



## Elia's Academic Board meets for the second time to foster collaboration and address challenges linked to the energy transition

**BRUSSELS |** On 19 October, Elia's Academic Board met in person for the second time in Brussels. Since its launch in October 2022, the Board has been driven by a twofold vision: firstly, that of fostering collaboration between Elia and different universities and working on innovative projects with academia; and secondly, facilitating discussions about topics linked to the energy transition. Whilst Elia can see the challenges that will need to be addressed in the future, it understands that partnerships are crucial for expanding and strengthening its skills and expertise. With this in mind, Elia hosted professors and researchers from across Belgium and different academic fields at its headquarters in Brussels.

*"Last year's launch of our Academic Board marked an important step in fostering closer relationships between Elia and Belgian universities. This forum, which was created to address future strategic challenges, will now focus on projects that will be developed by Elia and its academic partners and by universities amongst themselves. The challenges we are facing are important and the role academia will play in addressing these is essential."*

**Frédéric Dunon, Deputy CEO of Elia Transmission Belgium**

### Ensuring transparency and generating synergies through the Academic Board

As part of its second meeting this year, Elia's Academic Board met to explore three major topics: Elia's strategic direction and its 'Future Study 2050' that it is due to publish; the co-creation of Elia's Innovation Roadmap 2025; and the talent challenges that Elia is facing, particularly in terms of recruitment and upskilling and the critical role that academia will play in tackling these.

Elia's Innovation Department and Board members took part in lively discussions during their second meeting, leading them to identify some key areas they would like to collaborate on, as follows: asset management, infrastructure construction, offshore development, system operations, and consumer centricity. They also determined key priorities for joint initiatives to work on, including leveraging offshore development, effectively managing CAPEX, ensuring flexibility, and maintaining cybersecurity and digital sovereignty.

With regard to Elia's 'Future Study 2050', academic board members highlighted the likely drivers behind the energy transition in the lead-up to 2050. One significant theme that was discussed was the challenge of electrifying both industry and end consumer assets. Members emphasised that consumers should be incentivised to provide flexibility to the grid through appropriate pricing mechanisms; the importance of standardising dynamic pricing rules was highlighted as part of this. While EU guidance is crucial, members discussed the need to adapt and incorporate it at national and regional levels across the Union, including for DNOs.

During discussions related to the co-creation of Elia's Innovation Roadmap 2025, members mainly focused on the underground mapping of Elia's installations, HVDC breakers, and switch gears; the use of health indicators for dispatch capacity; the multi-objective optimisation of flexibility and dispatching; and cable sensors.

During the Board's concluding session, the focus shifted to the nurturing of new talent in the energy sector. Members emphasised the need to support initiatives which are centered on educating secondary school teachers and higher education staff about the energy challenges we are faced with. Since Elia foresees a 50% increase in energy consumption across its area by 2032, the company aims to increase its talent pool by 30% over the coming years. Dedicated talent workshops with professors were scheduled during the meeting to explore new and improve existing recruiting methods and staff upskilling programs.

### **Towards more structured collaboration**

In addition to all the discussions and constructive exchanges that members took part in, Elia released an updated version of a framework contract to further facilitate and speed up partnerships between the company and academia. Over the coming months, Board members will sign this new framework contract and launch new joint projects.

## 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 19,349 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 socio-economic 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.

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