

1) Title

LitPol Link energy interconnection between Lithuania and Poland

2) Country, region

Lithuania (Poland) , but in this case in only in Lithuanian side.

3) Name of the organisation which implemented the project

Litgrid AB (in Lithuania).

4) Total size of the project in EUR

370 million EUR

5) Amount of EU funding

168 million EUR.

6) Name of the EU fund that supported the project

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and also application is submitted to CEF in 2014.

7) Name of the Operational Program

TransEuropean energy networks TEN-E

8) Short description of the project, aims, targets, project activities

Interconnection between Poland and Lithuania consists of 400kV overhead double-circuit transmission line. The line's length will reach approximately 150 km, 100 km of which will be on the Polish side and 50 km of which will be on the Lithuanian side. The power link interconnection is planned to be operational by 2015. The interconnection will ultimately reach the capacity of 1000 MW.

The new power connection between Lithuania and Poland will:

- integrate the Baltic States Power system into the Western European Electricity System,
- strengthen the power independence of both countries,
- contribute to the development of an integrated EU electricity market,
- increase the guarantee of the energy supply continuity.

In the line route design it is planned to construct about 300 towers, and also two back-to-back station converters are needed (one in each country).

By the end of 2014 technical planning, EIA and some installment works, e.g. construction of tower platforms, have been already finished.

9) Estimated impacts on biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Why do you think that it is a positive or negative example in the light of the biodiversity proofing paper?

This case is a special case in Lithuania among all infrastructural projects. It is a rather negative example of infrastructural development because of the not well-performed Environmental Impact Assessment. The EIA of the line did neither include a complete research nor an assessment of the possible negative impacts of species listed under Habitats and Birds Directive and protected in the *Natura 2000* sites, where the line passes nearby.

This line route will pass through the moraine landscape of Southern Lithuania, which is famous for protected red listed species, such as the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis L.*). This species is close to extinction in Lithuania (1 (E) category in the Red book of Lithuania), and it is found only in several locations in Southern part of Lithuania. The line passes nearby the protected *Natura 2000* site Meteliai Regional Park (but not through it), which is assigned to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for habitats (LTLAZ0010), and part of the area (lakes of Meteliai, Dusios, Obelija) to the Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for birds (LTALYB001). The European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis L.*) population is found in Meteliai Regional Park some 14-15 km south from the planned line. The nearest European pond turtle population is also found in the south in *Natura 2000* site "Stankunu kaimo apylinkės" (LTLAZ0036). A number of birds species, like Great bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*), White-tailed Eagle (*Haliaeetus albicilla*) and others can be found in the *Natura 2000* sites Lake Žuvintas (LTALY0005) and Lake Galadusys (PLH200007), which is on the Polish-Lithuanian border.

Referring to the insufficiency of the EIA civic activists turned to the Supreme Administrative Court of Lithuania, which acknowledged EIA as sufficient and corresponding to all requirements. Therefore civic activists filed a complaint to the Standing Committee for Convention of the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats. The Bureau strongly recommended postponing the construction of the 400 kV overhead power line (OHL), at least until the survey of species protected by the Convention is carried out and its results are analyzed.

10) How did project leaders, authorities, NGOs or other stakeholders try to avoid harmful impacts, if the project had any?

How did stakeholders try to multiply positive impacts, if project had any?

The complete EIA was not started again since the Lithuanian court acknowledged it as complete and sufficient, therefore no other additional surveys and impact assessments were carried out.

But following the recommendations of the Bureau project leader AB "Litgrid" ordered extra study in spring 2014 on investigations of the European pond turtles, but without stopping the project and its preparatory works (forest and bush clearing, instalment of platforms). Lithuanian Fund for Nature performed pond turtle study since this non-governmental organisation works on turtle protection for more than 10 years. Explicit turtle research study was performed in some most important parts of the line route. The study consists of observations, turtle capturing, looking for nesting sites. This

biodiversity field monitoring surveys found no evidence that the European Pond turtles, live or breed in the area of the planned route. Thus, the electric line for sure won't have negative impact on this species, therefore the conclusions of the research states that this power line can be constructed in the selected route. Even some positive effects will arise on biodiversity in some places, e.g. after clearing the bushes wetlands accumulate more water, which can be easily inhabited by red-bellied toads (*Bombina bombina*).

Also, the project leader is committed to ensure that during construction no damage will be made to protected species and habitats. Experienced nature conservationists supervise the works, e.g. select time for work, translocate plants etc.

However, despite these efforts, a complaint is still sent further to the Aarhus Convention.

11) Author of the case study, name of the CEEWEB member, email, phone number

Nerijus Zableckis, Lithuanian Fund for Nature, [nerijus.z@glis.lt](mailto:nerijus.z@glis.lt), +37065620426

12) Annex - Attach any relevant materials (web links, photos, references, etc.)

Annexes:

1. Picture of general location

The line route on Polish side will be known after the EIA.



2. Picture of protected areas (red line – electric planned route).

