



Elia and Amprion launch ALEGrO, the first interconnector between Belgium and Germany

- Commercial operation is scheduled to start on 18 November 2020 (day-ahead market)
- ALEGrO will enhance both countries' security of supply and contribute to the integration of renewables

On Monday 9 November, system operators Elia and Amprion inaugurated the first electricity interconnector between Belgium and Germany. The livestreamed event took place in the City Hall of Aachen and was attended, either in person or digitally, by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, North Rhine-Westphalia Minister-President Armin Laschet and Belgian Energy Minister Tinne Van der Straeten. The ALEGrO interconnector will make it possible for the two countries to exchange 1,000 MW (1 GW) of additional electricity. Commercial operation is scheduled to start on 18 November (day-ahead) and 8 December (intraday).

ALEGrO interconnector

ALEGrO connects the grids operated by electricity transmission operators Elia (Belgium) and Amprion (Germany) and is a key link in the construction of an integrated European electricity system. The connection will have a transmission capacity of 1,000 MW, equivalent to the amount consumed by a city of one million inhabitants. The interconnector delivers multiple benefits: it enhances security of supply for both countries, it facilitates the energy transition by allowing better integration of renewable energies, it contributes to price convergence and it makes the connected regions more economically attractive.

90 km of lines and two converter stations

90 km of HVDC power lines connect the Lixhe (Belgium) and Oberzier (Germany) converter stations. These two stations will convert the direct current (DC) used for the interconnector line into alternating current (AC), which is used in 98% of the Belgian grid. Direct current enables the transmission of large volumes of electricity in either direction over long distances.

10-year collaboration

Despite the current COVID-19 pandemic, the original schedule was maintained. The project was completed on time thanks to the remarkable work carried out by both system operators working in close collaboration with the Belgian and German authorities and local and regional administrations. As a result, ALEGrO will begin commercial operation later this year. Since the HVDC interconnector will be integrated into the AC meshed network, capacity for commercial operation will be released in phases. Initial capacity will be made available to the market via the day-ahead allocation mechanism on 18 November, followed by intra-day on 8 December, and finally, by long-term capacity in early 2021.



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The success of the energy transition depends very much on the rapid expansion of networks. The new electricity connection between Belgium and Germany is not only important for our two countries, but also for electricity trading and system security across Europe as a whole. Therefore, today is also a good day for the internal energy market.

Angela Merkel, German Chancellor

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ALEGrO is a key facilitator of sustainable energy. As you all know, Germany and Belgium have made the same strategic choices in terms of energy production, namely moving away from nuclear and fully embracing climate-neutral energy sources. ALEGrO is the embodiment on the ground of the link between these two strategies and will allow for a better distribution of wind energy in both on- and off-peak periods. This is especially significant here because this is a connection between our country and one of Germany's leading producers of wind energy, North Rhine-Westphalia.

Alexander De Croo, Belgian Prime Minister

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The fast and smooth implementation of ALEGrO demonstrates the strengths of European cooperation. With this connection we are strengthening our cooperation within the European internal electricity market and we and our Belgian neighbours and friends can support each other in restructuring the energy system with a view to the energy transition.

Armin Laschet, Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia

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We welcome this project as it prepares us for the future – a future that will be shaped by new opportunities and new ways of looking at our societies: a post-COVID period in which, with the aid of the European Green Deal, Europe will become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. The ALEGrO project is an important step in developing a common future for our countries. An ambitious climate policy goes hand in hand with the transition towards a sustainable energy system, moving away from nuclear energy and fully embracing climate-neutral energy sources. By designing our energy policy we shape and create our common future.

Tinne Van der Straeten, Belgian Federal Minister of Energy



About the Elia Group

One of Europe's top five players

The Elia Group is active in electricity transmission, ensuring that generation and consumption are balanced at all times. We supply 30 million end users with electricity and manage 19,271 km of HV lines via our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and north-east Germany (50Hertz). As such, our Group is one of Europe's top five system operators. With a reliability level of 99.9%, we give society a robust power grid, which is important for -socio-economic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition towards a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We make the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and integrating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy, the Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. The Elia Group is also innovating its operational systems and developing market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid. In this way, the Elia Group is making the energy transition happen.

In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, the Elia Group is committed to working in the interests of society. We are constantly adapting our transmission grid to the rapidly changing energy mix, incorporating ever more renewable energy. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget and guarantee maximum safety. When we carry out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication with all affected parties from the outset. We also offer our expertise to our sector and relevant authorities to help build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, the Elia Group provides various consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia is also a member of the Nemo Link consortium, which operates the first subsea electricity interconnector between Belgium and Great Britain. Elia Group is a listed company whose core shareholder is Publi-T, a municipal holding company.

For more information, visit [elia.be](https://www.elia.be)

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