

Working together for sustainable and high European energy security

14 March 2022 – currENT commends Ukrenergo, ENTSO-E, and all of its TSO members for their around-the-clock efforts to fast-track the integration of Ukraine into the Continental Europe Synchronous Era. currENT also strongly supports the agreement of the European Council to speed up the development of renewables and improve the interconnection of European electricity networks. currENT would like to stress, however, that getting the most out of our transmission networks is absolutely key to getting it done.

“At currENT Europe, our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine. We are ready to work with our colleagues across the industry to provide the secure and affordable energy that we all need” says Layla Sawyer, Secretary General of currENT.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has served as a stark wake-up call to reduce Europe's dependency on Russian fossil fuels. At Versailles, the European Council on 10-11 March agreed to phase out this dependency in part by *“speeding up the development of renewables and the production of their key components, as well as streamlining authorisation procedures to accelerate energy”* and *“completing and improving the interconnection of European gas and electricity networks and fully synchronising our power grids throughout the EU.”*¹ On March 8, at the press conference to present the REPowerEU Communication of the European Commission, Executive Vice-President Frans Timmermans had already stated that *“we need to speed up permitting procedures to grow our on- and offshore wind capacity, and rollout large-scale solar projects.”* The IEA also rightly lists ‘Accelerate the deployment of new wind and solar projects’ as one of the points in their ‘10-Point Plan to Reduce the European Union's Reliance on Russian Natural Gas.’

Yet in all of these proposals, there is insufficient attention to the grid capacity that is needed. currENT wants to see a cost-efficient, secure and sustainable energy supply delivered as quickly as possible. Getting the most out of our transmission networks will be key to getting it done. So will the planning, design and deployment of new, innovative pan-European electricity infrastructure, including offshore, that can accommodate the rapid increase in deployment of renewables.

Europe needs a faster expansion of grids, as well as related actions on public acceptance and administrative roadblocks. Time is of the essence, as delays are very costly to citizens. Not only in very high congestion costs, but also from the curtailment of renewables. Within months, grids can be optimised and reinforced through innovative grid technologies, while it takes 12 years on average to build more in Europe. Innovative grid technologies enable network operators to maximise the capacity on the existing grids, minimise constraint costs, increase network resilience, and create more flexibility on the network. As demonstrated in a recent study by Consentec², the ‘benefits of modern grid design’ can combine the available technologies in ways that are complementary and deliver value together. *‘The regulatory framework needs to support and reward TSOs to utilise technologies for grid enhancement. It does not do this today’* concludes Layla Sawyer.

¹ [Point 16 d and e of the Versailles Declaration, 10 and 11 March 2022](#)

² [Consentec Study, The Benefits of Innovative Grid Technologies, December 2021](#)