



Ventilus: public consultation from 8 November to 7 December

- The environmental permit applications for Ventilus have been declared complete and admissible, which means that the public consultation can begin.
- Elia is holding seven information sessions along the entire route.
- Elia still aims to start work next year.

WEST FLANDERS | A public consultation will be held from 8 November to 7 December 2025 on the Ventilus project, as part of the environmental permit applications. The applications submitted by Elia in late September have been declared complete and admissible by the administration. Between 8 November and 7 December, anyone is free to submit views, comments and/or objections. Elia is also holding seven information sessions in November along the entire 82-kilometre Ventilus route to inform people about the project. Local residents will receive a personal letter inviting them to attend. In addition, Elia will present a digital tool providing an accurate representation of the project's impact.

The Ventilus connection is a missing link in the Belgian high-voltage grid and will ensure a more robust grid and a more reliable electricity system. It will run from the landfall point – where energy generated offshore is brought onshore – to Avelgem, a distance of 82 kilometres. A quarter (21 km) will consist of a new overhead line, while existing overhead lines will be upgraded or reused on a large part of the route. Around 60 new high-voltage pylons are also being built, and 10 kilometres of line will be laid underground. The Ventilus project is vital for bringing new wind power generated in the North Sea onshore. Ventilus will also reinforce the electricity grid, which is necessary for the further industrial development of West Flanders as well as security of supply for households and businesses. Following approval of the Regional Land Use Plan (GRUP) by the Flemish Government, Elia was required to prepare and submit the environmental permit application.

Five environmental permit applications

The sheer scale of Ventilus (entailing numerous application documents and plans) means that there are five environmental permit applications, each covering a part of the 82-kilometre route: Beach–Gezelle (from landfall to the first high-voltage substation, Gezelle in Bruges, which is being extended), Gezelle, Gezelle–Izegem (a combination of an upgrade to the existing overhead line, a new underground cable, and a new overhead line along the E403), Izegem (the second high-voltage substation to be extended) and Izegem–Avelgem (existing line to be reinforced).

Elia submitted the environmental permit applications for the first time in late June, but, as with other large permitting projects, the administration had further questions and requested additional information and clarification. Elia took the time this summer to study everything thoroughly and completed the environmental permit applications in late September. The Flemish Department of the Environment has now declared the environmental permit applications complete and admissible. The next step is the public consultation, which will run from 8 November to 7 December.

Seven information sessions

To keep everyone properly informed, Elia is organising seven information sessions during the public consultation, at various locations along the route. Each session will last from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Anyone wishing to attend must register in advance by email, telephone or using a QR code on the invitation.

1. **Tuesday 4 November** in the **Stadshallen** (Markt 7, BE-8000 Bruges): Beach–Gezelle, Gezelle, Gezelle–Izegem
2. **Wednesday 5 November** at **Salons Denotter** (Torhoutsesteenweg 76, BE-8210 Zedelgem): Gezelle–Izegem
3. **Thursday 13 November** at **UZIEN** (De Cassinastraat 10, BE-8540 Deerlijk): Izegem–Avelgem
4. **Monday 17 November** at **Evenementenhal De Ark** (Melkerijstraat 2, BE-8850 Ardooie): Gezelle–Izegem
5. **Tuesday 18 November** at **t SOK** (Hogestraat 15, BE-8870 Kachtem): Izegem–Avelgem
6. **Wednesday 19 November** at **OC De Schouw** (Statiestraat 113, BE-8810 Lichtervelde): Gezelle–Izegem
7. **Tuesday 25 November** at the **Vaernewijck events venue** (Hulstsestraat 217, BE-8520 Kuurne): Izegem, Izegem–Avelgem

"We're holding these information sessions because it's important that affected households get the right information. It isn't a required part of the procedure, but there's a lot of misinformation around, and we hope that this will partly remove resistance based on false information. Residents living within around 250 metres of an electrical facility (underground cable, overhead line, high-voltage substation or terminal tower) will be personally invited by a letter sent to their home address. Most of those directly affected (such as farmers on whose land a high-voltage pylon is due to be built) have already been contacted by Elia over the past two years and given the required information. Such discussions have been constructive."

Lotte Van der Stockt, Project Communication Officer

At the information sessions, Elia will provide more information about Ventilus, how an underground cable or overhead line is installed, the compensation for households living, for example, in the immediate vicinity of the new 380-kV overhead line, and the compensation for businesses and farmers. Elia will also present the new update to its Project Atlas at these events. The Project Atlas includes visual representations of the overhead lines based on the actual location of the high-voltage pylons. These give an impression of the impact on the surrounding area. For the high-voltage substations and terminal towers, the Project Atlas also clearly shows the landscaping measures (e.g. green buffer) that will be implemented. The Project Atlas is publicly available to everyone at <https://elia.projectatlas.app/ventilus/> (in Dutch).

Ventilus schedule

When the public consultation is over, the Flemish administration will review the comments, questions and suggestions received. It will then be up to the Flemish Government to approve the environmental permits. Once these permits have been secured, Elia can start work. Elia still aims to begin work next year, so that Ventilus can enter service in the course of 2029–2030.

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. We operate 8,903 km of high-voltage connections in Belgium, 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 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 (EGI). 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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