



Auvelais-Gembloux: Presentation of the underground connection project

On Thursday, 21 November, Elia, the operator of Belgium's high-voltage transmission system, presented the new underground connection project linking the Auvelais and Gembloux substations. At the public information meeting, Elia informed attendees about the new dual 150 kV underground connection that will replace the current line, which is now at the end of its service life.

A reliable grid capable of integrating renewable energy

The single overhead 70 kV line that currently connects the Auvelais substation in Sambreville to the Gembloux substation was built in 1938 and is coming to the end of its life, making it necessary for Elia to develop a project that will ensure grid reliability while enabling the integration of locally generated renewable energy.

More specifically, the project involves building a 10.29 km underground connection that will pass through Gembloux, Jemeppe-sur-Sambre and Sambreville. The town of Sombrefe is also impacted by the project, but only with regard to the dismantling of the current overhead line. To ensure security of supply for the region, the 69 towers comprising the current connection will be dismantled once the first three-phase transmission line (or electric circuit) in the underground connection comes onstream. According to the initial provisional schedule and subject to obtaining the necessary permits, the first three-phase transmission line (or electrical circuit) could be laid in 2021, meaning the overhead line could be dismantled in 2022. The second three-phase transmission line will be laid once the need for it has been confirmed, i.e. 2025-2026.

Project background: the result of hard work by multiple stakeholders

Having examined grid requirements, Elia included provisions in the Federal Development Plan 2015-2025 for replacing the overhead line connecting Auvelais and Gembloux.

Following an initial proposal presented in March 2017, the environmental impact study identified an underground alternative that was acceptable both technically and in terms of cost. Based on the study, Elia then launched detailed studies into the technical and administrative feasibility of this alternative solution, which is set to run alongside the pipeline. Once the studies were completed, Elia decided to hold another information session to present the new project - now an underground connection - that would be capable of meeting grid requirements.

Press contact

Project Communication

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Elia listens to municipal authorities and local residents

Elia is keen to communicate proactively throughout every stage of the project. Close collaboration has been established with the municipal authorities in four towns and Elia will make every effort to be transparent in keeping local residents regularly and fully informed about the project. Elia will organise information sessions as the project progresses through the various stages.

In connection with the future permit application, Elia will hold - in addition to the advance public information meeting - two additional information sessions:

- in Jemeppe-sur-Sambre on Monday, 25 November 2019 from 6 to 8 p.m. in the canteen of the town hall located at Place Communale 20;
- in Sambreville on Wednesday, 27 November from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Ledoux room in the town hall located on the Grand Place.

Our teams are also available to answer any questions you might have via freephone number 0800/18 002 or by e-mail: riverains@elia.be. A special web page is also dedicated to the project (www.elia.be).

Journalists can download the project brochure and illustrations from the following link:

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