

Press Release

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Extra-high-voltage line Pradella – La Punt Plans for expansion approved

The Federal Inspectorate for Heavy Current Installations (ESTI) has approved the plans to expand the line between Pradella and La Punt. The extra-high-voltage line will be upgraded to 2 x 380 kV by means of an additional line covering a length of 49 kilometres, which will eliminate grid congestion.

The existing extra high-voltage line between Pradella and La Punt constitutes a bottleneck in the Swiss and European transmission system. The congestion also hampers the transport of energy from hydropower in the Canton of Graubünden. Therefore, Swissgrid wants to upgrade and expand the line completely. Upgrading the existing 380 kV line is an important grid expansion project and part of Strategic Grid 2025, with which Swissgrid is increasing the security of supply in the Swiss and European transmission system. An additional benefit is that with the expansion of the line the Engadin can be supplied more reliably with power should its own electricity generation fail.

Engadiner Kraftwerke AG (EKW) implements extensive alternative measures

As an ecological compensatory measure for the expansion of the extra-high-voltage line and to ensure energy transport from the OVA Spin power plant, the existing EKW overhead line between Pradella and Zuoz will be dismantled and replaced by a new underground cable. To do this, EKW has to conclude a total of 643 easement contracts with property owners. Thereafter, around 1000 wooden pylons can be dismantled, which will effectively relieve the countryside and environment, as well as residents, from emissions. The alternative measures are legally required and were set and made binding by the authorities with the planning approval.

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Settlement with opponents

In December 2013, Swissgrid submitted the planning approval dossier for the grid construction project Pradella – La Punt to the ESTI. Several objections were submitted. Swissgrid addressed the concerns to the extent possible and found an amicable settlement with all opponents.

Based on this settlement, it was possible for the ESTI to grant approval on 11 May 2016 for construction of the almost 50 km long extra-high-voltage line between Pradella and La Punt. The construction work can be put out for tender in a few weeks and will most likely begin in 2017. The directly affected property owners and municipalities will be given guidance on this in good time.

Further information

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Powering the future—Swissgrid is the National Grid Company. As the owner of the Swiss extra-high-voltage grid, it is responsible for operating the grid safely and without discrimination and for maintaining, modernising and expanding the extra-high-voltage grid efficiently and with respect for the environment. Swissgrid employs over 430 highly skilled persons from 22 countries at its sites in Frick, Laufenburg, Uznach, Landquart, Ostermundigen, Prilly and Castione. As a member of the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E), it is also responsible for grid planning, system management and market design in the cross-border exchange of electricity in Europe. Several Swiss electricity companies jointly hold the entire share capital of Swissgrid.

Engadiner Kraftwerke AG (EKW) is in the business of the construction and operation of power plants to make the hydropower of the Engadin and neighbouring catchment areas useable. EKW has around 60 employees at the Zernez and Pradella (bei Scuol) locations. With average annual production of around 1400 million kilowatt hours, EKW is one of the biggest energy producers in Switzerland and covers three-quarters of the Bündner electricity consumption.