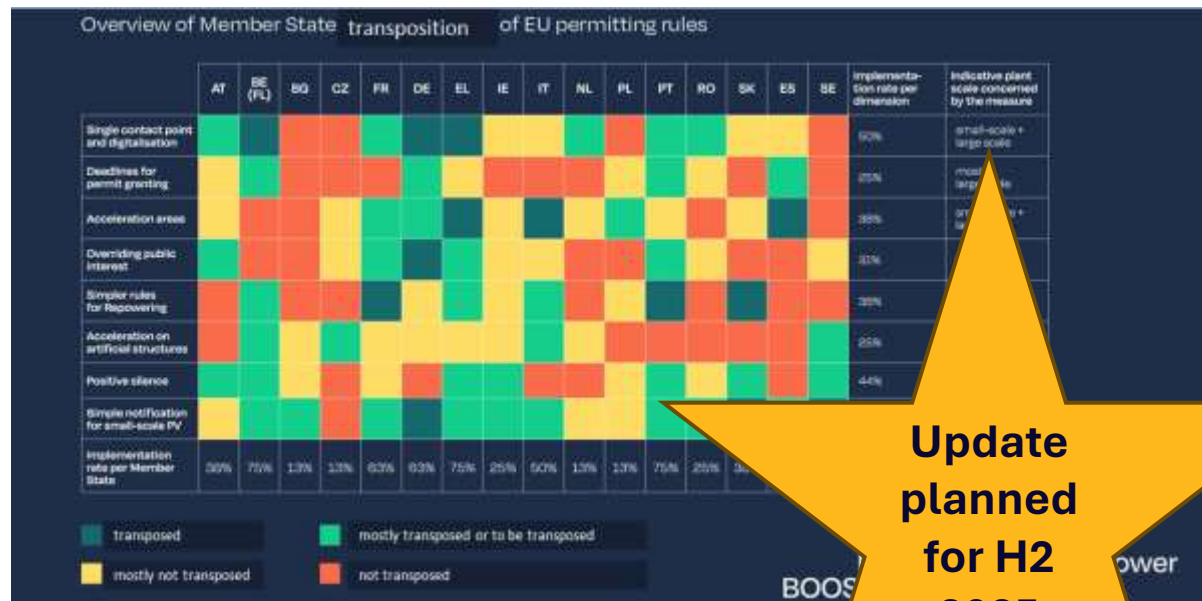
Beyond implementation

- Commission to ensure **harmonised implementation** of EU laws.
- **Harmonised requirements for Environmental Impact Assessments**
- **Positive silence and simple notification for large self-consumption systems** on artificial structures.
- ...

To know more...

Our 2023 briefing is available here:

<https://www.solarpowereurope.org/advocacy/position-papers/res-booster-stocktake>



Update
planned
for H2
2025

Permitting DOs and DON'Ts

In this section we highlight the best practice cases, showing the 'do's' that are already happening in EU Member States that can and should be replicated throughout the bloc. We also share a summary of the 'don'ts' that we see across Europe.

Single contact point and digitalisation

DOs

Do clearly define single contact point: In Austria, it was announced that the authority for the one-stop-shop will be the governor of the respective federal state. According to the draft Renewable Energy Accelerated Expansion Act (EABG), instead of several approvals by different authorities (and laws), one authority will administer the process.

Do include environmental impact assessment: In Germany, several new laws increase the digitalisation of permit processes. The spatial planning law stipulates that the process will be digitalised. The land-use law (currently discussed) also includes digitalisation. The permit-granting for PV-ground mounted lays in the hands of the local authority, including the environmental impact assessment.

Do establish a digital portal for projects: In Belgium, the Flemish region launched a portal that allows any type of RES permit to be submitted, as well as all necessary documents for the approval, such as impact assessments. The creation of this IT tool plays an important role in favour of concentrating all bureaucratic activities, and investors benefit of a simplification of permitting procedures.

DON'Ts

Don't separate administrative authorisation, environmental assessment, and grid connection permit: While it is beneficial to digitalise every single part of the permitting procedure, it is equally critical to ensure interoperability between the different parts of the permitting process. In some cases, all authorisations still need to be sent via email to the official entity responsible for energy, while the environmental permitting procedure has its own electronic platform. This can be done through a dedicated platform integrating all the procedures necessary for the renewable energy projects.



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