



ALEGrO: last junction completed

- The first electricity interconnector between Belgium and Germany has now been built and testing is set to begin soon.
- Commercial operation will start by the end of the year.
- The interconnector will enhance both countries' security of supply and help to further the integration of renewable energy sources.

The Walloon Ministers for Energy, Philippe Henry, and Spatial Planning, Willy Borsus, attended the completion of work on the ALEGrO project this Wednesday at the Lixhe converter station in Liège Province. ALEGrO is the first interconnector between Belgium and Germany. All the infrastructure has now been installed and energisation testing can start next week. The connection will make it possible for the two countries to exchange 1,000 MW (1 GW) of additional electricity (approximately equivalent to the electricity consumption of a city with a population of one million). The project is now entering the home stretch before commercial exploitation, which is scheduled for the end of the year.

ALEGrO, Belgium's first interconnector with Germany

ALEGrO is the first electricity interconnector between Belgium and Germany. The 90-km line will connect the grids operated by transmission system operators Elia (Belgium) and Amprion (Germany). ALEGrO is a vital link in the construction of an integrated European electricity system. Belgium is at the centre of that system and is an essential hub for its development. The interconnector will enhance both countries' security of supply and contribute to price convergence, as well as facilitating the energy transition and enabling better integration of renewable energy. Technically speaking, ALEGrO is also a first for the Walloon Region of Belgium, marking the first time an interconnector using HVDC technology and a converter station have been built in Wallonia. Nemo Link, a similar interconnector with the United Kingdom, successfully commissioned in West Flanders in January 2019.

Lixhe converter station

The Lixhe converter station will convert the direct current (DC, i.e. current flowing in only one direction) used for the interconnector into alternating current (AC, with current and voltage alternating 50 times per second, i.e. 50 hertz), which makes up 98% of Belgium's internal grid. Direct current will allow a large amount of energy (1,000 MW) to be carried over a long distance (90 km) in either direction.

Project delivered on schedule thanks to solid collaboration



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The completion of the ALEGrO project is on schedule (despite the COVID-19 pandemic). Nearly 10 years of solid collaboration and ongoing dialogue between Elia and the local and regional authorities have made it possible to complete the project. International cooperation between transmission system operators Elia and Amprion also ensured the project was kept on schedule. All the infrastructure has now been installed and energisation testing can start next week. Commercial operation is scheduled to start by the end of the year. As the HVDC interconnector will be integrated into the AC meshed network, capacity for commercial operation will be released in phases. Initially, capacity will be offered to the market via the day-ahead allocation mechanism, then on an intra-day basis, and finally via long-term capacity. The allocation of long-term rights is expected to begin in early 2021.

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Belgium and Germany are closely linked economically, at both regional and national level. In recent years, lasting relations have also been established with respect to energy policy. Elia is an 80% shareholder in German system operator 50Hertz, while German investment bank KfW holds 20%. We have also worked well together with Amprion over the last 10 years to create ALEGrO. I would like to thank the project teams on both sides of the border for their hard work in bringing such a complex project to fruition.

Chris Peeters, CEO Elia Group

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The completion of the ALEGrO project connecting the Belgian and German grids with a view to the development of a European super-grid is the result of a coordinated European response to current climate and energy challenges. This is clearly a step in the right direction in terms of meeting the challenges we face. The focus is on the common good and this is fundamental to the future.

Philippe Henry, Walloon Energy Minister

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This is a major project for Wallonia. First of all, I would like to highlight the excellent collaboration between Elia, Amprion and the various technical, regional and municipal authorities that made it possible to bring this project to fruition. This kind of interconnector with Germany is a first for Wallonia. Working on the competitiveness of energy costs is one of our government's priorities, as is making our Region attractive so that industries and companies set up operations here. Such opportunities will enable them to reduce their energy costs, an example of real added value.

Willy Borsus, Walloon Spatial Planning Minister

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About the Elia Group

One of Europe's top five players

The Elia Group is active in electricity transmission, ensuring that generation and consumption are balanced at all times. We supply 30 million end users with electricity and manage 19,271 km of HV lines via our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and north-east Germany (50Hertz). As such, our Group is one of Europe's top five system operators. With a reliability level of 99.9%, 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, 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. 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, the 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, the 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. Elia Group is a listed company whose core shareholder is Publi-T, a municipal holding company.

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

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