



2024/3223

20.12.2024

COMMISSION DECISION (EU) 2024/3223

of 19 December 2024

designating the European Coordinator for the Baltic synchronisation project of common interest and laying down the detailed arrangements for the performance of their mission and tasks

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2022/869 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2022 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure, amending Regulations (EC) No 715/2009, (EU) 2019/942 and (EU) 2019/943 and Directives 2009/73/EC and (EU) 2019/944, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 347/2013⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 6(1) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania remain the last Member States synchronised with networks of third countries, i.e. Russia (including Kaliningrad) and Belarus. Their synchronisation with the EU networks is one of the most urgent priorities for the Union, notably in the current geopolitical context, and has already received political, technical and financial support for the past 12 years.
- (2) The Baltic synchronisation project is a project of common interest (PCI) on the Union list of PCIs and projects of mutual interest (PMIs) in line with Regulation (EU) 2022/869. The investments related to the project feature in cluster 3.3: 'Integration and synchronisation of the Baltic States' electricity system with the European networks'.
- (3) The target date for the completion of the Baltic synchronisation (February 2025) is approaching and the next months will be crucial for the success of the project and the security of electricity supply of the Baltic States. In this respect, the project is at a very critical stage in its implementation as this depends on the close alignment between the four Member States and four transmission system operators. Moreover, continuous close coordination and steer will also be required after February 2025 until all necessary investments in the Baltic States are complete. A series of infrastructure investments necessary for ensuring the safe operation of the Baltic States' systems and trade in the region will be completed only in the period following the synchronisation up to 2030 (the Harmony Link Interconnector, battery system in Latvia, upgrades on the interconnectors with Sweden and Finland). These projects have so far encountered significant delays due to inflation and supply chain issues and require very close follow-up and coordination especially in the preparatory phase, before construction works, so that their development is set on track. In particular, for the Harmony Link Interconnector between Lithuania and Poland, close coordination is necessary to ensure the adequate routing for the project is established and that permitting is well on track in both Member States.
- (4) Pursuant to Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2022/869, the Commission may designate, in agreement with the Member States concerned, European coordinators for projects of common interest for a period of up to one year, renewable twice, if the respective projects require it. In order to ensure that the Commission can provide the necessary support to the Member States and project promoters concerned, it is necessary to appoint a dedicated European coordinator for the Baltic synchronisation project, who can closely monitor the last phase of implementation as well as the progress on the remaining infrastructure investments, provide advice and facilitate any measures that need to be taken by the stakeholders, and report back to the Commission on the relevant progress.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 152, 3.6.2022, p. 45, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/869/oj>.

- (5) The Coordinator should be appointed for a mandate of one year in line with Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2022/869. The decision to renew or not the mandate should be taken in agreement with the Member States concerned in view of the needs of the project at that time. The Coordinator should take into account the project coordination through Baltic Energy Market Interconnexion Plan ('BEMIP') and the context of all the other activities followed-up in BEMIP.
- (6) In order to develop his/her tasks, the European Coordinator should be granted a monthly flat-rate allowance to cover the secretarial expenses that cannot be delivered directly by the Commission services and be reimbursed for mission expenses in accordance with the Vademecum on specific working rules for the European coordinator annexed to this decision.
- (7) Based on the Article 6(3) of the Regulation (EU) 2022/869, the selection procedure was run with an open call for expression of interest for one month between 19 August and 19 September 2024. On the basis of her experience with regard to the specific tasks assigned to the European Coordinator for the Baltic synchronisation project of common interest, the selected applicant is Ms Catharina Sikow-Magny.
- (8) In accordance with Article 6(1) of Regulation (EU) 2022/869, the Member States relevant for the Baltic synchronisation, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, have been consulted on the results of the selection procedure and the mandate for the European Coordinator. The Member States concerned have expressed their agreement to the designation of the European Coordinator in October 2024.
- (9) The designation is urgent given the timing of the project. For this reason, the decision should enter into force on the day following its publication,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Ms Catharina Sikow-Magny is designated as European Coordinator for the projects of common interest pertaining to cluster 3.3 on the Union list of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest, the 'Integration and synchronisation of the Baltic States' electricity system with the European networks'.

Article 2

- (1) The mandate of the European Coordinator shall start on the date of the entry into force of this Decision and shall end one year after that date.
- (2) The mandate of the European Coordinator may be renewed twice if necessary. The European Coordinator may, at any time, request the Commission to terminate her mandate.

Article 3

Annex I lays down the detailed arrangements for the performance of the European Coordinator's missions and tasks.

Annex II lays down the Vademecum on specific working rules for the European Coordinator and describes the procedure to be followed for all missions carried out in the context of the European Coordinator activities.

Article 4

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 19 December 2024.

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN

ANNEX 1

Terms of Reference**TEN-E Regulation - TEN-E Coordinator for the Baltic synchronisation project****Introduction**

The European Coordinator for the Baltic synchronisation project (hereinafter referred to as 'the Coordinator') is appointed by the European Commission in accordance with Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2022/869 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure (TEN-E Regulation). The Coordinator will be responsible for facilitating the implementation of the Baltic synchronisation project, which is a Project of Common Interest (PCI) under the TEN-E Regulation, under the auspices of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan High-Level Group (BEMIP) chaired by the Commission.

Duration of the Mandate

The Coordinator will be appointed for an initial period of one year, renewable twice, subject to satisfactory performance and the needs of the project. The European Commission reserves the right to withdraw the appointment of the selected Coordinator, at any moment, in case of inactivity, insufficient or low-quality contribution to the Baltic synchronisation project or when the Coordinator no longer fulfils any of the selection requirements.

Specific Tasks and Corresponding Deadlines

The Coordinator's mission is linked to the successful and timely implementation of all tasks, actions and investments related to the Baltic synchronisation as a PCI under the TEN-E Regulation under the auspices of BEMIP in line with the deadlines and the implementation plan of the project. The Coordinator will provide the required critical expertise and close follow-up needed for the timely and orderly completion of the project and of the remaining related investments until all infrastructure and equipment linked to the synchronisation project are in place.

The Coordinator should closely monitor the last phase of implementation as well as the progress on the remaining infrastructure investments, provide advice and facilitate any measures that need to be taken by the stakeholders, and report back to the Commission and the Member States on the relevant progress. They will facilitate cooperation between the Member States concerned, project promoters, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure the timely and successful implementation of the project. The Coordinator will take a proactive approach and contribute actively, alongside the European Commission and the Member States concerned, to the achievement of any tasks and duties required for the project including participation in working groups, meetings or workshops. The Coordinator will call and organise such meetings together with the Commission if they consider them necessary for the implementation of their mandate. The Coordinator will take into account the project coordination in the context of BEMIP and of all the other activities followed-up in BEMIP. It will work closely with the relevant Member States, all relevant stakeholders, in particular, the project promoters and with the Commission services. The work of the European Coordinator will be conducted in English.

In particular, the Coordinator will ensure that the Commission can provide the necessary support to the Member States and project promoters concerned by implementing the tasks provided in Article 6 paragraph 2 of the TEN-E Regulation:

- they will promote the Baltic synchronisation project and the cross-border dialogue between the project promoters and all stakeholders concerned;
- they will assist all parties as necessary and requested in their actions of consulting the stakeholders concerned, discussing alternative routing, where appropriate, and obtaining necessary permits for the projects;
- they will, where appropriate, advise project promoters on the financing of the project;
- they will ensure that appropriate support and strategic direction by the Member States concerned are provided for the preparation and implementation of the project and they will facilitate the common understanding and information exchange towards acting in agreement and in a cohesive and coherent manner by all entities relevant for the project;

- they will submit every year, and, where appropriate, upon completion of their mandate, a report to the Commission and the BEMIP electricity regional group on the progress of the Baltic synchronisation project and on any difficulties and obstacles which are likely to significantly delay the commissioning date of the relevant investments or the achievement of relevant actions. The report will be forwarded to the European Parliament.

The Coordinator will be carrying out all necessary missions to the relevant sites linked to the implementation of the project or where meetings related to the project are held.

The coordination effort shall be proportionate to the complexity and estimated costs of the projects.

Methodology to be Followed

The Coordinator will work in close cooperation with the Commission, particularly the Directorate-General for Energy, the Member States concerned, project promoters, and other relevant stakeholders. The Coordinator will also take into account the project coordination by way of BEMIP and the context of all the other activities followed-up in BEMIP.

Secretarial assistance and Reimbursement of mission expenses

The Coordinator will be granted a monthly flat-rate amount of EUR 3 000 to cover the costs related to secretarial assistance where it is not directly provided by the Commission services (communication, miscellaneous office furniture, office space, secretariat), and travel-mission representational related expenses in accordance with the Commission rules. The annual mission budget is EUR 15 000. Detailed rules on reimbursement for missions will be recalled in a separate document ('Vademecum').

Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

The Coordinator shall not use or divulge any document or information which comes to their knowledge in the course of their duties, unless such information is already in the public domain. The Coordinator shall also avoid any situation giving rise to a conflict of interest regarding the areas in which they are requested to intervene.

Acceptance of the Terms of Reference

By accepting this mandate, the Coordinator acknowledges that they have read, understood, and accepted the terms of reference and the conditions set out in this document.

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ANNEX 2

Vademecum on specific working rules for the European coordinator**Organisation of missions**

This document describes the procedure to be followed for all missions carried out in the context of the European Coordinator (hereinafter Coordinator) activities.

Coordinator's contact point in the Commission will be DG ENER Unit C4 (Infrastructure and Regional Cooperation). Its staff will assist with the organisation of the missions and, when necessary, accompany the Coordinator.

Preparation of the mission**Mission order**

Missions of the Coordinator must be encoded in the corporate tool MIPS+ (Missions integrated processing system) and should follow the general rules set in the *'Guide to missions and authorised travel' accompanying the Commission Decision on the general provisions for implementing Articles 11, 12 and 13 of Annex VII to the Staff Regulations of Officials (mission expenses) and on authorised travel*.

Missions are considered valid only if approved by the Director of DG ENER C (authorising officer). The mission request should include the date and timing of the mission, the destination and the purpose.

Booking of transportation means

On the basis of the approved mission order, travel means can be booked via the official travel agency with the help of DG ENER Unit C4 or by the Coordinator personally. In the latter case the Coordinator will share the tickets and receipts with a clearly indicated price with DG ENER Unit C4. DG ENER C4 will encode the travel arrangements in MIPS+.

The Coordinator is allowed to request flexible tickets if there is an appreciable risk that the mission will be cancelled or amended.

Reimbursement of hotel expenses

The Coordinator may choose the accommodation, taking into account the ceilings for the reimbursement of accommodation expenses. Accommodation costs will be reimbursed, on presentation of the invoice, up to the ceiling for the place of the mission or, if authorisation to exceed the ceiling has been granted by the authorising officer, the full amount of the invoice will be reimbursed.

The cost of extra nights in case of travel combined with holidays will not be covered.

Taxi expenses

Transfers by taxi may be authorised by the authorising officer if public transport is not an appropriate alternative. The costs will be reimbursed on presentation of supporting documents.

Taxi trips should take place within the timing indicated in the mission order.

Conflict of interests

Any situation giving rise to a conflict of interest regarding the areas in which the Coordinator is requested to intervene shall be avoided. The Coordinator shall inform the Commission of any conflict of interest arising during the term of office immediately.

Furthermore, the Coordinator shall not use or disclose any document or information which comes to their knowledge in the course of the duties, unless such information is already in the public domain. All the results produced by the Coordinator shall be the property of the Union, which may use them or publish them as it sees fit.

Missions cannot be paid by the organisers of an event. This applies also to missions offered by Member States. Travel/mission arrangements will be covered by the European Commission.

To make best use of the mission budget, if possible, meetings or visits should be grouped to reduce their number, targeted and optimised.

Greener modes of transport should be prioritised for the missions. Any offer of gifts in connection with the performance of the Coordinator's duties should be declined unless it is of symbolic value and not exceeding EUR 50. The Coordinator shall be bound by the Commission guide to missions as reference in the Commission decision for their appointment.

After the mission

Mission report

The Coordinator must provide a mission report. If the Coordinator is accompanied by a representative of DG ENER Unit C4, the Coordinator is allowed to draw on support from the Representative for providing the report. The mission report will be transmitted to the Director of DG ENER C for information and attached to the reimbursement request of expenses. These documents may at a certain stage be requested by the European Parliament or the European Court of Auditors to assess the justification of the expenses.

Date:

Name, surname:

Signature:
