

PRESS RELEASE | 17 May 2023

Elia fits bird diverters to its high-voltage lines by helicopter

Ampsin (Amay) | For the first time, Elia, the Belgian electricity transmission operator, is using a helicopter to fit bird diverters. This technique is used to ensure the safety of workers on this hard-to-reach line. It also offers the advantage of working faster. Elia will equip the high-voltage line with 270 bird diverters. These diverters allow birds to see the lines better and thus avoid them. This action is part of the Elia Group's sustainability programme, ActNow, which includes limiting the impact of our infrastructure on the environment. Diverters have already been fitted to 140 km of high-voltage lines.

- 270 diverters will be fitted in 3 days;
- With a diverter fitted every 20 metres, almost 3 km of high-voltage lines will be made bird-safe;
- Studies show that these diverters can prevent 90% of bird collisions with high-voltage lines.

Safer and faster work in inaccessible places

Fitting diverters manually, with the help of baskets (nacelles) that slide over the conductors, involves very strict safety measures for the protection of workers and takes much longer. Using a helicopter for this operation is faster and safer for the crews. It avoids sliding on the ground wire, which is too thin to support the weight of such an installation. In practice, the pilot positions the helicopter above the line and the operators descend in a nacelle to the height of the line. The team will be able to place each diverter at approximately 20-metre intervals on the ground wire. More than 100 diverters can be placed per day in this way. This work is made possible by the expertise of a company specialising in this field. Airtelis, a subsidiary of the French transmission system operator RTE, will install the diverters, drawing on its solid experience in this field.

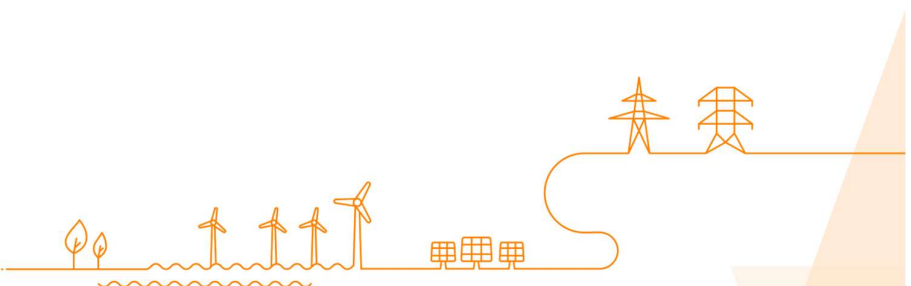
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Nearly 140 km of lines already protected in Belgium

This action adds to a trend that began several years ago in Belgium and is reflected in an action taken as part of our sustainability programme, ActNow. In order to limit the impact of its infrastructure on the environment and particularly on birds, Elia has been working closely with Natagora in Wallonia and Natuurpunt in Flanders over the past decade. As bird experts of these NGOs have mapped out the collision risk for the entire Belgian high-voltage grid, Elia knows which lines pose the greatest risk to birds. Currently, almost 140 km of the affected high-voltage lines in Belgium have diverters to reduce the risk of birds colliding with them. Elia has set itself the interim target of fitting 200 km of lines with diverters by 2030 and will identify and prioritise the most important risk areas. Since March, Elia has also been part of the international "SafeLines4Birds" consortium, which paves the way for even more innovative techniques and for the dissemination of our expertise across Europe.

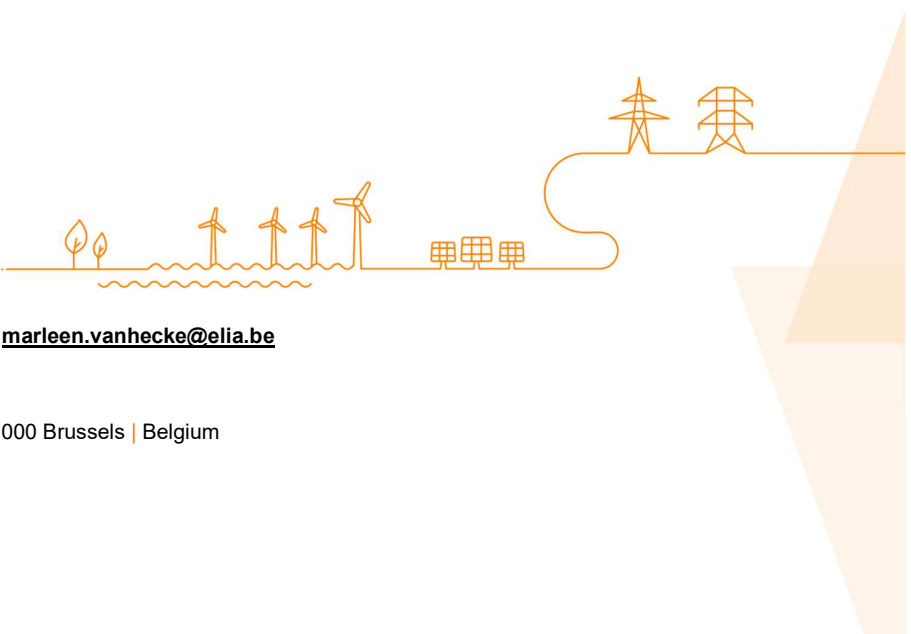
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About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five TSOs

Elia Group is a key player in electricity transmission. We ensure that production and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. Through our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and the north and east of Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,349 km of high-voltage connections, meaning that we are one of Europe's top 5 transmission system operators. With a reliability level of 99.99 %, we provide society with a robust power grid, which is important for socioeconomic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition, helping to establish a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We are making the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and incorporating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy into our grid, we are promoting both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of society. We also continuously optimise our operational systems and develop new market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus further facilitating the energy transition.

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 are responding to the rapid increase in renewable energy by constantly adapting our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. In carrying out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication channels between all relevant parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to different players across the sector in order to build the energy system of the future.

International focus

In addition to its activities as a transmission system operator, Elia Group provides consulting services to international customers through its subsidiary Elia Grid International. In recent years, the Group has launched new non-regulated activities such as re.alto - the first European marketplace for the exchange of energy data via standardised energy APIs - and WindGrid, a subsidiary which will continue to expand the Group's overseas activities, contributing to the development of offshore electricity grids in Europe and beyond.

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

eliagroup.eu

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