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Due to numerous enquiries to the FAS Russia' Community Liaison Office regarding technical connection to electric networks, FAS published information, including links to the documents which explains specifics of technical connection for different categories of consumers.

The issues of technological connections are given priority in the work of the antimonopoly authority. Such approach does not depend only on considerable number of complaints against actions of electric network companies and numerous antimonopoly cases- importance of regulating legal relations in the field of technological connection is primarily determined by its infrastructure status. Timely setting and compliance with the standards for technological connection determine such essential aspects as energy supply, producers' entry to the market and ultimately whether the population has modern, comfortable living conditions Development of the national economy depends on priority development of the infrastructure, of which electric networks are important element.

The Government of the Russian Federation is undertaking the necessary measures to stimulate priority development of electric network infrastructure by setting economically justified tariffs and energy transmission and the fee for technological connection to electric networks. It has created the necessary conditions for implementing investments programs aimed at developing electric network facilities with simultaneously established discounted fees and payment conditions for general public and small and medium business.

As part of its efforts towards optimizing legal norms for electric power industry, FAS drafted two documents on amendments to the Rules on technical connection of energy-receiving devices of consumers of electric energy, energy generation facilities and electric network facilities owned by network organizations and other persons, to electric networks, approved by No.861 Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of 27th December 2004 (further on referred as the Rules for technological connection). The objective of the Rules is to reduce the rate of violations related to technological connection. Drafted by FAS Russia Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation "On Introducing Amendments to Some Acts of the Government of the Russian Federation on the Issues of Improving the Procedures for Technological Connections of Consumers to Electric Networks" resolves a number of problems consumers have to face arranging technological connections of their facilities.

Principal provisions of the draft Decree include direct norms that:

- 1) a network organization must forward the draft contract to a consumer accompanied by technical conditions that constitute an integral part of the contract for technological connection;
- 2) the fee for custom-tailored technological connection (typically for connecting large consumers and energy generators) should be approved by the tariff regulating body, including the breakdown of the costs of operations for technological connection). The consumer can choose which operations can be completed independently (the consumer also has the right to independently perform all operations). In this case, the fee for technological connection should be reduced in accord with the sums approved by the tariff regulator.

- 3) the Decree sets the statutory periods for the regulator to approve the size of the fee;
- 4) the Decree clearly distinguishes responsibilities of consumers and network companies to perform operations for technological connection;
- 5) the Decree provides for specific features of technological connection of large producers of electric energy: it introduces the concept of the scheme of power distribution, which should be included in the application for technological connection. It considerably reduces the period required to perform technological connection and simplifies the procedures for both large consumers and network companies.

FAS Russia also developed a standard contract for technological connection to electric network as an appendix to the Rules for technological connection. Introduction of the standard contract will eliminate disagreements related to conditions of contract for technological connection between electric network companies and consumers of their services.

FAS Russia has also placed on its website several guidance materials for technological connection; in particular, regarding specific issues on the procedures for technological connection to electric networks, determination of the period of technological connection, and the reference book for entrepreneurs on technological connection to electric networks. The reference book includes examples to explain the key provisions of the normative legal acts on technological connection, describes the procedures and the consequence of steps to file the applications for technological connection, analyses typical violations and explains what consumers can do to overcome them.

FAS Russia created and launched a mailbox prisoedinenie@fas.gov.ru for forwarding information about violations in the field of technological connection. Information sent to the above e-mail is not an official petition to FAS Russia regarding antimonopoly violations.

"In 2009 the antimonopoly bodies initiated 205 cases upon the facts of antimonopoly violations in the field of technological connection, made 129 decisions on recognizing violations and issued 95 determinations. Methodical efforts to improve legal norms on technological connections and increased enforcement should affect the number of violations, which in 2010-2011 should start going down. Today we pay much attention to increasing awareness through the work of FAS Russia's Community Liaison Office, and intensify competition advocacy in this area through workshops, conferences and publications in the press", said the Head of the FAS Russia's Department for Control over Electric Power Industry Vitaly Korolyov.