**5 December 2018**

Elia and national Grid inaugurate Nemo Link and connect Belgium with the United Kingdom

- Nemo Link, the first interconnector between Belgium and the UK, was officially inaugurated on 5 December.
- It will enable electricity to flow in both directions between the two countries.
- Following a test phase, Nemo Link will commission in Q1 2019.

BRUGES – Elia and National Grid inaugurated the first submarine electricity interconnector between Belgium and the United Kingdom on Wednesday, 5 December. The ceremony was attended by the Energy Minister Marie Christine Marghem and the State Secretary for the North Sea Philippe De Backer. The commissioning of Nemo Link marks an important new stage in integrating the European electricity grid and will promote the transition to a sustainable and affordable energy system. The development of interconnectors in Europe will facilitate the integration of renewable energies into the mix while offering additional security of supply.

Chris Peeters, Chief Executive Officer of Elia:

Today marks the inauguration of the first interconnector between Belgium and the United Kingdom. This massive project is a first for Belgium, both technically and strategically. This new interconnector - along with the soon to be completed ALEGrO connection with Germany - will enable us to significantly boost our energy exchange capacity and to position our infrastructure at the very heart of a future integrated European electricity system.

John Pettigrew, Chief Executive Officer of National Grid:

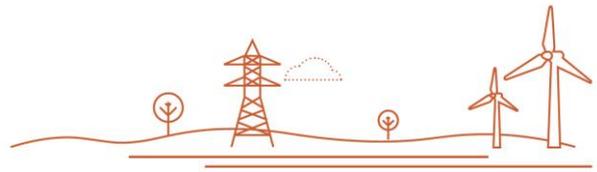
Nemo Link will bring great benefits to consumers in the UK and Belgium by offering both countries access to a broader energy mix and providing opportunities to expand into other electricity markets. This new connection will also provide significant social benefits. By connecting the UK and Belgian electricity markets, we will ensure customers have access to different sources of generation and lower priced electricity. This will mean that customers pay less for their energy. Over the next five years National Grid will be investing more than £2 billion in new interconnectors to Europe and our significant commitment is driven by the value that interconnectors like Nemo Link can bring to customers at both ends of the cable.

Marie Christine Marghem, Belgian Federal Minister of Energy:

Nemo Link, the interconnector between Belgium and the United Kingdom, will bolster Belgium's connection capacity with neighbouring countries. This is particularly important for security of supply, as it will enable Belgium to receive extra capacity from the UK.

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Greg Clark, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy:

“Nemo Link is the UK’s first interconnector since 2012, increasing our electricity capacity from these power cables by a quarter and further enhancing security of supply for us and Belgium. Not only will this interconnector help us to accommodate more renewable energy on our grid and provide cheaper, greener energy for consumers as part of our modern Industrial Strategy, it will also see continued and close cooperation on energy across borders with our European partners.”

Unique project, unique cable

This interconnector is a major event for Elia. Not only is it the first interconnector with the UK, but also the first subsea interconnector and the first time the transmission system operator has employed HVDC (High-Voltage Direct Current) technology. HVDC is ideal for this kind of project because the two grids are not synchronised. It also controls flows better. This cable is the first of its kind in the world. Designed in Japan, it is unique due to the voltage involved (400 kV) and its use of XLPE (cross-linked polyethylene) as insulation material.

Testing begins with a view to subsequent commissioning

Next week will mark the start of a test phase, which includes energy exchanges, to ensure that everything is working properly. This will be the final stage in the project before the interconnector's planned commissioning in Q1 2019 - at which time it will immediately enter service and play a role in integrating the European power grid. Elia and National Grid are making their infrastructure available to the market operators, i.e. the main players involved in exchanging electricity between Belgium and the UK. This will yield a better energy future for consumers in both countries while encouraging the transition to a sustainable and affordable system. Nemo Link is expected to see 1000 MW in electricity exchanges (equivalent to the capacity of a nuclear reactor), a significant plus in terms of ensuring security of supply.

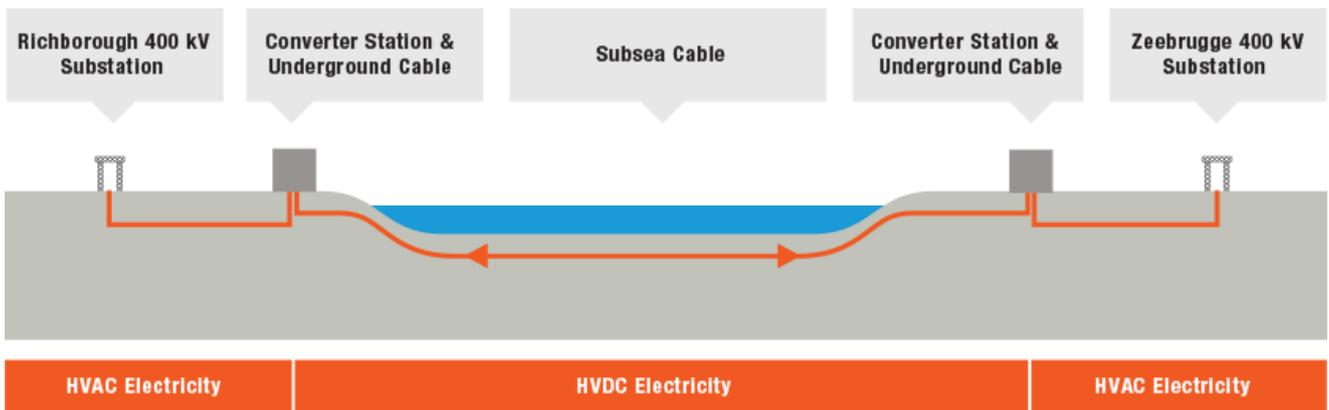
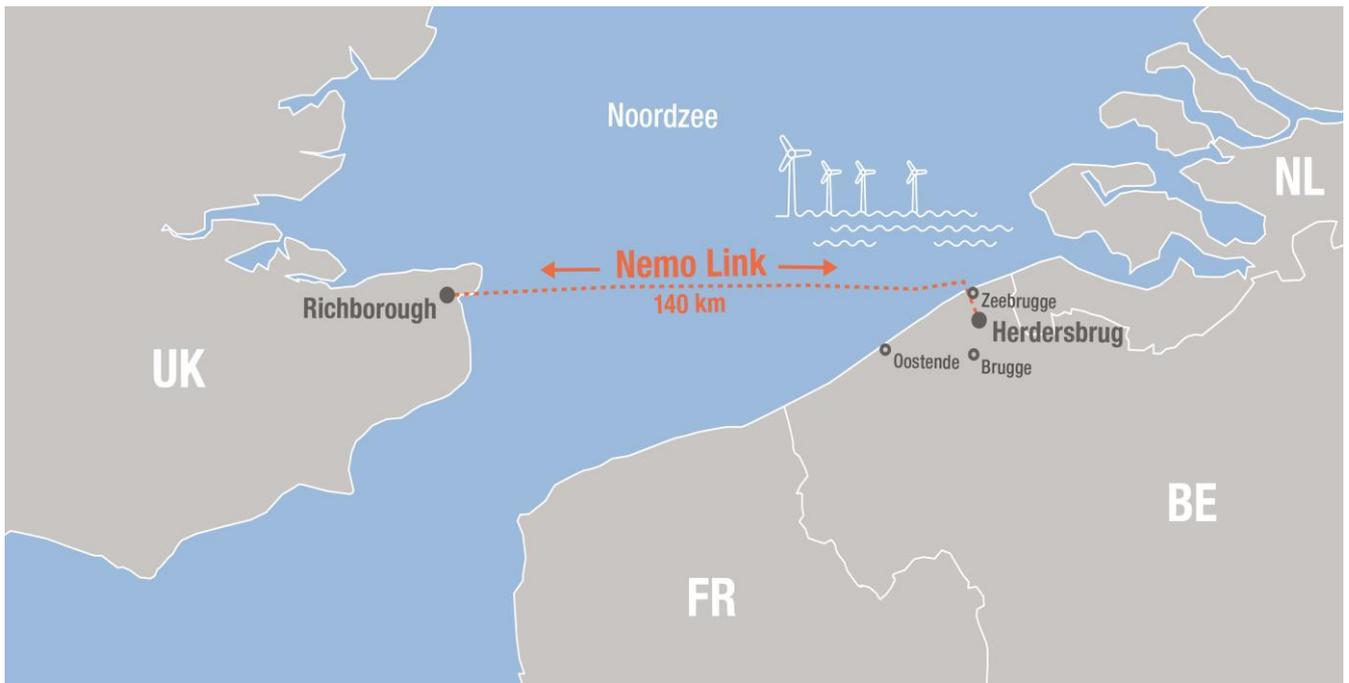
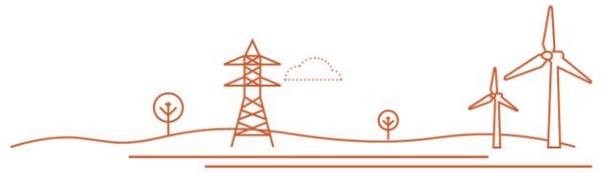
The culmination of 10 years of work

Nemo Link is a collaborative effort organised by Elia (Belgium) and National Grid (UK), which created a joint venture with a mixed Belgian-British team. The inauguration of the Nemo Link interconnector marks the culmination of an enormous project that took nearly 10 years to complete. Connecting the Richborough (UK) and Herdersbrug (Belgium) converter stations via a 140 km cable (130 km submarine) was an extremely complex undertaking that entailed many technical challenges. It never could have succeeded without the determined efforts of the men and women who worked together to overcome all of these difficulties.

Respecting our marine heritage

The Nemo Link cable crosses one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. For hundreds of years, the English Channel has been witness to some of the most dramatic moments in our shared history. The Nemo Link cable route had to be carefully examined not only to respect this historical heritage, which included the remnants of an American Boeing B-17 bomber, but also to detect explosive devices. Forty-six bombs were neutralised in order to guarantee the safety of our personnel. Accordingly, Nemo Link worked closely with the governments and militaries of Belgium, the United Kingdom and France.





About the Elia Group



ONE OF EUROPE'S TOP FIVE PLAYERS

The Elia Group is active in electricity transmission. We ensure that generation and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. With subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and north-west Germany (50Hertz), we operate 18,600 km of high-voltage connections. As such, our group is one of Europe's top 5. With a reliability level of 99.999%, we give society a robust power grid, which is important for socio-economic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition towards a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

WE MAKE THE ENERGY TRANSITION HAPPEN

By expanding international high-voltage connections and integrating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy generation, the Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. The Elia Group is also innovating its operational systems and developing market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus making the energy transition happen.

IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIETY

As a key player in the energy system, the Elia Group is committed to working in the interest of society. We respond to the rapidly changing energy mix, i.e. the increase in renewable energy, and constantly adapt our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. When we carry out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication with all affected parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to our sector and relevant authorities to build the energy system of the future.

INTERNATIONAL FOCUS

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, the Elia Group provides various consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia is also part of the Nemo Link consortium that is building the first subsea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

The Group operates under the legal entity Elia System Operator, a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

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