



Elia making every effort to restore high-voltage grid in Mechelen region following storm

LEEST - MECHELEN | The high-voltage system operator Elia has set up a task force to secure the high-voltage line in and around Leest (Mechelen). Multiple teams are already on-site and taking stock of the damage done to homes alongside their owners. Yesterday afternoon's extreme weather toppled nine high-voltage pylons – across a distance of four kilometres – in the Leest area. It also brought down conductors (high-voltage cables), most of which ended up in fields and some of which fell onto around 15 homes. No one was injured, but the material damage was extensive and the repair work will take months to complete.

Task force

One day after the storm, Elia is taking stock of the damage done to the high-voltage grid in the Leest area. First and foremost, the high-voltage pylons that remain unscathed following yesterday's storm will be stabilised. Indeed, the toppling of nine pylons along the line means that the pull exerted on the other pylons has increased. Next, the conductors that have fallen across a distance of several kilometres will be removed. The priority here will be to clear the roads and 15 affected homes, alongside removing the conductor that fell near a railway track and those that fell in some fields. The damaged high-voltage pylons will be dismantled at a later stage.

Elia's staff are remaining in the area in order to assist and inform local residents about the situation. Elia has also been involved in information sessions organised by the municipal authorities. Around 10 of the homes damaged by the high-voltage line will not be accessible until the middle of next week. However, residents may enter their homes to collect personal items if they are accompanied by staff from Elia and firefighters. Shelter was provided for local residents last night in consultation with the municipal crisis management unit.

Backup line

There was no risk of electrocution during the incident and the power running through the high-voltage line was automatically switched off. The line was also earthed in order to avoid any further danger, such as from lightning strikes for example. Despite the extreme circumstances, the power supply via Elia's grid was maintained at all times. However, part of the local low-voltage network operated by Fluvius went offline due to it being struck by a high-voltage conductor. As a result, a number of homes don't have any power.

Elia is currently investigating the construction of a backup line near Leest. At the same time, studies will be launched in order to begin repairing the damaged line.



Unusual situation

In Elia's 23-year history as the high-voltage system operator, this is one of the most serious incidents that it has faced in one single location. Elia is and will remain in close contact with Mechelen's crisis management unit and is giving first priority to the repair work. Teams from other regions and projects will be called in so they too can work on the damaged high-voltage line.

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 19,460.5 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 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 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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