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Elia launches its first Academic Board in collaboration with Belgian Universities

Brussels | On October 28, Elia launched its first Academic Board in Belgium. This board establishes a new collaborative platform where Elia and the academic community can discuss the challenges and issues crucial to the future of the Belgian energy sector. Among the main objectives of the board are top-priority topics that have a direct effect both on the industry, and end-users: Accelerating academic research towards a green, digital and resilient energy future; Developing skills to ensure that the electricity industry has the right talents to face future challenges. This first meeting was dedicated to the market and grid stability.

"The launch of the Academic Board is an important step in establishing a deeper relationship between Elia and the Belgian universities. It creates a real forum for discussion of the strategic issues of tomorrow. We hope that all this multi-disciplinary knowledge source will lead us to even more robust solutions for the management of the electricity system. "

Frederic Dunon, Deputy CEO of Elia

21 academics to open up new avenues of thought

Through its central position in the Belgian electricity system, Elia has an overview of the challenges that must be met in the future. However, Elia is always looking for new ways to expand and strengthen its skills and expertise. That's why 21 professors and researchers from different regions of the country were gathered together at this first Academic Board. The participants came from a variety of backgrounds, such as power systems engineering, energy economics, sociology, information technology or marine biology, each bringing their own specific knowledge.

Structural market reforms and grid stability

This first day of discussions and research was dedicated to two main topics: structural reforms of the EU electricity markets and grid strength with high penetration of power electronics. The discussions led to the definition of some open points that will be addressed in future projects in collaboration between Elia's experts and the academic community.

With regard to the market, the working group identified three main challenges:

- Consumer behaviour or how to shift demand through 3 axes: understanding consumer habits through a structured and multidisciplinary approach; new products to incite certain targeted consumers to change their demand; deeper consumer segmentation based on specific criteria to create more effective market products.
- Coordination between TSOs and DSOs is necessary to maximize social welfare.
- The grid has to be represented better in order to have more optimal redispatch.

On the theme of the grid strength, the Board identified two main areas of work that are essential for progress in this area:

- Accessibility and transparency of TSO and DSO data. Based on this data, academics and others will be able to propose solutions to Elia for security threats and to improve and optimize forecasts through data analysis and models.
- Identifying the health of the system. Clear indicators will be required to estimate the behavior of the system in 2040, 2050. A study to identify the right KPIs to characterize the system is a proposed solution.

Next steps

The challenges in energy sector defined at the first Elia Academic Board will be translated into projects. They will be launched by Elia in collaboration with the Board Members in upcoming year. To ensure ongoing result-oriented cooperation, Elia's Innovation Department will work out and release the framework for academic-supported projects. Elia Group will continue to strengthen collaboration with Belgian universities to build and facilitate concrete academic ecosystem in the energy sector.

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 19,192 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 our activities as a transmission system operator, we provide various consulting services to international customers through our third subsidiary, Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia (in Belgium) is also part of the Nemo Link consortium, which operates the first subsea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

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

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: eliagroup.eu & elia.be



For further information, please contact:

Corporate Communications

Marleen Vanhecke | M +32 486 49 01 09 | marleen.vanhecke@elia.be
Elia Transmission Belgium SA/NV