



March 26, 2019

Elia reports a new round of copper theft in the province of Luxembourg

- While the thefts had no perceptible impacts on the electricity transmission system, they have affected our infrastructure and replacing the stolen cables will be very costly.
- The destruction and theft of power lines is completely irresponsible and potentially very dangerous for the thieves.
- Elia has filed a complaint and is calling on local residents to report any unusual behaviour to the special number : 03 640 07 00.

Last days, over two kilometres of cable was stolen from a high-voltage (70 kV) power line on the Elia grid in Vaux-sur-Sûre, in the Province of Luxembourg. The thefts took place during the day on Friday and early on Sunday evening. The earth wires on the line in question were severed, placed on the ground and taken away. While stealing the cable, the thief or thieves dropped it onto the lines, which caused an incident and alerted Elia to the theft. On Friday, Elia took a number of additional measures to protect its grid infrastructure, namely stepping up patrols to check on infrastructure in the affected area, asking technicians working in the field to be even more vigilant, and increasing overall grid surveillance by the dispatching and control centres. These latest thefts follow on from a wave of thefts that took place in Flanders and Wallonia last June. While this is not the first time copper has been stolen from Elia power lines, we have never known such thefts to be committed in broad daylight before.

POLICE CONTACTED, COMPLAINT FILED

The method used to steal the copper is extremely risky and suggests that the thefts were the work of one or more thieves using expert knowledge and professional equipment. Elia reiterates that the intentional destruction and theft of power lines is totally irresponsible and potentially very dangerous. Thieves who scale pylons to cut and steal power lines run a serious risk of falling, electrification or even electrocution. Furthermore, the thefts in question took place in relatively inaccessible areas that would definitely have had to be reconnoitred beforehand.

Elia duly informed the police as soon as we became aware of the thefts. The incident is being taken very seriously and an in-depth investigation has been launched. We would like to invite local residents to contact Elia directly or notify the local authorities if they spot any unusual objects or abnormal behaviour in the vicinity of high-voltage lines. A hotline has been specially set up for reporting any such unusual activity: 03 640 07 00. We would advise members of the public not to approach the lines that were damaged by the thefts, as they could be dangerous.

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ELIA TEAMS IMMEDIATELY SET ABOUT REPAIRING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

As with the thefts in June 2018, the stolen cables were earth wires. These cables are located very high up and serve several purposes, such as protecting the power lines against lightning strikes. During both thefts, the earth wire struck the power line as it fell. This caused an incident, which alerted Elia to the thefts. The automatic restart procedure enabled us to minimise the impact on the grid, so consumers in the region barely noticed the incident.

Although the lines are operating smoothly for the time being, the thefts have weakened them, leaving them more vulnerable to disruption. Elia's technical teams went straight to the site of the thefts to repair the damage and restore the infrastructure. Our teams are currently looking into ways of preventing such thefts in future.

The cost of the repairs will be substantial as it includes both the gross cost of the cable and the costs associated with the cable replacement process, which requires a number of permits and involves substantial human and material resources.



About the Elia Group

ONE OF EUROPE'S TOP FIVE PLAYERS

The Elia Group is active in electricity transmission. We ensure that production 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 production, 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.

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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.

www.elia.be/www.eliagroup.eu

