



## Europe's Commitment to Grids. Now It's Time to Deliver

**BRUSSELS - BERLIN | Europe's energy independence is no longer an aspiration, it is a necessity. The European Commission's Grids Package, published on December 10, marks a decisive moment: it makes clear to all stakeholders, not just transmission system operators, that electricity grids are the backbone of Europe's energy system and the foundation of its prosperity.**

Breaking free from Russian fossil fuels was a positive and necessary step. But independence must be built. The Grids Package recognizes that grids are essential for integrating and delivering decarbonized and affordable energy to consumers. The Commission estimates that €1.2 trillion will need to be invested by 2040 to achieve this ambition, a figure that reflects both the scale of the challenge and the long-term value of building a resilient energy system. The direction is clear: Europe is committed to accelerating grid deployment. Now, commitment must turn into action.

### From Vision to Implementation: Avoiding a Top-Down Approach

The Grids Package introduces significant changes to grid planning, including a major shift of competences from ENTSO-E and national TSOs toward EU institutions. While coherence at European level is essential, Elia Group cautions against a purely top-down approach that risks disconnecting decisions from real system needs and lacking political and regulatory backing. Measures such as a single Commission-defined Central Scenario, binding ACER guidelines, and a Commission-steered needs-matching process could subordinate national priorities and established planning procedures to European processes. Rather than overturning today's planning framework, Elia Group advocates for a regional and collaborative approach: harmonizing National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs), validating scenario assumptions earlier, and strengthening regional cooperation through High-Level Groups and TEN-E regional plans.

### Financing: Turning Challenges into Opportunities

Building tomorrow's grids requires vast amounts of capital. As outlined in Elia Group's White Paper on offshore financing, innovative models that attract institutional investors through fair risk-return structures can lower overall costs and ease the impact on consumer bills. Public Financial Institutions, such as the European Investment Bank, will play a key role, alongside increased public funding for cross-border projects. We strongly support the Commission's call to boost the Connecting Europe Facility budget, but more subsidies alone will not suffice. A strong regulatory framework and innovative financing approaches—such as an offshore financing facility per sea basin are equally essential.

### **Accelerating Connections and Storage Integration**

The accompanying guidance on grid connections points in the right direction by promoting prioritization frameworks and “first ready, first served” approaches. This shift will accelerate viable projects and optimize network usage. As highlighted in Elia Group’s recent *Storage for System Strength* study, Europe’s transition depends on smart integration of energy storage with renewables and grid modernization. Transparent processes, readiness criteria, and grid signals will ensure storage supports grid stability, unlocks flexibility, and keeps costs under control.

### **Energy Highways: A Step Forward, But More Is Needed**

The Energy Highways Initiative signals urgency by prioritizing eight projects, including the Bornholm Energy Island, which Elia Group is developing together with its Danish partner Energinet. At the same time, we regret that the North Sea, Europe’s renewable powerhouse, did not meet the final selection criteria. Unlocking its vast offshore wind potential and hybrid interconnectors would transform the Energy Highways vision into reality, delivering clean energy where it’s needed most and reinforcing Europe’s energy independence.

Europe needs faster, smarter grids and action now. The Grids Package must not remain a starting point; it should trigger immediate implementation. Today’s challenges demand adaptation without delay.

## About Elia Group

### One of Europe's top five TSOs

Elia Group is a key player in electricity transmission. We ensure that production and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. Through our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and the north and east of Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,741 km of high-voltage connections, meaning that we are one of Europe's top 5 transmission system operators. With a reliability level of 99.99%, we provide society with a robust power grid, which is important for socioeconomic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition, helping to establish a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

### We are making the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and incorporating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy into our grid, we are promoting both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of society. We also continuously optimise our operational systems and develop new market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus further facilitating the energy transition.

### In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, Elia Group is committed to working in the interest of society. We are responding to the rapid increase in renewable energy by constantly adapting our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. In carrying out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication channels between all relevant parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to different players across the sector in order to build the energy system of the future.

### International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, Elia Group provides consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International. In recent years, the Group has launched new non-regulated activities such as re.alto - the first European marketplace for the exchange of energy data via standardised energy APIs - and WindGrid, a subsidiary which will continue to expand the Group's overseas activities, contributing to the development of offshore electricity grids in Europe and beyond.

The legal entity Elia Group is a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T/NextGrid Holding.

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