

PRESS RELEASE | 6 December 2023

## King Philippe and Queen Mathilde visit the 50Hertz (Elia Group) facilities in Berlin in the presence of the German President and First Lady

- 50Hertz, a subsidiary of Belgian company Elia Group, is a tangible example of the strong economic and energy links between Belgium and Germany
- The synergies created between Elia in Belgium and 50Hertz in Germany have made Elia Group a European leader in electricity transmission
- Roundtable discussions and meetings about the energy transition and sustainability were held today in the presence of both countries' heads of state at the German system operator's headquarters (the Netzquartier)
- The participants then visited the 50Hertz tunnel located in Berlin; the project will be essential for accommodating the growing demand for electricity resulting from the electrification of society

**BERLIN | King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium visited the headquarters of 50Hertz, a German electricity transmission system operator and subsidiary of Belgian company Elia Group, as part of the Belgian state mission which is running from 5 to 7 December in Germany. Many Belgian political figures and socioeconomic players are part of the mission. Elia Group is a fine example of Belgian-German entrepreneurial success. The Group has leveraged the experience it has acquired as a result of operating in the different contexts of Germany (via 50Hertz) and Belgium (via Elia) to propel itself into the top 5 European utilities and be recognised as an expert in onshore and offshore electricity transmission infrastructure.**

### A royal delegation focused on economic relations and the energy transition

On the second day of Belgium's state mission, the royal couple and the delegation visited the headquarters of 50Hertz. King Philippe and German President Frank Walter Steinmeier attended a roundtable discussion with the heads of major Belgian and German energy sector companies (BASF, Port of Antwerp, Fluxys, Siemens, John Cockerill, Wintershall Dea, Open Grid Europe) to discuss topics such as the decarbonisation of industry, investments in renewable generation and the local integration of industry.

For more information, please contact:

#### Corporate Communication

Jean Fassiaux (FR) | M +32 474 46 87 82 | [jean.fassiaux@elia.be](mailto:jean.fassiaux@elia.be)

#### Elia Group SA/NV

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

A large delegation of political leaders is on hand for this state mission. Among those taking part in 50Hertz's visit today were Walloon Vice-Minister-President Philippe Henry, Minister-President of the German-speaking Community Oliver Paasch, and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs Hadja Lahbib. Belgian ambassador to Germany Geert Muylle also took part in the discussions on Wednesday.

### Elia Group: creating strength by leveraging the differences between the Belgian and German contexts

Elia Group comprises two electricity transmission system operators: Elia in Belgium and 50Hertz in Germany (Elia Group holds an 80% stake in 50Hertz, in partnership with the German investment bank KfW, which holds the remaining 20%). The company is a good example of successful Belgian-German collaboration. While the Group's shareholder base is Belgian, the Group's figures and business activities are just as German as they are Belgian. This unique position, based on two countries experiencing complementary situations, has enabled the Group to become a European leader in its sector. The different contexts in which it operates have unleashed synergies, enabling the Group acquire unique expertise and globally recognised experience in key segments of the energy sector. One example is the development of offshore grids and infrastructure: the Group has built some of the world's first hybrid interconnectors (interconnectors between two countries that are also linked to offshore wind farms). Elia Group is also innovating by building energy islands that will become the first key components of an offshore integrated European power grid. Another example is the integration of renewable generation. 50Hertz's grid is connected to a large number of renewable energy sources. In its control area, the German operator aims to integrate 100% renewable energies securely into the power system by 2032 (currently 70%). It also makes system operation highly complex due to the intermittent nature of renewable power. Belgium can learn a lot from Germany in this area.

### Promoting sustainability and improving diversity and inclusion

Queen Mathilde and the German First Lady, Elke Büdenbender, visited the Netzquartier control room, after which they met with representatives from German companies that are front-runners in embedding sustainability into their strategies. Elia Group was represented by Sylvia Borchering (Chief Human Resources Officer at 50Hertz). The ensuing discussions focused on improving diversity and inclusion as well as nature inclusive design (NID), the approach adopted by Elia in its work on the Princess Elisabeth Island in Belgium. Before leaving the 50Hertz headquarters, the royal and presidential couples admired the model of the Princess Elisabeth Island. Construction work on the island, which will be a world first, is set to begin in 2024. The artificial energy hub will transmit electricity generated by Belgian wind farms back to the mainland and will connect Belgium's grid to the grids of other countries.

### A tunnel serving as an electrical artery through Berlin

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The delegation then left the company headquarters to visit the Kabeldiagonale Berlin construction site. This tunnel will supply electricity to the German capital. Part of the line is currently being built in the middle of Berlin as a tunnel to replace an existing underground cable. The energy transition is significantly changing electricity flows, which in turn is requiring the construction of new lines and the expansion of the existing grid across Germany as a whole. As the 380 kV Kabeldiagonale in Berlin has become one of the most sought-after lines due to the expansion of renewable energy, 50Hertz must expand its capacity so it is ready for the future. Due to the growth in wind, solar and biomass power in the federal states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg, the line's load is constantly increasing. The tunnel, which has an internal diameter of three metres, runs through the middle of the city at a depth of 15 to 30 metres. The approach of running a cable through a tunnel under a city has already proven its worth. The approach will preserve Berlin's cityscape and will enable operation and maintenance activities to be undertaken without disrupting any traffic above ground.



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## 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 19,349 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 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 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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[eliagroup.eu](http://eliagroup.eu)

