

PRESS RELEASE | Brussels, 24 February 2021



BESIX, the construction company, and Elia, the grid operator, want to give smart buildings an active role in the electricity system.

- 40% of our energy consumption comes from buildings
- In addition to being more energy-efficient, smart buildings also carry great potential in terms of flexible energy management
- Smart buildings strengthen the integration of renewable energy into the energy system

To achieve a climate-neutral society by 2050 as outlined in the European Green Deal, more than just an energy transition is needed. Other sectors can also contribute to the further decarbonisation of our society. Just as the advent of electric vehicles will have a major impact on decarbonisation in the short term, innovative changes are also being announced in the construction sector. For instance, the buildings of the future will not only be more energy-efficient, but also energy-smart. Thanks to flexible energy management, the energy consumed by buildings will be better matched to the variable production of renewable energy. The construction sector will thus support the energy transition without compromising on comfort. At the same time, consumers will be able to save on their energy bills.

To keep the electricity network in balance, supply and demand must be kept equal at all times. With the expected increase in renewable (and less predictable) energy production and the further electrification of our society, this challenge will become much greater in the future. To maintain the balance, there is a need for flexible balancing tools.

Today, flexibility is mainly provided by industry through increases or decreases in energy production. In the future, Elia also wants to use the flexibility that ordinary consumers will have through their control of electric cars, heat pumps, boilers and other applications. Digitalisation and market structure reform are both paving the way towards consumer centricity. The latter is a forward-looking concept that acts as a stepping stone towards the realisation of the European Green Deal.



In order to realise the climate targets, it is important that we cooperate with other sectors. In the short term, electric mobility is our big focus. The interaction of car batteries with our electricity system is occurring very quickly and in large volumes. But the next big step will be the integration of smart buildings. The cycle of innovation in construction is slower, but the impact will be all the greater, as 40 per cent of our energy consumption comes from buildings. By working together and using our combined expertise, we can test applications that will later be used in private homes.



Chris Peeters, CEO Elia Group



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The construction and real estate sectors are not yet widely digitised. However, as technology becomes increasingly accessible, digitisation and automation in these sectors will grow in importance. The concept of smart buildings is central to this. A building is 'smart' because it combines a pleasant environment with efficient consumption through the use of technology. Consumers can relax, because it is the buildings themselves which make decisions to optimise their performance, for example in terms of energy consumption.

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A lot of attention is paid to the renovation of buildings in post-Covid recovery plans. We must focus both on less energy consumption and also on smarter energy consumption. In this way, we will create more value for consumers, who will save on their energy bills and benefit from increased levels of comfort. Embedding a layer of technology in buildings is an important step towards a low-carbon society. A focus on this would give us Belgians an edge over neighbouring countries and it would highlight Belgium's knowledge economy.

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Rik Vandenberghe, CEO BESIX Group

Elia and BESIX have already worked together on the Internet of Energy (IO.Energy) ecosystem as part of the Enleash project. A pilot concept was tested, which looked at how large buildings with complex needs (such as offices and hospitals) could play an active role in the energy system. In future, they could do this by producing, holding or using their energy only when it is useful or needed.

BESIX and Elia will now work together on a joint vision statement and a project structure will be set up to share knowledge, identify opportunities and develop projects. The partners will also jointly promote the importance of smart buildings. Joining forces and the sharing of knowledge about smart buildings and electrical system operations are concrete steps that will further contribute to the much-needed energy transition.

Learn more about Enleash at: <https://www.ioenergy.eu/enleash>



About BESIX

BESIX is a leading Belgian group, based in Brussels and operating in 25 countries and on 5 continents, in the construction, real estate development and concessions sectors. Active since 1909, its iconic achievements include Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the tallest tower in the world, buildings of the European Parliament in Brussels as well as the Grand Egyptian Museum, on the Giza pyramids plateau.

The Group's engineering department enables BESIX to carry out complex and unique projects, particularly in terms of technical and environmental aspects.

BESIX has developed cutting-edge expertise in the energy performance of infrastructures. In 2020, for example, by combining sustainable solutions for electricity, ventilation and lighting, BESIX is building the first 100% CO2-neutral tunnel in the Benelux, in Rotterdam.

BESIX and its subsidiaries have often been pioneers in the field of energy performance of buildings. In Paris, Brussels and Rotterdam, the Group has contributed to the design and construction of buildings that meet the highest environmental certifications (BREEAM, LEED, Passive Building, Cradle-to-Cradle, etc.) and contribute to improving standards in the sector.

In 2019, the Group achieved revenues of EUR 3.3 billion. BESIX has about 12,000 employees active on 5 continents.

For more info: www.BESIX.com.

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Elia Transmission Belgium SA/NV



About Elia Group

One of Europe's top five players

Elia Group is active in electricity transmission. We ensure that production and consumption are balanced around the clock, supplying 30 million end users with electricity. With subsidiaries in Belgium (Elia) and north-east of Germany (50Hertz), we operate 19,271 km of high-voltage connections. As such, our group is one of Europe's top 5. With a reliability level of 99.999%, we give society a robust power grid, which is important for socio-economic prosperity. We also aspire to be a catalyst for a successful energy transition towards a reliable, sustainable and affordable energy system.

We make the energy transition happen

By expanding international high-voltage connections and integrating ever-increasing amounts of renewable energy production, Elia Group promotes both the integration of the European energy market and the decarbonisation of our society. Elia Group is also innovating its operational systems and developing market products so that new technologies and market parties can access our grid, thus making the energy transition happen.

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 respond to the rapidly changing energy mix, i.e. the increase in renewable energy, and constantly adapt our transmission grid. We also ensure that investments are made on time and within budget, with a maximum focus on safety. When we carry out our projects, we manage stakeholders proactively by establishing two-way communication with all affected parties very early on in the development process. We also offer our expertise to our sector and relevant authorities 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 through its subsidiary Elia Grid International (EGI). Elia is also part of the Nemo Link consortium that operates the first sub-sea electrical interconnector between Belgium and the UK.

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

More information: eliagroup.eu

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