

Press release

Millionth renewable energy plant connected to E.ON grid

- Wind turbine connected in Brandenburg, Germany, in presence of Klaus Müller, President of the Federal Network Agency
- Number of plants to be connected could rise to 900,000 units per year by 2030
- In order to fulfill Easter Package targets, 85 plants and decentralized consumers would have to be connected to the E.ON grid every hour by 2030
- Grid expansion must be synchronized with the expansion of renewables to avoid high additional costs

E.ON, Germany's largest distribution system operator, connects the millionth renewable energy plant to its distribution system and celebrates an energy transition anniversary. The commissioned wind turbine is located in the municipality of Biesenthal in Brandenburg and will in future feed 6.8 megawatts (MW) of installed capacity into the grid of E.ON subsidiary E.DIS. E.ON's Chief Network Officer Thomas König symbolically connected the wind turbine to the grid together with Klaus Müller, President of the Federal Network Agency, plant operator Jan Teut, and other participants from business and politics.

König commented: "One million renewable energy plants – what a milestone for the energy transition! But the anniversary plant in Brandenburg is just the beginning. For the energy transition to succeed, we need to integrate millions more decentralized producers into the energy system by 2030. This mammoth task will require a joint effort from all stakeholders."

Connection requests increase significantly

The connected wind turbine is a symbol of the energy transition: Whereas in the past a few large power plants supplied households and companies, in the future millions of decentral PV and wind power plants will generate energy. At least 90 percent of these decentralized plants will be connected to the distribution grid. For distribution system operators like E.ON, this means both growth opportunities and challenges: In 2022, the number of requests to connect to E.ON's German grid will already more than double compared to the previous year. By 2030, this number could roughly quadruple to as many as 900,000 new installations to be connected per year. In line with the German government's climate policy goals, this would require connecting an additional six million new renewable energy systems and distributed consumers by 2030, including at least 2.9 million PV systems, 1.9 million new charging points for electric vehicles, one million heat pumps and 2,000 new wind farms. In total, this would amount to 85 new installations every hour.

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Seite: 1 / 2

No alternative to expanding distribution grids

The distribution grids are the backbone of the German energy system and the central infrastructure of the energy transition. To achieve the political goals of the energy transition, the expansion of the distribution grids – for example, the construction of new lines, transformers, and substations – must be synchronized with the expansion of renewables. This is the only way to avoid curtailing sustainable energy production on sunny and windy days and incurring high, so-called “redispatch” costs. “Redispatch” is the term used to describe the intervention of the grid operator in the planned energy generation of power plants to prevent a grid bottleneck and to ensure security of supply. Redispatching can be necessary, for example, when good weather conditions cause wind turbines to produce more energy than the grids can absorb at that time. These costs are a burden on society to the tune of billions of euros each year.

Energy transition power plant in Brandenburg

Power generation from wind turbines plays a major role in the success of the energy transition. Brandenburg is no exception, and it is where the network area of the E.ON subsidiary E.DIS is located. In 2022, the installed nominal capacity of wind turbines in the entire state was more than 8,000 MW, the second highest value in Germany after Lower Saxony. This is roughly equivalent to the output of eight large conventional power plants. Brandenburg’s wind power output is expected to increase by another third by 2032 and to double by 2040. The company operating the millionth connected turbine is part of the Teut Group, which has been planning and operating wind turbines in the region since 1996. The newly inaugurated wind turbine is located on a site owned by Berliner Stadtgüter GmbH, which owns and leases approximately 16,700 hectares in Brandenburg and thus contributes significantly to the development of the Berlin region.

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