

PRESS RELEASE

Improving electricity supply security across Europe

On 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006, a decision taken by a Transmission System Operator (TSO) in a corner of Europe caused a major failure across the whole European electrical transmission grid. The system separated into three parts and behaved abnormally for 38 minutes. Almost two hours were needed to recover the normal grid operation.

The report published by DG TREN in January 2007 revealed weaknesses in the field of system operation. Actions by TSOs and countries differed significantly, even opposing restoration in some cases. The need for TSOs to improve coordination across the countries forming the European interconnected grid was given as a key issue. One year after the event, little has been done to prevent something similar happening, so IFIEC Europe draws attention to key weaknesses of the current system, which require urgent and effective action:

- ∅ Most TSOs do not exchange real-time data of topology, generation or demand. Without these data it is not possible to model system behaviour or to conduct contingency analysis;
- ∅ Operators at one TSO are not familiar with the grids or operational practices of their neighbours, making it very difficult to anticipate risks and coordinate corrective actions following an incident;
- ∅ Assurances are needed to safeguard that vertically integrated TSOs act in a manner that benefits the overall effectiveness of the system rather than the interests of the holding company to which they belong.
- ∅ No TSO oversees the European system as a whole and no single body oversees the impact on the entire system of individual decisions taken by TSOs. This leads to difficulties in managing (or anticipating) loads and flows at the interconnections.
- ∅ No body is responsible for identifying "islands of frequency" or network separated zones during incidents. This makes the coordination of resynchronization processes more risky and complex.
- ∅ Load-frequency control requires a level of coordination that simply does not exist today.

Apart from new networks being connected as demand rises, rising renewable input levels require more sophisticated balancing capability and co-ordination at the European interconnection. To manage this effectively, IFIEC Europe calls for the establishment of a European System Operator (ESO), which would be in the right position to design and decide the grid reinforcements that both further integrate the markets and guarantee system security. The European Commission's proposal for a European Network of TSO's should be the first step towards the creation of a truly effective body with sufficient authority to solve the operational challenges of a secure and interconnected Europe grid.

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*IFIEC Europe represents energy intensive industrial consumers where energy is a major component of operating costs and directly affects competitiveness.*

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