

Press release

Location, date Laufenburg, 13 September 2017

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Chamoson – Chippis extra-high-voltage line: Federal Court rejects complaints – construction of the new line will go ahead

With its ruling on 1st September 2017, the Federal Court has rejected the complaints against the Swiss Federal Administrative Court's decision on 14 December 2016, thus providing ultimate confirmation of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy's planning approval decision made on 19 January 2015. Swissgrid can now begin construction work on the overhead line between Chamoson and Chippis in the canton of Wallis.

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy had already approved the construction plans for the Chamoson – Chippis 380 kV overhead line back in 2010. Complaints against these plans were filed with the Swiss Federal Administrative Court. The Swiss Federal Administrative Court confirmed the overhead line project in August 2012, although a supplementary study was requested to investigate ways to reduce noise build-up as well as energy losses. This decision was confirmed by the Federal Court in May 2013.

Based on the supplementary investigations, the Swiss Federal Office of Energy approved the construction plans for the Chamoson – Chippis 380 kV line on 19 January 2015. The approved variant proposes bundling the conductors to form a triple conductor, which would result in significantly less noise pollution and fewer transmission losses. On 14 December 2016, the Swiss Federal Administrative Court rejected the complaints against the SFOE's decision. This ruling has now been confirmed by the Federal Court in the final instance.

The process ends, the work begins

The ruling by the Federal Court on 1st September 2017 officially brings to an end the planning approval procedure. Swissgrid will now begin work on constructing the 380 kV overhead line between Chamoson and Chippis. The first step is to conduct geotechnical studies, then to mark out and complete the necessary forestry work in the planned pylon locations. At the same time, Swissgrid intends to tender, and award the contracts for, the foundation work and manufacture of the pylons and equipment. Construction work itself will begin in 2018. Swissgrid will issue regular

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updates to local residents and those directly affected regarding the status of the various construction phases.

National significance

The overhead line will be around 30 kilometres long and will be built along a new route that is further away from residential areas. The lines for Swissgrid, SBB and Valgrid will be bundled onto the same pylons. This means that around 90 kilometres of lines and 322 pylons can be decommissioned.

The Chamoson – Chippis 380 kV overhead line is a core element of Swissgrid's «Strategic Grid 2025». Modernisation of the transmission grid is a key factor for a sustainable energy future. Other projects are planned in Wallis to reinforce and expand the extra-high-voltage grid, specifically to increase the voltage on the Bickingen – Chippis overhead line from 220 kV to 380 kV, as well as on the lines Chippis – Mörel and Mörel – Ulrichen (Gommer line).

It is necessary to realise these projects in order to transmit the energy produced in power plants in Valais – especially the energy in the new pumped-storage power plant Nant de Drance – to the consumer centres in Central Switzerland. This will eliminate one of the largest bottlenecks in the Swiss transmission grid.

Hook-up of the Chandoline substation

Swissgrid has built a new 220 kV substation in Chandoline in order to connect the two 220/125 kV transformers of Grand Dixence SA to the grid. The plant was connected to the existing 220 kV overhead line between Chamoson and Chippis in June 2017. The substation will be connected to the planned 380/220 kV overhead line at a later date as soon as the latter is operational.

For further information write media@swissgrid.ch or call +41 58 580 31 00.

Powering the future – Swissgrid is the national grid company. As the owner of Switzerland's extra-high-voltage grid, it is responsible for the safe operation of the grid without discrimination, and for maintaining, modernising and expanding the grid efficiently and with respect for the environment. Swissgrid employs over 450 highly qualified people from 24 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 hold the majority of Swissgrid's share capital.