

PRESS RELEASE | 12 February 2021

Elia and Energinet launch feasibility study for hybrid interconnector between Belgium and Denmark

- Joint report on economic and technical feasibility will be ready by the end of 2021
- Hybrid interconnectors are the next step in greening the Belgian electricity system
- North Sea will be crucial link in our energy supply on the path towards a climate-neutral society

BRUSSELS - COPENHAGEN | System operators Elia (Belgium) and Energinet (Denmark) have set up a working group to examine the feasibility of a subsea cable between Belgium and Denmark that would link the high-voltage grids of both countries over a distance of more than 600 km. It should be clear by the end of 2021 whether the project is both economically and technically feasible. A 'hybrid' design is being examined. On the Danish side, the interconnector would connect to a new 'energy island' to be built 80 km off the Danish coast and to which a large 10 GW wind farm will eventually be connected. This would give Belgium direct access to the renewable bulk generation we need in order to decarbonise our energy-intensive industry and achieve the European climate targets.

The start of the feasibility study follows the political cooperation agreement signed last week by the Belgian and Danish Energy Ministers, Tinne Van der Straeten and Dan Jørgensen. The project dovetails with the implementation of the European Green Deal, which aims for Europe to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 by increasing the current capacity of 25 GW offshore wind to 300 GW. Transmitting electricity generated offshore to onshore consumption centres requires a meshed subsea electricity grid in which hybrid interconnectors are key components.



Contact

Corporate Communication

Jean Fassiaux (FR) | M +32 474 46 87 82 | jean.fassiaux@elia.be

Marie-Laure Vanwanseele (NDL) | M +32 499 86 51 58 | marielaure.vanwanseele@elia.be

Marleen Vanhecke (ENG) | M +32 486 49 01 09 | marleen.vanhecke@elia.be

Elia Transmission Belgium SA/NV



Building the Belgian-Danish cable is an important next step in making our electricity system more sustainable. It will be the first time our country is connected to a new electricity market that is further away than our neighbouring countries. Thanks to hybrid technology, we will also gain direct access to large wind farms in the far northern part of the North Sea where the meteorological conditions are different from those off the coast of Belgium. This will provide greater security of supply and will help our energy-intensive industry to continue decarbonising.

– **Chris Peeters, CEO Elia Group**

Elia and Energinet are leading system operators in the development, construction and operation of high-voltage offshore infrastructure. Both companies have experience with subsea HVDC (high-voltage direct current) interconnectors. In early 2019, Elia commissioned *Nemo Link*, Belgium's first subsea interconnector with the United Kingdom. In late 2020, Energinet – together with Elia's German subsidiary 50Hertz – built the *Combined Grid Solution*, the world's first hybrid interconnector between Denmark and Germany.

The collaboration between Energinet and 50Hertz may lead to additional projects. A working group is investigating the possibility of a second hybrid interconnector in the Baltic Sea. The cables would also be connected to offshore wind farms via a link to Denmark's Bornholm Energy Island.



I am delighted to sign this important cooperation agreement with Elia. Belgium will be a completely new neighbour for Denmark. With this project, we can build on our good and innovative cooperation with Elia's German subsidiary, 50Hertz.



– **Thomas Egebo, CEO Energinet**



When the interconnector between Belgium and Denmark is completed, the cable will run through the territorial waters of four countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark. Stretching over 600 km, it could be the longest subsea direct-current (HVDC) cable in the world.

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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 high-voltage power 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 99.999%, 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 interest 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. The Elia Group operates under the legal entity Elia Group, a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

For more information: [elia.be](https://www.elia.be) & [eliagroup.eu](https://www.eliagroup.eu)

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