



Corona virus – electricity consumption 10 % lower - APG: grid operation secured

Split teams, majority of staff working from home: focus on health – construction projects suspended – emergency teams ready to act - France, Germany major energy exporters, Austria moderate importer

Vienna (APA) – Due to the corona crisis the electricity consumption has noticeably decreased by approximately 10 percent. This means that Austria is completely in step with the rest of Europe. France also reported a decrease of around 10 percent, while in Italy the consumption has even dropped by 20 percent, explained Gerhard Christiner, the CTO of Austrian Power Grid (APG), on Wednesday in answer to an APA query. Austria's transmission system operator is well prepared for the crisis both regarding its technology and its staff.

In answer to an APA query the Austrian energy regulator E-Control revealed that the consumption figures in individual network areas range 10 to 20 percent below the figures of the previous year.

Large numbers of APG's staff have been ordered to work from home, the focus is on protecting the employees' health and maintaining the security of energy supply, emphasizes Christiner. In many instances tasks are fulfilled in teams that are acting separately and have no direct contact with each other, says APG's CTO.

The operational management via the Control Center is divided among two locations: teams are alternately working for 12 hours in one or the other, while in the following 12 hours the frequented control center is being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. In practical terms this means that the work is permanently split between two locations: the actual Power Grid Control "Wien-Südost" (the main coordination center) and a Reserve Control Center. "There must not be any physical contact between the teams. The first and foremost aim is to avoid any infection."

APG has shut down all construction sites. "We have suspended and postponed all construction projects – this means that we also have the whole network at our disposal because also revisions have been put on hold." Transmission system operators of other countries are handling the situation in a similar way, explains Christiner. Regarding emergencies APG reserve staff, who are currently staying at home to avoid social contacts, are on standby and ready to act. "It would be bad if an infection peak would occur in our company." APG has about 600 staff members.

According to APG's CEO Christiner grid operation is currently "stable", the cooperation with other transmission system operators (TSOs) in Europe is well coordinated just like the



cooperation on a national level with distribution system and power plant operators. Electricity rates are falling due to the low consumer demand, as demonstrated by the day-ahead and spot-prizes.

In accordance with the merit order – the sequence in which power plants are designated to contribute power to the market – the gas-fired power plants (which in Europe are still in the mix to some extent) would be the first to go off the market. At some point also the coal-fired power stations would follow. The renewables would definitely stay in the mix as they are at the top of the merit order. Thermal power plants are currently still operating in the region around Vienna and in Styria.

In Europa we have the “old established” picture with France and Germany as energy exporters and the rest of Europe as importers, in particular Italy – not only due to the corona crisis. Currently France is exporting very much, more than 10,000 megawatt (MW), Germany up to 10,000 MW. The rest of the European countries are importers. Also Austria is currently one of the energy-importing countries. However, the volume is moderate or average with 2,000 MW. Christiner: "Today the wind is missing – according to the forecast it will pick up again on March 21."

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About Austrian Power Grid AG

Austrian Power Grid (APG) is Austria's independent transmission system operator in charge of monitoring and managing the nationwide transmission network. Its infrastructure is the lifeline of the country, its population and its businesses. The APG network totals a length of about 3,400 km and is operated, maintained and continuously adapted to the increasing challenges of economy and society by a team of more than 600 specialists. APG guarantees security of supply to ensure that everybody has enough electricity when needed. As one-stop-shop APG is an important service provider of the energy sector. APG's staff develop suitable market products, have an excellent knowledge of physics and ensure security and efficiency of supply for Austria.