

## PRESS RELEASE

8 August 2017

**Press contact:**

**Kathleen Iwens**  
External Communication  
+32 478 66 45 55  
[Kathleen.iwens@elia.be](mailto:Kathleen.iwens@elia.be)

## Elia begins dismantling the high-voltage line between Cibly and Pâturages

- The project to build a 150kV underground line between the Cibly and Pâturages high-voltage substations, replacing an old 70kV overhead line, is at a temporary standstill following the rejection of Elia's permit application.
- Elia decided not to wait before starting to dismantle this line.
- Work designed to improve the reliability of the line will be carried out in August and September, pending full dismantling, which will begin in the first half of 2018 when the necessary permits have been obtained.
- The project to upgrade the Cibly-Pâturages high-voltage line remains essential for the region's economic development and future grid security.

Elia, the operator of Belgium's high-voltage transmission system, plans to replace the current 70kV overhead line between the Cibly and Pâturages substations with a 150kV underground line passing through Mons, Quévy, Frameries and Colfontaine. The infrastructure upgrade is necessary both to ensure security of supply and to safeguard the region's economic development, including the integration of renewable energies.

### Planned upgrade at a standstill

The current 70kV line, built in 1932, is showing significant signs of wear and tear and must be replaced. Elia has proposed an alternative route involving a 150kV underground connection. Following the initial rejection of Elia's permit application, the HV system operator held a number of information evenings with Q&A sessions to address residents' specific questions and concerns.

Despite these efforts, the permit was still not issued, and the submitted plan for the underground line is therefore at a temporary standstill.

### Dismantling the 70kV line

As the existing 70kV line is no longer fit for purpose and could pose safety risks, Elia decided to start dismantling it without waiting for the 150kV underground line to become operational.

Work designed to improve the reliability of the line will be carried out in August and September, pending full dismantling, which will begin in the first half of 2018 when the necessary permits have been obtained.

Despite the dismantling of the 70kV line, the area's short-term security of supply will be guaranteed. It will rely on close cooperation between Elia and the distribution system operator (ORES), which is currently carrying out work to consolidate its distribution system in the region. While providing a temporary back-up solution for the distribution system in case of incident on the main supply, these measures will do nothing to change Elia's need to replace the existing 70kV high-voltage line.

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Planned upgrade remains essential**

Replacing the Cibly-Pâturages high-voltage line is vital to the region for several reasons, namely to:

- guarantee sustained operation and facilitate the maintenance of the transmission system, while enhancing its reliability;
- ensure security of supply in the region and the ability to accommodate future increases in the electrical load;
- support the region's economic development;
- enable the local integration of renewable energies and thus meet the targets set by the Walloon Region in this domain.

Elia is currently studying the various options for developing the new 150kV line and will soon be back in contact with the relevant local authorities to determine together the best approach for ensuring continued security of electricity supply in the region.

---

### **About Elia**

*Elia is Belgium's high-voltage transmission system operator (30 kV to 380 kV), employing 1,200 professionals and operating over 8,000 km of lines and underground cables. Its grid is considered one of the most reliable in Europe and 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.*