



## Elia to start removing fallen high-voltage lines from houses in Leest tomorrow. First residents can return home by Monday evening.

- Elia's top priority is to secure the impacted homes in the area around Vinkstraat, followed by the area between the sports hall (Dorpstraat) and the railway line (Moststraat).
- Stringent safety measures will be put in place and traffic will be diverted during the work.
- At the same time, Elia will bolster the local transmission network to optimise security of supply for the city of Mechelen.

**LEEST – MECHELEN | Now that the preparatory work has been completed, Elia will start removing the fallen high-voltage lines in Leest tomorrow. The lines fell on ten houses on Tuesday as a result of a powerful storm that toppled nine high-voltage pylons. Alongside Mechelen's municipal authorities, Elia has drawn up an action plan for the days ahead. The situation should be back to normal within a week. Elia's top priority is to secure the impacted houses so that residents can return home as soon as possible. Stringent safety measures will be put in place during the work and traffic will be diverted.**

Since Tuesday evening, national transmission system operator Elia has been working hard to restore the high-voltage grid in the Leest, Heffen and Hombeek areas, with several Elia teams making extraordinary efforts over the past few days. In the immediate aftermath of Tuesday's heavy storm, the focus was on addressing the electrical emergency, namely maintaining the power supply and earthing the fallen power lines (to rule out any risks in the event of a lightning strike).

A 40-person task force was then set up immediately afterwards. Since Wednesday, this task force has undertaken preparatory work to ensure the safety and security of the immediate area and our onsite staff. Removing the fallen lines is complex. Since a lot of force is still being exerted on the lines, Elia has to work very carefully to prevent the lines from flying away and causing any further damage once they have been cut.

Until sunset on Wednesday, work continued on reinforcing those pylons which were still standing to the north and south of the impacted region, with the first houses in the area being cleared. Just prior to this, the first conductors were removed (including those above the N16) and some of the damaged roofs were repaired in collaboration with the fire services. Staff worked until late last night to place tarpaulins on the damaged roofs to protect the impacted houses from rain.

**Now that the preparatory work has been completed, over the coming days, Elia will focus on removing the lines. After that, efforts will shift to dealing with the pylons that were toppled. Our staff will work from 7 a.m. until sunset, including on the weekend.**

### In and around Vinkstraat

The area around Vinkstraat (between Heirstraat and the sports hall in Dorpstraat) will be addressed first, since that is where the situation is most precarious for those residents who were impacted by the storm. Preparatory works will start there today and equipment and machinery will be delivered to the site. The cables – seven in all – will be removed in several stages, from Saturday to Monday.

This work is complex. The lines will be lifted up, temporarily secured, cut at both ends and then rolled up safely on the street. We aim to have finished this phase of the work by Monday evening.

**If everything goes according to plan, local residents in the area around Vinkstraat (between Heirstraat and the sports hall in Dorpstraat) will be able to return home by the evening of Monday 15 July at the latest. Elia and the fire services will give the area the all-clear.**

### In and around the sports hall (Dorpstraat) and the railway line (Moststraat)

The next phase will focus on the zone between the sports hall (Dorpstraat) and the railway line (Moststraat).

**By next Friday 19 July, the situation should be back to normal here too.**

### Removing fallen pylons

Once the lines have been removed, the pylons will be removed. Here, the priority will be on removing the pylon that fell on a house in Kouterweg and the pylon that fell near the sports hall in Dorpstraat.

### Stringent safety measures

Stringent safety measures will be put in place while the repairs are underway.

- **Local residents in the immediate area will be asked to stay indoors while the high-voltage lines are being removed. Our onsite employees will notify local residents accordingly.**
- **No one will be allowed to move underneath the high-voltage lines during the work. Working alongside Elia, the police will temporarily divert traffic in the affected areas.**

### Temporary change to traffic rules

- From Saturday 13 July to Monday 15 July, Vinkstraat will be closed between Hopstraat to Dorpstraat near the sports hall.
- Traffic diversions will be in place:
  - o from Tisselt via Blaasveldstraat;
  - o from Mechelen via Molenbeekstraat towards the N16 as well as via Kouter towards Hombeek.
- The area itself will be partly accessible from Dorpstraat and partly accessible via Molenbeekstraat.



### Strengthening security of supply

In the wake of the storm, Elia, working with the distribution system operator Fluvius, successfully maintained the power supply to the affected region; however, additional work is needed here too.

Given the loss of the impacted high-voltage line, the local network must be bolstered in order to better protect it from any additional incidents. Over the last few days, Elia's experts have been working on a technical solution that will involve the deployment of a backup line. Elia will work with the municipal authorities and relevant landowners with the aim of launching an emergency procedure to build five temporary pylons. Elia would like to start this work on 23 July. The backup line should be operational by mid-August.

### Contact

Elia will keep residents in the affected neighbourhoods informed of the situation by sending out letters today. Anyone with questions can contact Elia's onsite staff or call the free hotline on 0800 11 089.

**The work over the week ahead will be challenging, but the task force is well prepared and has the necessary expertise to ensure it is carried out safely. Elia would like to take this opportunity to thank the residents who have been affected for their understanding and patience and to praise the highly professional cooperation and support demonstrated by the municipal authorities and emergency services.**

## About Elia Group

### One of Europe's top 5 TSOs

Elia Group is a key player in electricity transmission. We ensure that generation and consumption are balanced 24/7, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. Met filialen in België (Elia) en het noorden en oosten van Duitsland (50Hertz) beheren we 19.460,5 km aan hoogspanningsverbindingen. meaning that we are one of Europe's top 5 transmission system operators. With a reliability level of 99.99%, we provide society with the robust power grid that is so important to socio-economic 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 engage in proactive stakeholder management 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](http://eliagroup.eu)

**For further information, please contact:**

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