

Press release

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50Hertz Transmission GmbH

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Chancellor Angela Merkel and Minister-President Erwin Sellering inaugurate new 50Hertz power line between Schwerin and Hamburg

50Hertz brings the Northern Line between Schwerin and Hamburg into operation / New 380 kV extra high voltage line increases security of supply for greater Hamburg / Better equilibrium for northern German wind power / Fourth interconnector between old and new Länder since the 1995 "electrical reunification"

Berlin/Schwerin, 18/12/2012 – The energy transition continues to pick up speed: today, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Erwin Sellering, Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, joined 50Hertz, the transmission system operator responsible for Northern and Eastern Germany, to formally put the Northern Line between Schwerin and Hamburg into operation. The 380 kV Northern Line, also known as the Wind Busbar, links the substations of Görries in Schwerin and Krümmel near Hamburg, bridging a distance of 88 kilometres in all. The total investment amounts to 93 million euros. The newly operational line significantly improves the security of supply for the greater Hamburg area in comparison to last year, finally reaching the same level as before the moratorium on nuclear energy. Furthermore, the wind power in northern Germany can be balanced more efficiently, allowing better use of the existing German north-south routes. Certain sections of this extra high voltage line include regional supplier WEMAG's 110 kV line, in accordance with the bundling principle for infrastructure projects to minimise the impact on land use and landscape. Construction work in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania started after the official approval procedure was concluded in September 2009 (completion in June 2010). For the Schleswig-Holstein section, line construction started in May 2012 and was completed in December 2012. This makes the Northern Line the fourth connection between eastern and western Germany since the so-called electrical reunification of 1995.

In her speech, Chancellor Angela Merkel underscored that the commissioning of the Northern Line is a milestone for the power supply of the future. Furthermore, the Northern Line contributes to the stabilisation of the entire German power grid: "A choice for renewable energy is a choice for grid expansion", said the Chancellor.

According to Minister-President Erwin Sellering, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania was one of the first Länder to realise the potential of renewable energy. "Renewable energy sources are already contributing to the generation of more than half of our electricity. Wind turbines alone supply two thirds of this green power. This puts us at the forefront of the energy turnaround. In 50Hertz, we have found a highly committed transmission system operator for

eastern Germany. We also need the new 380 kV line to transport large energy volumes from the coastal area to central and southern Germany."

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50Hertz CEO Boris Schucht, too, pointed out that the newly operational Northern Line significantly improves the integration of renewable energy into the grid: "The Wind Busbar is very capable of balancing the fluctuating generation of wind power between north-western and north-eastern Germany. When a wind front hits the German Bight, the Baltic Sea is usually still calm. If in such a scenario, not all north-western wind power can be transported southward, this green power will flow into our grid area. In that case, 50Hertz can fall back on its north-south transmission capacities. The same also applies in the opposite direction, when the Baltic winds are strong during a calm spell in the north-west."

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Schucht further said that the new line also represents a definite improvement to the security of supply for greater Hamburg in comparison to last year. Since the moratorium on nuclear power plants of 2011, the Hamburg area is only supplied by a single large-scale power station, the Brokdorf NPP. If the plant had broken down last winter during a cold period with low wind power feed-in, supply bottlenecks might have occurred. Now, however, these are remedied by the connection to the 50Hertz grid area.

Boris Schucht went on to say: "The Northern Line is yet another piece of the puzzle for the implementation of the energy transition. However, the transmission grid also requires further expansion, especially between north and south. That is why the future conversion of the grid infrastructure should be realised in substantially less time, while citizens should be involved at an earlier stage. Only in this manner can the energy transition be turned into an internationally acclaimed success story."

With its almost 800 collaborators, 50Hertz takes care of the operation and the expansion of the transmission network. Furthermore, the company is responsible for the management of the overall electrical system throughout the German Länder of Berlin, Brandenburg, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia. As transmission system operator active in the Central European market, 50Hertz is responsible for the secure integration of renewable energies, the development of the European electricity market and for maintaining a high level of security of supply. Since 2010, the Belgian grid operator Elia and the Australian infrastructure fund IFM are shareholders of 50Hertz, holding stakes of 60% and 40% respectively. As a European transmission system operator, 50Hertz is part of the Elia Group and a member of ENTSO-E, the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity.

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