

Swissgrid calls for more grid co-operation

(Montel Powernews) - More co-operation among European transmission system operators (TSO) is a prerequisite for accommodating the expected increase in renewables in the future, a Swissgrid official said on Friday.

"Huge investments are needed in the coming years to maintain the current grid, but to accommodate the future growth of renewables we also need much stronger European co-operation," the Swiss TSO's Thomas Tilwicks told a conference in Geneva.

Located in the heart of Europe, non-EU member Switzerland played a key role in facilitating a smoother power flow between southern and northern Europe, he said.

"With tunnels we revolutionised railway traffic through the Alps, something similar is needed in the transport of power," he said, urging fellow TSOs to speed up the work towards the creation of a supergrid which could accommodate wind power from the North Sea and solar power from northern Africa.

But he did not think the creation of a common system operator for the whole of Europe was a good idea.

"Decentralised operators are more effective than one operator overseeing the grid from Greece to northern Norway," he said.

Local opposition to power lines was also a major challenge for the energy sector, Tilwicks said, pointing out the difficulty TSOs faced in getting the public to understand that an extended power grid "was part of the climate solution".

Olav Vilnes

News editor

Dir: +47 22 99 42 28 Mob: +47 48 20 11 94

Montel Powernews Holbergsgate 1, NO-0166 Oslo, Norway

Phone: +47 22 99 42 00 Fax: +47 22 20 58 05

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