

German Legislation on high-voltage powerlines

Germany is to underground large parts of new high voltage lines in four pilot projects. This nationwide development follows recent policy developments in Lower Saxony. Key points are below. The German Ministry of Economics and Technology issued a press release 18 June at <http://luca.init-ag.de/BMWi/Navigation/Presse/pressemitteilungen,did=253752.html>

Last week, the German government introduced new legislation on transmission lines, which is expected to have major implications for the future use of overhead lines. The main points are:

- There is strong need for new EHV lines due to EU electricity transit, more conventional power plants in Germany due to nuclear “exit strategy” and more renewables
- 4 pilot EHV transmission line projects are agreed - Ganderkessee-St.Hulfe, Niederrhein-Diele, Weklar-Mahle and the section Altenfeld-Redwitz of the line Bad Lauchstadt-Redwitz. The lines are around 600km in total and around 30% is expected to be put underground
- The 4 pilot projects are critical to ensure security of energy supply in Germany “*it is essential to have high security of supply guaranteed*” Page 16/18/19 - they recommend partial undergrounding for them
- Additional cost to be shared among all electricity customers in Germany – page 2
- Partial undergrounding is “*more expensive, but speeds up construction, this in turn will contribute to improved competition which will reduce electricity prices*” - page 2
- Planning and authorisation procedures are to be streamlined into a “one-stop-shop” – only one court can be called upon once in case of disagreement – page 27
- **Transmission lines should not be placed within sensitive areas ie: 200m of buildings/400m of residential areas** plus an environmentally protected area in Thuringen for 4th pilot project – page 4
- 24 priority EHV lines are to be built – page 6/7
- **This is federal competence – it will apply to all of Germany** – page 28
- There is limited experience with EHV transmission cables – this is why the 4 pilots have been identified, to facilitate use of EHV UGC “widely” – page 31/32

News (21 Oct) from Salzburg, Austria - new draft provincial legislation requires underground cable options to be considered for high voltage lines (above 110 kV) within 400 metres of settlements or 200 metres of single dwellings. This is similar to the Lower Saxony legislation. The Salzburg statement seems to require only consideration, not necessarily actual burial.

<http://www.salzburg.at/themen/verkehr.html?nachrid=41652>