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ULTRANET partners reveal new converter technology

New technology to make power transmission more secure

Together with their technology partner Siemens, transmission system operators Amprion and TransnetBW have today revealed the technology behind the ULTRANET converter. ULTRANET is one of the key projects of Germany's energy policy shift. At its heart are the converters to be built at either end of the transmission line, which will connect ULTRANET to the existing alternating current grid by converting alternating current to direct current and vice versa.

These converter stations will be among the most modern of their kind. One new feature of these converters is "full bridge technology", which can be used to regulate and stabilise the grid voltage – a function mainly performed by conventional power stations today. This also enables the converters to help re-configure the grid in the event of a power outage. Another advantage of the system is that the converters are capable of adjusting the direct current very quickly, such as after a lightning strike, and of preventing links from being interrupted for too long. "This is an important step towards securing the transmission of electricity both during and after the energy transition", says Dr Klaus Kleinekorte, CTO of Amprion. Dr Werner Götz, CTO of TransnetBW, agrees, adding, "With the contract for implementing the new system, we have reached an important milestone for ULTRANET. By awarding this contract and selecting the site for the new converter station in Baden-Württemberg, we are demonstrating our sincere intention to build ULTRANET."

The two stations planned by Siemens guarantee a transmission capacity of 2,000 MW at a rated voltage of 380 kV. Amprion and TransnetBW have commissioned their technology partner Siemens to plan and build the ULTRANET converter stations. Detailed planning work will begin in the coming months. During the design phase, Siemens will work hand in hand with Amprion and TransnetBW to define precisely how the converters are to be arranged – a crucial step for the ULTRANET project as a whole.



The technical details drawn up will serve as the basis for the full set of planning documents required for the approval procedures. The two transmission system operators anticipate a period of four to five years for completion of these procedures and construction of the converter stations.

About ULTRANET

ULTRANET is a collaboration between Amprion and TransnetBW. It forms the southern section of one of the planned high-voltage direct current (HVDC) powerlines to run from the north to the south of Germany known as "Corridor A". The necessity to build this 340-kilometre link between Osterath in North Rhine-Westphalia and Philippsburg in Baden-Württemberg was demonstrated in the network development plan drawn up in 2012 and has been legally established with the enactment of the "Federal Requirement Plan for Transmission Networks" (Bundesbedarfsplan Übertragungsnetze, Project No. 2). ULTRANET will see, for the first time, a DC cable placed on a pylon together with an existing 380-kV AC powerline.

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