



Secure Electricity Supply for the Central Region of Upper Austria: Hearing at the Federal Administrative Court for one of Austria's Most Important Energy Transition Projects Took Place at the Beginning of March

Vienna/Linz - The project "Secure Electricity Supply for the Central Region of Upper Austria" is a joint project of Austrian Power Grid (APG), Netz Oberösterreich GmbH (Netz OÖ) and LINZ NETZ GmbH (LINZ NETZ) and the most important electricity infrastructure project for the decarbonization of businesses and industry in Austria. Due to appeals against the positive EIA decision at first instance, a second-instance hearing took place at the Federal Administrative Court (BVwG) in Vienna at the beginning of March.

Almost exactly one year ago (in March 2023), the responsible environmental impact assessment authorities, the provinces of Upper Austria and Lower Austria, decided that the joint project of the three grid operators was not harmful to the environment. However, since three complaints were filed against the positive EIA decision of the province of Upper Austria (one of which has already been rejected by the Supreme Court), a second-instance hearing regarding the two pending appeals was scheduled at the Federal Administrative Court in Vienna for March 4/5 and 7, 2024 (the approval for the Lower Austrian part of the project had already become legally binding in the first instance).

The three-day hearing was very orderly and structured. Issues included aspects of electrical engineering and the energy industry, nature and landscape conservation, forestry and human medicine. The grid operators emphasize the extraordinary importance of the project and stress that a quick and positive decision by the Federal Administrative Court is essential for its timely implementation (this project is, among other things, a prerequisite for the further implementation of electricity-based steel production). "The 'Secure Electricity Supply for Central Upper Austria' project is the largest decarbonization project in the context of our grid expansion efforts and one of the most important infrastructure projects in the country. It is crucial for the secure supply of electricity and the development of Upper Austria as a sustainable location for industry, business and place to live that its implementation can proceed as intended. We are convinced that the planned project is environmentally compatible," emphasizes Christoph Schuh, company spokesperson for APG.

220-kV supply ring for a secure electricity supply

A 220 kV supply ring is planned to replace the existing 110 kV grid in central Upper Austria, which is more than 70 years old and no longer meets future requirements. In future, this ring will connect the APG substations Ernstshofen, Pichling, Hütte Süd, Wegscheid and Kronstorf. Along with the project, several substations of the project partners will also be converted or expanded to form sub-grids in the central region and integrated into the ring. In addition to increasing the security of supply, the project is making an important contribution to the decarbonization of the central region



of Upper Austria as a business location by also facilitating the conversion of industrial processes, such as the transition to electricity-based steel production.

Existing APG, Netz OÖ and LINZ NETZ line routes will be used for the construction of the new lines in order to minimize the impact on people and nature. Other measures include voltage conversions from 110 kV to 220 kV on line sections already designed for this purpose as well as expansion and conversion work in a total of eight substations. The construction work is scheduled to start in 2024. The start of operation will take place in stages from 2026 to 2030.

Sustainable investment in a high-performance electricity infrastructure

APG is investing around EUR 9 billion in the expansion of Austria's high-performance electricity infrastructure by 2034. The "Secure Electricity Supply for the Central Region of Upper Austria" project is one element of this investment scheme. "Together with our project partners, we are investing around EUR 650 million in the industrial province of Upper Austria. With this investment, we are securing the electricity supply for future generations and facilitating the increasing electrification of businesses, industry and society in the region," says Mario Golger, Project Manager at APG.

About Austrian Power Grid (APG)

*As independent transmission system operator Austrian Power Grid (APG) is in charge of ensuring the **security of electricity supply** in Austria. With our high-performance and digital electricity infrastructure and the use of **state-of-the-art technologies** we integrate renewable energies, we are the platform for the electricity market, and we provide access to reasonably priced electricity for Austria's consumers and thus create the basis for Austria as supply-secure and future-oriented industrial and business location and place to live. The APG grid totals a length of about 3,500 km and is operated, maintained and continuously adapted to the increasing challenges of the **electrification** of businesses, industry and society by a team of approximately 850 specialists. 67 substations are distributed all over Austria and the majority is operated remotely from APG's control center in Vienna's 10th district. Thanks to our committed employees Austria had a security of supply of 99.99 percent also in 2023 and thus ranks among the top countries worldwide. Our investments of 445 million euros in 2024 (2023: 490 million euros, 2022: 370 million euros) are a **motor for the Austrian economy** and a crucial factor in reaching Austria's climate and energy targets. Until 2034 APG will invest a total of approximately 9 billion euros in grid expansion and renovation projects.*

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