



PRESS RELEASE | Brussels, 7 June 2021

The solar eclipse will have a limited impact on the Belgian grid

- A solar eclipse will be visible from Belgium between 11:16 a.m. and 1:25 p.m. on Thursday, 10 June.
- The growing share of solar power in the energy mix means eclipses can impact the power grid.
- While this eclipse will only impact the Belgian grid in a minor way, Elia is still preparing to mitigate any effects it might have on the grid.

Brussels | A solar eclipse is set to cast a shadow over large swathes of Europe on 10 June 2021. During this event, the generation of solar electricity will drop by 15% in Belgium. As the share of solar power in our energy mix continues to grow, natural phenomena such as solar eclipses can impact the power grid. While the impact of this particular eclipse will only be minor, Elia is nevertheless preparing to mitigate any effects it might have on the grid. Relevant market players have also been informed about the eclipse and its possible impact.

This week's eclipse will have a smaller impact on the grid than the one which occurred in 2015 and will only produce a small loss of around 500 MW

The solar eclipse will be visible from northern Canada, Greenland, Russia and most European countries (including Belgium) between 10.10 a.m. and 1.45 p.m. The production of solar energy, along with wind power, underpins efforts made by European countries to make their power grids more sustainable and help Europe achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with the European Green Deal. Belgian solar capacity has increased sharply in recent years and is almost 5 GW today.

When the last solar eclipse occurred in 2015, the solar capacity in Belgium was just 2.9 GW. The 2015 eclipse obscured much more of the sun than this week's eclipse will, which is why it posed a greater challenge for smooth grid operation.

Since supply and demand must be kept balanced at all times, any sudden drops in generation must be addressed, especially at times when there is a high demand for electricity. However, the impact of the solar eclipse on 10 June will be minor, with solar generation capacity dropping by just 15%, which is equivalent to a loss of about 500 MW.



For further information

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Anticipating effects in order to limit impact

Despite this, Elia has been preparing itself to mitigate the impact of the eclipse and ensure continuity of supply in Belgium. The impact of the solar eclipse has been precisely calculated and associated measures have been discussed and put in place, including the deployment of additional reserves and extra staff in control rooms. In addition, relevant market players have also been informed of the event, to ensure that they are prepared to respond to it in any way necessary. The upcoming eclipse will be a good practice run for the next eclipse, which is due to occur on 25 October 2022. This will have a much bigger impact on the grid and will require even more preparation and coordination.

Ensuring a more flexible grid

In the future, new tools will need to be developed to establish a more flexible grid which is capable of smoothly and efficiently integrating energy generated from intermittent renewable sources. Elia is working with industry players as well as businesses, start-ups, the public sector and academia to make this ambition a reality



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 northeastern Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,276 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 our activities as a transmission system operator, we provide various consulting services to international customers through our third subsidiary, Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia (in Belgium) is also part of the Nemo Link consortium, which operates the first subsea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

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

More information: [eliagroup.eu](https://www.eliagroup.eu)

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