



## Elia clears fallen high-voltage lines in Leest one day ahead of schedule; residents will be able to return to the homes that were impacted by the storm

**LEEST- MECHELEN** | After a long day, Elia's teams succeeded in removing the high-voltage lines that had fallen on 10 homes following last Tuesday's storm. This means that the residents of the Vinkstraat neighbourhood can return home tonight. The fire services and staff from distribution system operator Fluvius will accompany each resident home, ensuring that their houses are habitable. The work to clear the fallen high-voltage lines went more smoothly than planned, particularly since it had been very well prepared. There was a great deal of tensile force still being exerted on the fallen lines, so the removal work had to be undertaken very carefully. Elia's solid preparation ahead of the work paid off. Additionally, Mechelen's residents were asked to use less electricity today, which also made a difference.

### Solidarity

50 or so members of staff from Elia worked onsite today alongside 20 technicians from Equans, one of its subcontractors. No unexpected problems arose and our teams were motivated as they undertook the work, since their progress was followed and encouraged on by local residents. Some locals even showed up with pastries for our teams this morning!

The solidarity demonstrated by the residents of Mechelen was a great help. Elia and Fluvius had asked them to consume less electricity during the work and they responded brilliantly. On a normal Saturday, the average demand for electricity is around 50 MW, but today it stood at 20 MW - less than half its usual level. This is unheard of. We would like to thank Mayor Bart Somers as well as the local residents and businesses of Mechelen who went above and beyond in their support for our work. Their lower levels of electricity use really made a difference today in terms of not overloading the power grid, thus ensuring that the power supply was never compromised.

### Proper assessment of risks

Residents and businesses were asked to use less electricity because one of the two high-voltage lines (70 kV) that currently supplies Mechelen and the surrounding area had to be temporarily taken offline. This line is close to the 150 kV line that was destroyed by the storm. It would have been too risky to keep the line in service during the work. If the 150 kV line were to spring back while being cut (due to the high tensile force still being exerted on it) and hit the 70 kV line, an electric arc could form that could be fatal for anyone in the area. Members of staff from Elia were available onsite throughout the day to answer questions from local residents and ask people close to the affected houses to stay indoors during the work.

### A long day

Elia started removing the tarpaulins on the roofs of the affected houses this morning at around 7 a.m. These had been installed on Thursday evening because rain had been forecasted for Friday. Following some preparatory work

and a safety briefing, the machines were rolled into place and the actual work began. Two of the seven high-voltage lines were removed in the morning, with another five being removed in the afternoon.

### **Returning home**

During last Tuesday's storm, nine pylons were destroyed across a distance of four kilometres. The high-voltage lines mainly ended up in fields, but some also fell onto 10 or so houses. Now that all the fallen lines have been removed, residents can return home. They will be accompanied by the fire services and Fluvius, who will check that the affected homes are habitable. Elia would again like to thank local residents for their patience and cooperation. We have been in close contact with them since Tuesday evening.

### **Everything to be cleared up by next week**

After a few eventful days, most of Elia's teams will take the day off tomorrow. Some will continue to clean up today's site. Work on removing the other high-voltage lines and fallen pylons will start on Monday. A new phase will then begin, with the focus being on bolstering Mechelen's security of supply.

Over the last few days, Elia's experts have been working on a technical solution that involves the deployment of a backup line. Elia is working with the municipal authorities and relevant landowners on an emergency procedure that will involve the construction of five temporary pylons. Elia would like to start this work on 23 July. The backup line should be operational by mid-August.

## 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. Through our subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and the north and east of Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,460.5 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 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.

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