

ALEGrO: Elia invites local residents to four evening meetings to present findings of Environmental Impact Assessment.

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Elia officials will present the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as well as the final project for which permit applications were submitted to the Walloon Region authorities. This information will be provided in connection with the evening meetings organised voluntarily and in collaboration with four cities and towns impacted by the project. The author of the EIA will also be on hand to answer questions from local residents from the 14 municipalities concerned. For Elia, maintaining transparent communication with local residents is a priority.

It should be remembered that Elia, the operator of Belgium's high-voltage electricity transmission system, plans to implement a new underground connection between Lixhe and Oberzier in 2018-2019. This is an interconnector intended to provide a 90km direct current connection - 49km of which in Belgium - between Elia's high-voltage grid in Belgium and Amprion's high-voltage grid in Germany. The ALEGrO (Aachen Liège Electric Grid Overlay) project has been recognised by the European Union as a priority project. The Belgian government deems it essential for:

- supporting the security of the country's electricity supply;
- encouraging the creation of a competitive energy market benefiting consumers;
- enabling renewable energy producers to inject as much output as possible into the grid.

ALEGrO will have a transmission capacity of 1,000 MW, corresponding to 1/10th of Belgium's average electricity consumption. It should commission in 2020.

Dialogue with local residents

Elia will welcome local residents on:

- 10 May, 7-9 p.m., Salle des Arbalétriers, rue Haute 46, 4600 Visé
- 11 May, 5-7 p.m., Salle Communale, rue de l'Eglise 46, 4710 Lontzen
- 15 May, 5-8 p.m., town hall meeting room, rue des Ecoles 4, 4684 Hacourt (Oupeye)
- 18 May, 6-8 p.m., town council room at the Herve town hall, Centre Administratif Marie-Thérèse, rue du Collège 26, 4650 Herve

The author of the study will be on hand to present his findings. Elia officials will also be on hand to present the changes to the project. The findings of the study can be viewed at the municipal offices of the 14 municipalities in question throughout the public consultation process (starting on 2 May for a period of 30 days).

The ALEGrO project officers previously met with local residents in October 2016 at the advance public information meeting (Visé) and at two information sessions (Herve and Raeren). These meetings were an opportunity to gather comments, questions and suggestions from local residents. Six letters were also sent to Elia. All questions, comments and suggestions were incorporated in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) by CSD, an independent consultancy. Elia took on board the study's findings in finalising its project.

Elia's planned new infrastructure

The project route plans to make as much use as possible of existing infrastructure and to avoid private land as far as possible as well as areas of special biological interest. At some points, the route has been changed slightly to avoid trees and significant hedgerows. A new converter station will be built in Lixhe (city of Visé) on land belonging to Elia. Pursuant to the findings of the EIA, the site will be arranged in such a way as to promote biodiversity and incorporate the station into the environment.

About Elia

Elia is Belgium's high-voltage transmission system operator (30 kV to 380 kV), operating over 8,000 km of lines and underground cables and employing 1,200 professionals. Its grid is considered one of the most reliable in Europe. The grid plays a key role in the community: large industrial customers are connected directly to it and it transmits electricity from generators to the distribution networks, which in turn supply electricity to individual consumers. Elia also operates connections to neighbouring countries.