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Belgian Pavilion at Dubai World Expo opens in collaboration with Elia, BESIX and DEME

- Opening event dedicated to the global energy transition – Belgian expertise in this area is among the best in the world
- Even in a fossil-free society, cooperation between Europe and the Gulf region will remain crucial

DUBAI – The 35th World Expo has kicked off in Dubai under the slogan *Connecting Minds, Creating the Future*. Expo 2020 Dubai – the first World Expo to be held in the Gulf region – was postponed for a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Belgium is one of the 191 countries taking part in the 35th World Expo. The Belgian Pavilion was designed by BESIX Group and Belgian architects Vincent Callebaut and Assar. During the opening event, Belgian companies Elia, BESIX and DEME discussed the challenges brought on by a fossil-free society. The Gulf region can play an important role in greening our energy-intensive industries.

As key sponsors of the Belgian Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai, Elia, BESIX and DEME aim to demonstrate that there is more to Belgium than beer, chocolate and waffles. Not only are they focused on making our society more sustainable, but they are also all pioneering companies in their respective industries. Leveraging their experience and know-how, Elia, BESIX and DEME have grown into international players – a fact they want to highlight in Dubai.

According to Elia Group CEO **Chris Peeters**, the Gulf region has the potential and space to provide sustainable energy in the form of both electricity and gas. *“This means the Middle East is an important partner for making our energy-intensive industries – for example, the Belgian chemical and steel sectors – more sustainable.*

Frank Jeuniaux, DEME Group’s Middle East Area Manager, also sees hydrogen playing an important role in decarbonising heavy industry. *“As pioneers in the development, construction and financing of offshore wind farms, we want to capitalise on our vast expertise to produce, transport and store green hydrogen which has been created using renewable energy sources. In collaboration with different partners, DEME is currently working on a number of projects, including the HYPOR Duqm project in Oman, which aims to produce green hydrogen.”*

BESIX, which developed and built the Belgian Pavilion, wants to demonstrate in Dubai that innovative changes are also underway in the construction sector. For example, the buildings of the future will not only be more energy-efficient, but also energy-smart.

According to **Olivier Crasson**, General Manager at BESIX Middle East, flexible energy management will make it possible to better align the energy consumption of buildings with the variable production of renewable energy. *“This is*



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how the construction sector will be able to support the energy transition without compromising on consumer comfort. At the same time, consumers will benefit from cheaper energy bills.”

This is not the first time that Elia, BESIX and DEME have worked together. DEME and Elia have completed multiple joint projects aimed at integrating offshore wind into the electricity system. Moreover, Elia and BESIX worked together within the Internet of Energy (IO.Energy) ecosystem on a pilot concept that aligns the energy management of smart buildings with the needs of a renewable electricity system.

The World Expo in Dubai will run until 31 March 2022.



About ELIA GROUP

As a Group comprising two system operators in Belgium (Elia) and Germany (50Hertz), our mission is to realise the climate ambitions of the European Green Deal. We are therefore accelerating our investment programme. We are preparing our on- and offshore grid infrastructure for the integration of large volumes of renewable generation in order to electrify our society in a sustainable way. We are increasingly doing this in cooperation with other sectors and other countries. To maintain a reliable electricity system in this rapidly changing context, we are investing heavily in digitalisation. In addition to our social commitments, we are also improving our own internal activities and embedding sustainable practices into our strategy. In this way, we are actively working to accelerate the net-zero society.

Elia Group is active in the Middle East via its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). EGI offers consultancy and engineering services related to the international energy market and develops power system projects for third parties. As a wholly owned subsidiary of Elia Group, EGI benefits from the quality and expertise of two large European system operators, each with a solid track record and many decades of experience in the energy sector.

www.elia.be | www.eliagroup.eu

ABOUT DEME Group

DEME is a world leader in the specialised fields of dredging, solutions for the offshore energy industry, infra marine and environmental works. The company can build on more than 140 years of know-how and is a front runner in innovation and new technologies. DEME's vision is to work towards a sustainable future by offering solutions for global challenges: a rising sea level, a growing population, reduction of CO2 emissions, polluted rivers and soils and the scarcity of natural resources. DEME can rely on 5,200 highly skilled professionals and a modern fleet of over 100 vessels.

www.deme-group.com

ABOUT BESIX

BESIX is a leading Belgian group, based in Brussels and operating in 25 countries and on 5 continents, in the construction, real estate development and concessions sectors. Active since 1909, its iconic achievements include Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the tallest tower in the world, buildings of the European Parliament in Brussels as well as the Grand Egyptian Museum, on the Giza pyramids plateau. The Group's engineering department enables BESIX to carry out complex and unique projects, particularly in terms of technical and environmental aspects.

Its Middle-East subsidiary, operating in the region since 1966, has been a driving force in the development of the Arabian Peninsula, particularly in the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. In the United Arab Emirates, BESIX and its subsidiary have notably participated to the construction of the Burj Khalifa, the Dubai Tram, the Emirates Palace, the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, the Dubai Water Canal, the Ferrari World theme park as well as major terminals and port facilities. In addition to construction, the group operates and maintains projects through public-private partnership, including water treatment and waste-to-resource facilities in multiple emirates.

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