



PRESS RELEASE | 07 April 2023

Elia, Natuurpunt and Natagora join forces with the SafeLines4Birds consortium to reduce bird mortality along power lines

Elia, Natuurpunt and Natagora are the Belgian stakeholders in the international SafeLines4Birds consortium which aims to reduce bird mortality around power lines. The success of this project relies on extensive collaboration between the consortium partners, which include transmission system operators (TSOs), distribution system operators (DSOs), NGOs and scientific experts from France, Belgium, Portugal, Germany and the United States. The project is co-financed by the European Union's LIFE programme and has a budget of nearly €14.2 million. Launched in March this year, it will run until December 2028.

Collision with power lines, electrocution and disturbances during the breeding season are major threats to some birds, causing the deaths of millions of individuals worldwide each year, and in some cases posing a real threat to population viability. SafeLines4Birds is therefore focusing on 13 species most impacted by power lines in France, Belgium and Portugal. To reduce mortality from collisions, innovative approaches will be adopted, including the testing of new bird flight diverter devices such as the US ultraviolet Avian Collision Avoidance System (ACAS). In order to reduce the risk of electrocution, hazardous electricity poles will be insulated, with bird deterrent devices being installed at the most high-risk sites. Platforms and perches will also be fitted to protect perching or nesting birds.

All results from these actions will be gathered and shared to better understand the interactions between birds and infrastructure and to assess the effectiveness of the mitigation measures tested.

About the consortium

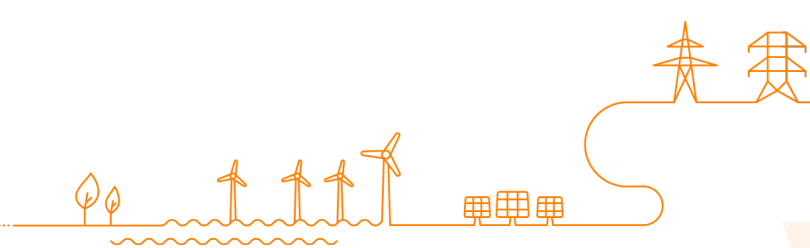
For further information, please contact:

Corporate Communication

Jean Fassiaux (FR) | M +32 474 46 87 82 | jean.fassiaux@elia.be Marie-Laure Vanwanseele (NDL) | M +32 499 86 51 58 | marielaudivanwanseele@elia.be
Marleen Vanhecke (EN) | M +32 486 49 01 09 | marleen.vanhecke@elia.be

Elia Transmission Belgium SA/NV

Boulevard de l'Empereur 20 | Keizerslaan 20 | 1000 Brussels | Belgium





The project is coordinated by a French NGO, *Ligue Pour La Protection des Oiseaux* (LPO France). In Belgium, Elia will coordinate and implement actions on the ground and on its grid in close collaboration with the NGOs Natuurpunt and Natagora for the selection of sites. The other French partners are Enedis (DSO) and RTE (TSO). In Portugal, the NGO Sociedade Portuguesa Para O Estudo das Aves (SPEA) and E-Redes (DSO) are participating in the project, as is BIOPOLIS-CiBIO (a non-profit private company active in research into the impact of energy structures on biodiversity). Partners also include the Renewables Grid Initiative (RGI), a Berlin-based environmental NGO involving collaboration between European TSOs. Finally, EDM International (USA) brings a team of avian specialists to the consortium.

Nearly 140 km of lines already protected in Belgium

This consortium is adding to a dynamic that has already been present in Belgium for several years. In order to limit the impact of its infrastructure on the environment and particularly on birds, Elia works closely with Natagora in Wallonia and Natuurpunt in Flanders to limit the impact of its infrastructure on the environment and in particular on birds. As bird experts have mapped out the collision risk for the entire Belgian high-voltage grid, Elia knows which lines pose the greatest risk to birds. Currently, 140 km of high-voltage lines on the territory have diverters. Elia has set itself the interim target of installing 200 km of lines with diverters by 2030 and will identify and prioritise the most important risk areas. The work of the consortium will pave the way for even more innovative techniques and for the dissemination of our expertise across Europe.:



About Elia Group

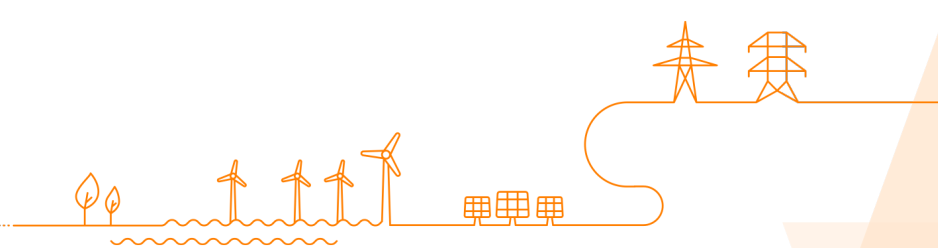
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One of Europe's top five TSOs

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 Elia Group is 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 various consulting services to international customers via its subsidiary Elia Grid International. Recently, Elia Group launched new non-regulated activities such as re.alto, the leading European market platform for the exchange of energy-related data via standardised APIs in the energy field, and WindGrid, a subsidiary that will continue to develop Elia Group's activities abroad, contributing to the expansion of offshore electricity grids in Europe and beyond.

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

eliagroup.eu

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