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VDE FNN Calls for Greater Powers for Grid Operators to Protect the Power Grid

The Network Technology and Operation Forum within VDE (VDE FNN) warns that the threat to Germany's power grid has intensified. At the same time, the power supply remains one of the most reliable in the world, as shown by the latest figures on power outage duration. VDE FNN has addressed three specific demands to policymakers.

(Frankfurt am Main/Berlin, November 13, 2026) Despite an increased threat level, Germany's power supply remains at a top-tier level. VDE FNN announced today that the average power outage duration in 2025 was just 10.5 minutes per customer, even amid increasing demands resulting from the ongoing energy transition (in German). In 2024, it was still 12.9 minutes. To ensure the resilience of the power grids in the future, VDE FNN is calling for three policy measures.

Dr. Joachim Kabs, Chairman of the Executive Board of VDE FNN: "The risks to the power grid have changed. Therefore, we must constantly reassess resilience and adapt our mindset, as well as our preparedness and resources. At the same time, it is clear that there is no such thing as 100 percent security. The power grid is an infrastructure spread across the entire country and can therefore never be fully protected against all risks. What is crucial, rather, is to be prepared for crises and to be able to act quickly and effectively in an emergency."

Collaboration and Decentralized Structures as the Key to Supply Security

A resilient power grid must remain functional even under exceptional stress, quickly overcome disruptions, and adapt in the long term to technical, climatic, and societal changes. Dr. Dirk Biermann, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board at VDE FNN, explains what matters most in this regard: "It is important to recognize that ensuring resilience is not a task that individual players in the power grid community can tackle on their own. It can only be achieved through

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close cooperation and mutual support. Germany already has a decisive advantage in this regard: its decentralized structure, with around 900 grid operators, strengthens the resilience of the overall system and enables a flexible response even in crisis situations."

VDE FNN's three demands are therefore as follows:

1. **Design disclosure requirements to ensure security**

In the past, the federal and state governments have significantly expanded disclosure requirements for grid operators. However, the abundance of publicly available information makes it too easy for potential attackers. Existing transparency requirements must be adapted to prioritize the protection of critical infrastructure.

2. **Enable the monitoring of facilities**

Data protection regulations prohibit video surveillance in the immediate vicinity of power facilities. Aviation regulations, in turn, make it difficult to use remote-controlled drones for surveillance. These requirements must be adjusted so that grid operators, as operators of critical infrastructure, can identify threats early and work with security authorities to counter them.

3. **Accelerate recovery**

In emergencies, there is no time for lengthy approval processes. Appropriate legal regulations are needed to provide all parties involved with certainty regarding the rapid construction and commissioning of temporary solutions. Key issues include property rights, rights of way, and building and operating permits.

Active consumers strengthen the power grid

As part of the energy transition and ongoing electrification, millions of households can also make an important contribution to the resilience of the power system. Ingo Schönberg, Deputy Chairman of the Executive Board at VDE FNN, says that to achieve this, it is necessary to further accelerate the rollout of smart meters: "End consumers now play an active role in the energy system: They feed electricity into the grid, support load management with storage systems, and can help relieve strain on the grids during peak times by, for example, charging their electric vehicles intelligently. To unlock this potential for flexibility among end customers, the smart meter rollout must scale up. Interoperability and cybersecurity form the foundation for participation. In light of the growing threat landscape, the high level of security for critical energy infrastructures must be consistently strengthened—particularly in the context of digitalization and the necessary networking of these decentralized systems."

About VDE FNN:

The Network Technology and Operation Forum within VDE (VDE FNN) develops the electricity grids with foresight. The aim is to ensure reliable system operation at all times with 100 percent renewable energies. VDE FNN makes innovative technologies practicable and provides answers to the grid technology challenges of tomorrow. Here, various specialist groups with different interests work together on solutions. Its members are over 500 manufacturers, grid operators, suppliers, system operators, authorities, and scientific institutions.

For more information, visit www.vde.com/fnn

About VDE:

VDE, one of the largest technology organizations in Europe, has been regarded as a synonym for innovation and technological progress for more than 130 years. VDE is the only organization in the world that combines science, standardization, testing, certification, and application consulting under one umbrella. The VDE mark has been synonymous with the highest safety standards and consumer protection for more than 100 years.

Our passion is the advancement of technology, the next generation of engineers and technologists, and lifelong learning and career development “on the job”. Within the VDE network more than 2,000 employees at over 60 locations worldwide, more than 100,000 honorary experts, and around 1,500 companies are dedicated to ensuring a future worth living: networked, digital, electrical. Shaping the e-dialistic future.

The VDE (VDE Association for Electrical, Electronic & Information Technologies) is headquartered in Frankfurt am Main. For more information, visit www.vde.com

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