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To newsrooms

Transmission system evolving in the Baltic Sea region

Cornerstone laid in the EstLink 2 project at Püssi in Estonia

Fingrid and Elering, the electricity transmission system operators in Finland and Estonia respectively, are jointly constructing the new EstLink 2 transmission connection between the two countries. The cornerstone of the project was laid today in Estonia, when the time capsule of the project was enclosed in the structures of the Püssi direct current substation. The new submarine cable connection will play an important role in the development of the electricity market in the Baltic Sea region. The connection will be brought to commercial operation in early 2014.

The EstLink 2 HVDC (high-voltage direct current) connection between Finland and Estonia will have a transmission capacity of 650 megawatts, which increases the total transmission capacity between the countries to 1,000 megawatts. The total length of the link is approx. 170 km, some 14 km of which is overhead line in Finland, about 145 km submarine cable laid on the bottom of the Gulf of Finland, and about 12 km underground cable in Estonia.

The total budget of the project is approx. 320 million euros, which will be divided between Fingrid and Elering. EstLink 2 will receive 100 million euros in investment subsidy from the EU as part of the EU's extensive economy recovery package.

The EstLink 2 HVDC connection is built so as to improve power system security and electricity market integration in the Baltic Sea region. The project has progressed swiftly. Earthwork at the Anttila substation and at the Nikuviken cable terminal station in Finland came to conclusion in the summer. The construction and installation work at the substations in Finland and Estonia has also started, as has the construction work of the transmission line in Finland. The type testing and manufacture of the submarine cable in Norway are also in progress.

In the cornerstone laying ceremony of the direct current link, speeches were given by Juhan Parts, Estonian Minister of Economic Affairs and Communications, Krista Kiuru, The Finnish Minister of Housing and Communications and Jukka Ruusunen, President & CEO of Fingrid, and Taavi Veskimägi, President and CEO of Elering.

- The EstLink 2 connection due to be ready in 2014 will almost triple the transmission capacity between Finland and Estonia, hence contributing greatly to the wholesale market of electricity in the Baltic Sea region. The volume of transmission capacity is a crucial factor preventing or promoting competition in the electricity market. When electricity can be transmitted across national boundaries without obstructions, the market is larger and more efficient, said Jukka Ruusunen.

Taavi Veskimägi emphasized that EstLink 2 is a good example of a large-scale joint international project which will create new opportunities for electricity producers and consumers across the region, and which will increase competition in the regional electricity market.

- It is especially important for Estonian consumers as the market opens, because the open Estonian electricity market will be very concentrated on one single producer. EstLink 2 is a very significant project for Estonian energy security and the development of the electricity market. Together with EstLink 1 it will give Estonia a connection of 1000 MW to the Nordic countries. The total capacity should be enough to ensure unlimited transmission of electricity for sale and purchase between Estonia and Finland in almost all hours. This means that consumers will get the best price from the different electricity producers competing in the area", Veskimägi added.

Stages of EstLink 2 project:

- Environmental impact studies, route selections, seabed surveys, and application for various permits in Finland and Estonia. All the basic permits were obtained in 2010.
- Reinforcement of the electricity transmission grid in Estonia. Contractor Empower Oy. All reinforcement work in Estonia is complete.
- Earthwork at Anttila and Nikuviken in Finland. Contractor Konevuori Oy. The earthwork is ready.
- Substation upgrades in Finland (Anttila) and Estonia (Püssi). The contractor in Finland is Empower Oy, and in Estonia the Siemens Osakeyhtiö Estonian branch office.
- Construction of HVDC converter substations in Finland (Anttila) and Estonia (Püssi). The contractor is a consortium of Siemens AG and Siemens Osakeyhtiö.
- Construction of the direct current overhead line in Finland from the converter substation to the terminal point of the submarine cable. The contractor is the French company ETDE.
- Manufacture and laying of the submarine cable, and construction of the direct current underground cable in Estonia from the converter substation to the terminal point of the submarine cable Nikuviken. The contractor is Nexans Norway AS.

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