



## Elia begins upgrading the 92-kilometre-long high-voltage line between Zandhoven and Kinrooi

Elia, Belgium's high-voltage system operator, has begun upgrading the high-voltage line between Zandhoven and Kinrooi. This line will be equipped with a new type of conductor that can transport more power. This will allow Elia to better distribute and transmit increased electricity flows throughout the country in the future. The upgraded high-voltage line will also make it possible to exchange more electricity with the Netherlands. This is necessary to continue ensuring security of supply for the entire country. Work is expected to be completed by late 2024.

### Upgrading the backbone of the Belgian high-voltage grid

Elia is upgrading the high-voltage line between the Massenhoven (Zandhoven) and Van Eyck (Kinrooi and Maaseik) high-voltage substations. This line is part of the backbone of the 380-kV electricity grid. This voltage level enables Elia to transmit large volumes of electricity quickly and efficiently throughout the country. Renewable energy sources are being connected to the electricity grid all over the country, causing an increase in domestic electricity flows throughout Belgium. The 380-kV grid between Zandhoven and Kinrooi needs to be upgraded in order to better distribute and transmit these flows. This will also facilitate the import and export of electricity between Belgium and the Netherlands, which is vital for Belgium's security of supply and the development of a European energy grid.

*"The energy transition will lead to more internal electricity flows in Belgium and more electricity exchanges with neighbouring countries. A strong high-voltage grid is necessary to continue ensuring security of supply for the country."* – François De Hoe,

**Programme Manager**

### New type of conductor on an existing high-voltage line

The high-voltage line between Zandhoven and Kinrooi will be equipped with a new type of conductor that can transport more power. The entire high-voltage line is 92 kilometres long and runs through 15 municipalities in the provinces of Antwerp and Limburg. The upgrade comprises two phases. From February 2021 to late 2022, Elia will carry out work in the municipalities of Meerhout, Balen, Ham, Hechtel-Eksel, Peer, Bocholt, Bree and Kinrooi, where conductors hang on one side of the high-voltage pylons. Elia will first install an additional three-phase transmission line on the other side of the pylons, before replacing the existing three-phase transmission line with new conductors. From early 2023 onwards, Elia will carry out work in the municipalities of Massenhoven, Grobbendonk, Herentals, Olen, Geel, Laakdal



For further information, please contact:

Pieter Verlaak | M +32 (0)472 76 30 80 | pieter.verlaak@elia.be

and Meerhout, where for the most part the current high-voltage line already has conductors on both sides of the pylons. Both three-phase transmission lines will then be replaced with new conductors. This work is expected to be completed by late 2024.

### Post-work nature management plan

The high-voltage line runs straight through a number of nature reserves, including Bosland. Trees that come too close to high voltages can cause malfunctions, consequently jeopardising the power supply. A 65-metre-wide safety corridor needs to be erected around the upgraded line, meaning that surrounding vegetation and trees will have to be cut back and pruned. Once the work is complete, measures will be taken to encourage vegetation and biodiversity around the high-voltage line. Elia has devised a nature management plan to this end, together with the Flemish conservation agency Agentschap Natuur en Bos and the forest management associations Bosgroep Zuiderkempen and Bosgroep Limburg. Various ecotypes will be able to flourish under the high-voltage line in the future. Along the edge of the woods, cover and edge vegetation consisting of tall forb and a shrub and coppice zone will form a transition to the mixed native woodlands.



*"Thanks to the nature management plan, we can transform the safety corridor around the high-voltage line into a highway for biodiversity. Various fauna and flora will spread via this green corridor. A similar project in Zutendaal and Genk has already demonstrated the benefit for biodiversity in Limburg."* – **Raf Vandenboer, Community Relations**



### More information

For more information about the Massenhoven-Van Eyck project, visit <https://www.elia.be/en/infrastructure-and-projects>. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Elia by email at [omwonenden@elia.be](mailto:omwonenden@elia.be) or on our free hotline 0800 11 089.



## About Elia Group

### One of Europe's top five players

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-east Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,271 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, Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. At the same time, Elia Group is 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, 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, 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 operates the first subsea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

Elia Group is a listed holding company whose core shareholder is the municipal holding company Publi-T.

**More information: [elia.be](https://www.elia.be)**

### Contact

#### Project Communication

Pieter Verlaak | M +32 (0)472 76 30 80 | [pieter.verlaak@elia.be](mailto:pieter.verlaak@elia.be)

#### Elia Transmission Belgium SA/NV

Boulevard de l'Empereur 20 | Keizerslaan 20 | 1000 Brussels | Belgium

