

PRESS RELEASE | Brussels, Friday 27 March 2020

UPDATE | Electricity consumption in Belgium continues to fall. Down 16% on average compared to early March, and even dropping 25% at times.

- The impact of anti-coronavirus measures on electricity consumption is even more pronounced.
- The drop can be seen among industrial consumers (14%) and other consumers (17%).
- The average price per megawatt hour (MWh) on the short-term market has hit an all-time low.
- Grid stability and security of supply are maintained.

BRUSSELS | The gradual restriction on activities in Belgium to prevent the spread of the coronavirus is leading to a further downturn in electricity consumption. Electricity consumption is down 16%, on average, compared to the first week of March, and at times down as much as 25%. The drop is slightly more pronounced among consumers connected to the distribution grid (17%) compared to Elia's 149 industrial customers (14%) connected directly to the high voltage grid.

Consumption down 16% on average

Following the government circular issued on 12 March 2020 and the implementation of the first restriction measures, we saw a significant downward impact on load (between 5 and 10% during peak-load hours). The impact increased following the announcement on Tuesday, 17 March 2020, leading to a downturn of 10 to 15% in the days that followed. Since these initial observations, electricity consumption has dropped further. Today, the consumption drop is now **16% on average** compared to the first week of March. At certain times of day, the differences can be greater, peaking at **25%**.

In the graph below, the blue line shows the trend in total electricity consumption for the first week of March (2-8 March 2020). The orange line shows the situation from 9 to 15 March when the first measures were taken (closure of schools, restaurants and cafés). The grey line shows the impact on consumption from 16 to 22 March following the implementation of the latest measures (retail lockdown and closure of companies where social distancing cannot be guaranteed). And lastly, the green line is the situation during the past week.

Contact

Corporate Communication

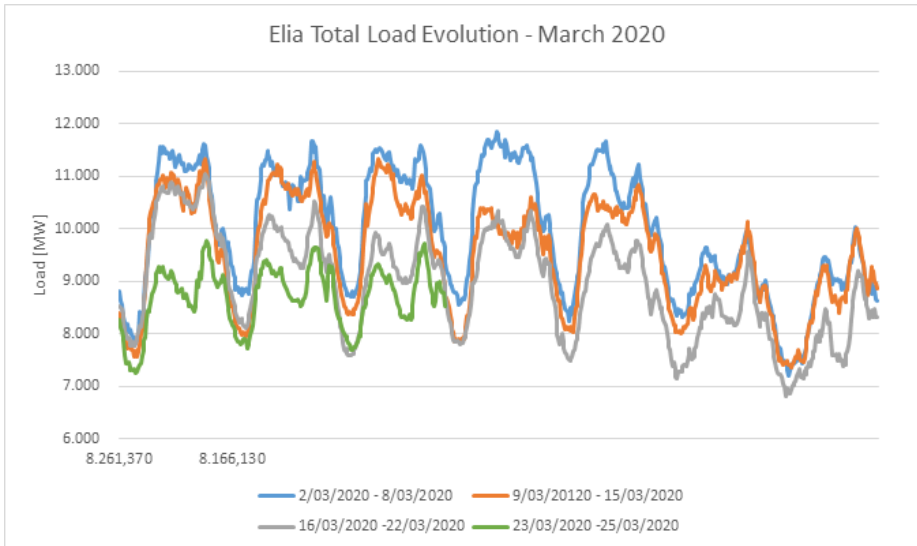
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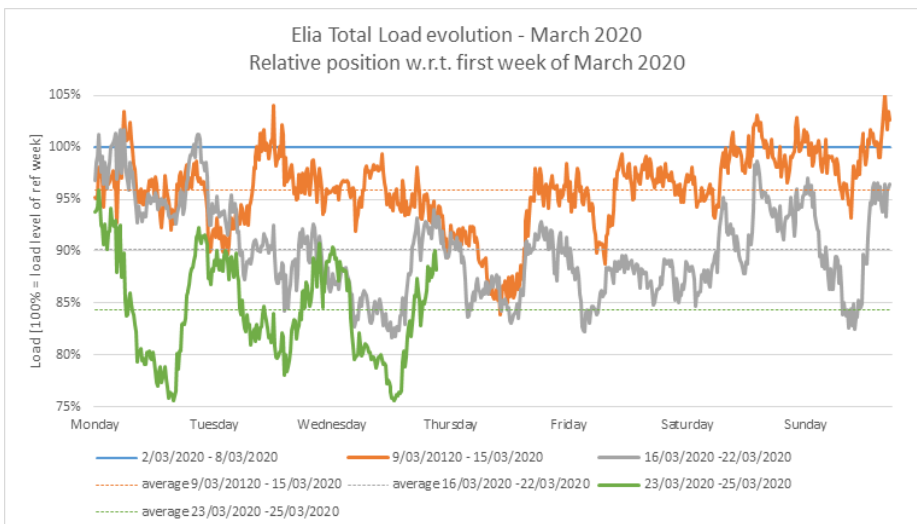
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The second graph shows the differences (in %) for the same reference periods.



You can view the load and load forecasts for Elia's transmission system at the following link:
<https://www.elia.be/en/grid-data/load-and-load-forecasts>

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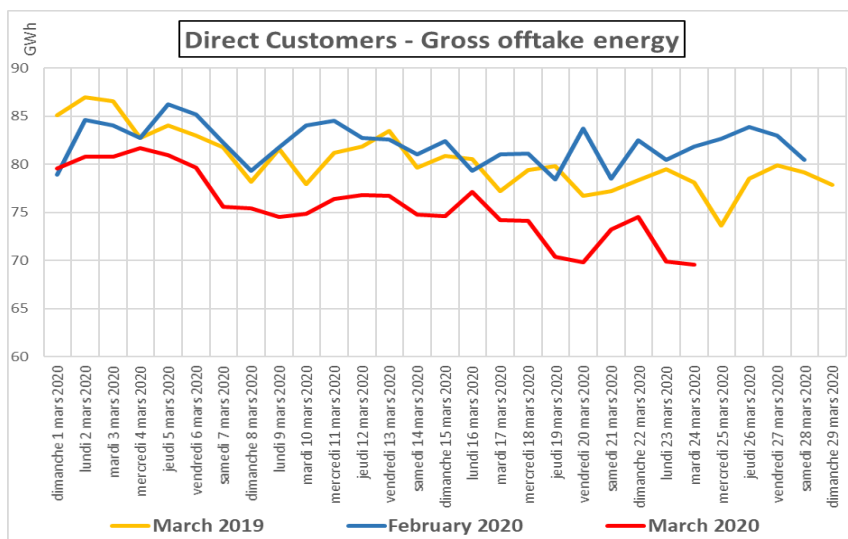
System stability and security of supply maintained

The decreases have been gradual, giving market players time to adjust their forecasts downwards. Elia also continues to anticipate those changes. Grid stability and security of supply are maintained. The adjustment margins for balancing the grid both downwards and upwards are also sufficient.

Widespread drop in consumption

While there is a general overall drop in consumption, we see a slightly greater decline among consumers connected to the distribution grid (17%) compared to Elia's 149 industrial customers directly connected to the high-voltage grid (14%). The difference may be due to tightened anti-coronavirus measures that have a greater impact on sectors where establishments are connected to the distribution network (bars, restaurants, retail), possibly offset in part by rising residential consumption due to widespread teleworking. In March 2020, the distribution network accounts for 66% of offtake from the Elia grid.

The graph below compares the electricity consumption of Elia's **industrial customers** in February 2020 (blue) and March 2020 (red). The yellow line shows electricity consumption in March 2019.



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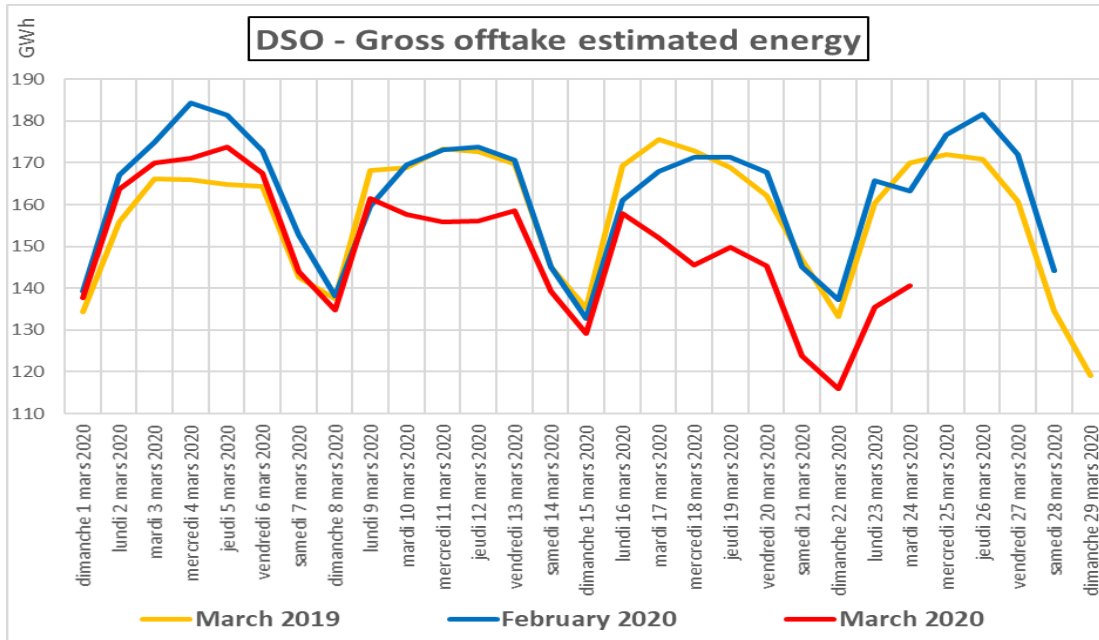
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The graph below compares the electricity consumption of **other consumers** connected to the **distribution network** in February 2020 (blue) and March 2020 (red). The yellow line shows consumption in March 2019.



MWh price hits all-time low in March

The current situation also has an impact on the MWh price of electricity on the short-term market (day-ahead market). This can be explained by the fact that electricity generation is sufficient both in Belgium and in neighbouring countries, but demand is falling. This reduces the price per MWh. As long as demand remains low, this price phenomenon can continue. In the table below, you can see the average MWh price (by month) in recent years.

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Average price per MWh on the day-ahead market.

Clearing Price Day-Ahead €/MWh										
Row Labels	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
January	51.3	41.9	53.9	39.7	42.9	32.6	72.6	36.8	60.5	37.9
February	54.0	65.1	55.6	38.7	50.5	25.4	47.6	47.4	47.6	28.4
March	59.3	45.2	60.3	37.4	47.1	27.1	34.5	50.7	37.6	18.7
April	50.1	44.9	57.5	41.9	47.7	25.4	37.3	37.8	37.9	
May	53.5	39.0	49.9	38.7	37.6	25.4	37.2	44.5	38.0	
June	43.4	40.5	33.3	36.8	39.0	30.7	32.7	50.0	27.5	
July	37.5	41.7	34.6	33.8	42.6	31.3	33.6	52.9	37.7	
August	41.0	45.4	37.7	37.4	42.4	28.9	31.8	60.7	33.7	
September	50.0	46.7	45.5	46.2	52.5	37.7	37.2	68.8	33.6	
October	52.3	51.5	44.8	46.2	55.4	57.2	49.0	76.0	37.6	
November	55.4	52.7	49.2	45.1	43.1	62.3	66.6	77.8	44.4	
December	45.1	50.1	47.8	47.7	35.9	55.0	55.1	59.7	36.4	
Grand Total	49.370	46.977	47.446	40.789	44.679	36.616	44.583	55.272	39.349	7.038

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About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five players

Elia Group is active in electricity transmission, ensuring that generation and consumption are balanced at all times, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. With subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and northeast Germany (50Hertz), we operate 18,990 km of high-voltage connections. As such, our Group is one of Europe's top five system operators. 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, Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. Elia Group is also innovating its operational systems and developing market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid. In this way, the Elia Group is making the energy transition happen.

In the interest of society

As a key player in the energy system, Elia Group is committed to working in the interests of society. We are constantly adapting our transmission grid to the rapidly changing energy mix, incorporating ever more renewable energy. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget and guarantee maximum safety. When we carry out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication with all affected parties from the outset. We also offer our expertise to our sector and relevant authorities to help build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, Elia Group provides various consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia is also a member of the Nemo Link consortium, which operates the first subsea electricity interconnector between Belgium and Great Britain. The Elia Group operates under the legal entity Elia System Operator, a listed company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

For more information, visit [elia.be](https://www.elia.be)

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