

# THE EIRGRID FILES

## EirGrid correspondence with DCCAE

Michael Fisher

The following 18 records of emails obtained under a Freedom of Information request are mainly ones sent by an EirGrid executive (whose name is replaced with XX) and addressed to Kevin Brady and Enda Gallagher of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment. Some messages are circulated to other important people in EirGrid, whose names are already in the public domain. There are also some responses from the Department. EirGrid say they report regularly to the Department on all aspects of the North South Interconnector project and that there is "nothing in any way unusual about such communications."

March 10th 2017  
Clarifications Post North South Meeting EirGrid Updated March 2017

Hi  
See soft copy of that document. Note some of the language is now past tense in terms of some upcoming meetings etc. Give me a bell if you need anything else.  
XX

DCCAE Document: Clarifications Required re North-South

1. It was stated that in some countries (including Belgium and Denmark) public acceptance is included in the project evaluation. Can this be examined to determine what is in place in these countries?

(EirGrid) Response: Initial discussions with our counterparts in Belgium, and Denmark suggest that what is done with respect to public acceptance in those countries is not much different from what is done in this country.....

2. Refers to the Kingscourt substation that was omitted from the amended planning application (turning it into a "true interconnector.") Why was this removed?

Response: ...the economic downturn commenced in the second half of 2008. It resulted in a significant and general decline in electricity consumption in Ireland.....

As part of the re-evaluation of the proposed interconnector, which has been undertaken since the withdrawal of the previous planning application in June 2010, EirGrid has routinely re-examined the security of supply risk in the north-east area in light of the economic downturn. Using the median demand forecasts from the All Island Generation Capacity Statement 2015-2024, it was found that the peak demand in the area will still be below the critical level for beyond the current planning horizon (more than 10 years). Therefore, unless there is a stronger recovery in the economy in the area and / or one or more new large industrial consumers emerge, reinforcement of the network in the area for security of supply reasons is not likely to be required within the next ten years.

The construction cost comparisons do not include the full lifetime costs (e.g. O&M). What are the estimated lifetime costs for overhead and underground?

Response: That is not correct. The PB Power report of 2009 and its subsequent update of 2013, both considered capital costs, annualised power losses, energy losses and, operation and maintenance costs. The lifetime costs estimated by PB Power are shown in the table below.

HVAC Overhead Line Option  
Total Operating Costs €54M  
HVDC Underground Cable  
Total Operating Costs. €110M

4. The 'dealing cost' was estimated at €30m per year. Need to clarify this is not a cost but a benefit that was not realised.

Response: EirGrid's analysis shows that the delivery of the new interconnector will bring savings of approximately €20

million in 2020 rising to between €40 million and €60 by 2030 and beyond. If the interconnector is not in service by 2020 then it would be correct to say that the benefit will not be realised. (NS highlight).

5. It was stated that SEAI research funding was used to promote community compensation. Need to clarify what SEAI funding was used for.

Response: That is a matter for SEAI not EirGrid.  
6. It was stated that a business with 120 employees that uses poly-tunnels (in Co. Meath) will have a pylon in the middle of its business and potentially impact this business. Need to provide more detail of this impact.

Response: A copy of the assessment of the impact that was included in EirGrid's application to An Bord Pleanála is attached.

7. Quotes from Ralf Christian, CEO of the Siemens Energy Division were provided in relation to Alegro, D/CCEA to make contact with Siemens (and potentially ABB) to find out what information can be provided on the potential cost of underground HVDC. Need contact details of relevant people if possible.

Response: Contact details can be provided. Coincidentally (sic.) EirGrid is meeting with Siemens next week to get their feedback on their participation in the Alegro Project...As far as we are aware ABB has no involvement in the Alegro Project.

ABB is in the same position as Siemens as they (also) do not manufacture or supply underground cable (and therefore would not be able to provide first-hand information on the cost of underground cable).

8. The capacity of 1500MW was described as "over-engineering." Need clarification of need for this level of capacity.

Response: A capacity of 1500MW is appropriate for three reasons:

- The proposed interconnector will form a link between the 400 kV network in Ireland and the double circuit 275 kV network in Northern Ireland. The capacity of the circuits that form these 400 kV and 275 kV networks is 1,500MW.
- The nominal capacity of the existing north-south interconnector is 1,500MW. The proposed interconnector will form a second north-south interconnector and operate in parallel with the existing interconnector. A capacity of 1,500MW will therefore match that of the existing interconnector.

- Studies completed and contained in EirGrid's planning documents show that cross border power flows of at least 1,100 MW would be anticipated if the existing constraint was to be lifted. Cross border power flows are currently constrained for a security of supply reasons due to the fact that there is only one existing high capacity interconnector. Delivery of the proposed new interconnector will allow this constraint to be removed. It is therefore prudent to design for 1,500 MW as this allows for the predicted 1,100 MW plus a margin for future growth.

The issue was discussed at length at the oral hearing. The inspector...concluded on page 125 by stating "I accept that it has been adequately and comprehensively demonstrated by EirGrid why the proposed new interconnector needs to be rated 1500MW."

9. The figure of €22,000 per pylon in compensation was stated. However, based on calculations carried out on the Pleanála hearing, it was stated that a figure of €20,000 per pylon would apply. Clarification on the compensation per pylon (as per ABP submission) to be provided.

Response: It was explained at the oral hearing that there is a system in place between the IFA and ESB Networks - who construct the line. This compensates farmers for financial loss caused by the construction of new electricity infrastructure. The agreement extends to the construction of

110 kV overhead lines and the figure of €22,000 per pylon relates to 110 kV pylons.

As of yet the agreement with the IFA does not provide for the construction of 400 kV overhead lines so it is not yet possible to provide an agreed compensation figure for a 400 kV pylon. It is not clear from where the figure of €200,000 originates, no such figure was mentioned at the oral hearing.

10. It was stated that in the documents provided to ABP, 25% of the land for the project was accessed. This was disputed. Monaghan rep felt that no lands in Monaghan were accessed. Whilst land access was discussed in some detail in the ABP report, this was quite a specific question arising at the meeting so clarification of where the 25% of land accessed is and when it was accessed to be provided.

Response: The level, form and outcome of EirGrid's engagement with landowners is set out in Chapter 7 of Vol2B (of the applications) documents submitted by EirGrid to An Bord Pleanála.

Table 7.8  
Total number of landowners 456  
Landholdings Surveyed 115  
Number of Change Requests 57  
Received

Number of Change Requests 30  
Accommodated  
From the table it can be seen that access was granted to EirGrid to survey 115 landholdings along the route of the overhead line. Approximately 40 landholdings were accessed for survey in County Monaghan.

11. It was stated (the) some countries have EMF thresholds 250 times lower (that) Ireland.

Need to clarify if this is correct and what is the context. We are also referring this to our Environment colleagues.

Response: In 2016 the Department of HPC&LG published the report "Electromagnetic Fields in the Irish context." Included in this report is a review of practices and policies in five European countries. It is the government's policy (however) to comply with ICNIRP guidelines based on recommendations through health and safety legislation. In addition, of the recommendations made by the Stakeholder Advisory Group on ELF EMF (SAGE), the government supported optimal phasing of high-voltage power lines to reduce public exposure to ELF EMF where it is cost effective to do so.

April 6th 2017  
Hi XX  
We have received the following PQ:

To ask the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment if a scenario (details supplied) is correct in view of the passing of the Fianna Fáil Oireachtas motion concerning same and the stay currently imposed by the Judicial Review; and if he will make a statement on the matter. Details: (link to agriland article on how high could compensation levels rise for north south interconnector project)

Niamh Smyth  
\* For WRITTEN answer on Tuesday, 11th April 2017.

Can you confirm the scenario outlined in the article? In answering we also plan on discussing proximity payments and community fund payments so any of the most recent lines you would have on that would be appreciated.  
Thanks,  
YY

NS: This is the article referred to, written by Conor Finerty of Agriland on April 5th 2017:

How high could compensation levels rise for North/South interconnector project?  
A financial package for landowners affected by the North/South interconnector is currently being finalised, according to EirGrid. It is believed that approximately 400 landowners will be affected by the development of the

interconnector, if it goes ahead. Despite the fact that the compensation package for landowners affected by the interconnector is still 'in play', previous agreements indicate that the compensation could reach or exceed €22,000/pylon.

In 1985, a Code of Practice was drawn up between the ESB and the IFA, a statement from EirGrid read. This Code of Practice set out a framework for compensation payable to landowners for overhead transmission lines, it added.

It states: "These payments compensate landowners for the areas of ground that are no longer available for normal farming, due to the presence of structures that support transmission lines.

"Landowners are also compensated for any land damage or crop loss that may occur during the construction phase of a project. Compensation may be payable where transmission lines prevent a viable development on the same site - such as a house or farm building."

"Further agreements also provide compensation to landowners for the loss of tree-planting rights and forestry."

In 2009, a 'Flexibility of Access' payment for new overhead transmission lines was agreed, according to the statement.

This provides for payments of €11,000/double wood pole set and €2,000/pylon, in return for landowner co-operation with the construction programme.

"A fixed payment of €2,500 is also payable to landowners where the line crosses their land but who do not have a mast or poles on their land," the statement read.

The North/South interconnector project will see the addition of a new 400kV overhead line connecting the electricity grids of Ireland and Northern Ireland. EirGrid has explained that compensation rates vary from project to project and that each case is assessed on its own merits.

**North/South Interconnector**  
According to EirGrid, the North/South interconnector is a vital piece of grid infrastructure, which will strengthen the electricity grids both north and south of the border.  
The line is set to run through counties Monaghan, Cavan and Meath in the Republic, and Armagh and Tyrone in Northern Ireland.

In December 2016, An Bord Pleanála granted planning approval for the southern element of the interconnector, EirGrid said. A number of judicial reviews relating to An Bord Pleanála's decision are currently before the courts.

The planning enquiry concluded in Northern Ireland on February 27; a decision is expected before the end of the year, it added.

**Overhead Versus Underground**  
Responding to a parliamentary question in the Dail recently, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and the Environment, Denis Naughten, said a proposal for an independent study on the project is currently being prepared.

"I have requested officials in my Department to prepare a proposal for an updated, independent study that will bring further clarity to the relative cost and technical merits of overhead and underground solutions for the North South interconnector."

"The section of the project in Ireland which received planning permission from An Bord Pleanála in December 2016 is currently the subject of judicial review proceedings. The planning process is still underway in Northern Ireland."

"Construction of the project is not planned to commence before 2018 and I intend that this report be completed and published before the end of this year," Minister Naughten said.

April 7th 2017

Hi YY

This is a copy of the question (in bold) and response we sent back to Agriland. This was a supplementary question to some questions they had submitted looking for an update on North South. The scenario is copied. Further down I have copied in some of a briefing note I have on various compensation levels. Give me a bell if you need any more. Thanks  
XX

**Historically what compensation have landowners received if pylons are erected on their land? Are there any comparisons with similar projects in the past?**

"In 1985 a Code of Practice was drawn up between the ESB and the IFA setting out a framework for compensation payable to landowners for overhead transmission lines. These payments compensate landowners for the areas of ground that are no longer available for normal farming due to the presence of structures that support transmission lines. Landowners are also compensated for any land damage or crop loss that may occur during the construction phase of a project. Compensation may be payable where transmission lines prevent a viable development on the same site such as a house or farm building. Further agreements also provide compensation to landowners for the loss of tree-planting rights and forestry."

In 2009, a 'Flexibility of Access' payment for new 110kV overhead transmission lines was agreed. This provides for payments of €11,000 per double wood pole set and €2,000 per pylon in return for landowner co-operation with the construction programme.

A fixed payment of €2,500 is also payable to landowners where the line crosses their land but who do not have a mast or poles on their land."

**Compensation Levels Landowner**  
• Under the Electricity Act 1927 as amended, landowners are entitled to compensation for any lines placed across their lands.  
• There is an ESB/IFA Code of Practice dating back to 1985 which sets out areas to compensate landowners for their loss, namely crop loss, land damage, loss of development rights and disturbance. These compensation payments are typically agreed following installation of the infrastructure.

• Additionally there is an agreement between EirGrid/ESB Networks and IFA dating from 2009 to provide payments to landowners who cooperate with the build programme to facilitate timely construction. These are staged payments to reflect progress of build.

• EirGrid continue engagement with IFA and ESB Networks in relation to new and existing infrastructure at all voltages in order to facilitate ongoing development.

**Proximity**

• A once off payment will be made to the owners of occupied residential properties (or sites with planning permission for residential units) within a 200 metre corridor of new pylons or substations.

• For 400kV line such as the North South I/C there would be a payment of €30,000 for residences at 50 metres from the centre of the line and this would decrease (on a sliding scale) to €5,000 for residences at 200 metres from the centre of the line.

Voltage 110 kV	€10,000 (50m)	€7,333 (100m)
	€4,667 (150m)	€2,000 (200m)
Voltage 220 kV	€20,000 (50m)	€14,500 (100m)
	€9,000 (150m)	€3,500 (200m)
Voltage 400 kV	€30,000 (50m)	€21,667 (100m)
	€13,333 (150m)	€5,000 (200m)

**Community Fund**

In the 'Government Policy Statement on the Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure' published in July 2012 it was proposed the incorporation of a community gain consideration for major infrastructure projects. EirGrid have responded to this and have recently piloted a Community Fund for the Mullingar - Kinnegad. This was launched by Minister Kyne with a broad range of social, community and sports organisations securing funding.

For a 400kV overhead line, the Community Fund will amount to €40,000 per kilometre for communities in proximity to new lines and substations. The approximate fund available for the entire ROI section of the North South I/C is €4million. (this was the reply to an email sent to EirGrid by an official of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment)

April 11th 2017

IBEC / CBI report

Hi

See report launched by IBEC / CBI today for info: (link)  
Thanks  
XX

Monday April 10th 2017

**North South Interconnector needed ahead of Brexit threat**

Ibec and the CBI, the two major business groups in the Republic and Northern Ireland, today launched a new report setting out the economic importance and urgent need for the proposed 400kV overhead North South electricity interconnector (NSIC). The report, prepared by Grant Thornton, demonstrates how the proposed interconnector will not only safeguard electricity supply and increase efficiency of delivery, but is also essential to keeping business across the island competitive in the face of prevailing challenges from Brexit.

Ibec CEO Danny McCoy stated: "The major competitive challenges created by Brexit make construction of the North South Interconnector more relevant than ever before. Sufficient electricity supply is essential for growing our economy and is a significant factor in ensuring we seize the inward investment opportunities that will arise in the next few years. It is worrying, to say the least, that Northern Ireland is facing an electricity supply deficit by 2021, if North South electricity flows are not safeguarded. The interconnector can address this problem by strengthening the electricity grid, reducing the risk of power shortages and blackouts, all at a lower cost to users. In fact, the new Interconnector will result in savings to consumers across the island of around £25.5m/ €30m per year, and that is likely to grow over time. Poor interconnection at the moment means that generated electricity is regularly unused - a high cost that customers are paying for."

"Adequate supply of energy underpins all economic activity, prosperity and jobs growth. The North South Interconnector is one of the most critical pieces of infrastructure needed for Ireland in the next few years. Its delivery is essential for the successful future operations of the All Island Single Electricity Market (SEM). As we face into the uncertainty of Brexit negotiations, we must progress its construction with added urgency. It is crucial that business and industry are fully supportive of this vital project. Any disruption to the delivery of the North South Interconnector will lead to an inferior grid and significant cost increases, which will ultimately negatively impact all electricity users."

Both groups are now calling on the wider business community and politicians across the island to get behind the project. Now that the project has received planning permission in the Republic of Ireland, it is essential for business and industry, and the

Irish economy, that no further delay occurs. Additional setbacks will only result in increasing costs and impact our competitiveness. If delivered, Ibec and the CBI believe the interconnector will:

+Safeguard the supply of sufficient electricity to meet growing demand.

+Increase efficiency of the Single Electricity Market and reduce costs.

+Support inward investment and underpin investment in new generating capacity.

+Reinforce the excellent progress which has been made in developing the All Island economy.

CBI Director, Angela McGowan said: "The Single Electricity Market (SEM) is an excellent example of how working in collaboration can provide tangible benefits for citizens and businesses across the island of Ireland. However, the success of all markets is underpinned by effective infrastructure. The successful delivery of the proposed North South Interconnector by 2021 will improve market efficiency, drive down costs for consumers, and guarantee Northern Ireland's future security of supply. The business community is justifiably concerned that Northern Ireland is projected to face an electricity supply deficit from 2021. To address this problem, the Interconnector remains the best option in terms of cost, reliability and impact on the consumer. Little while ago, a recent survey reported that 87% of Northern Ireland businesses identified the delivery of the Interconnector as a top priority for the regional economy."

\*\*This news release was published in The Northern Standard on April 20th 2017

May 2nd 2017

NIAC Report re NI electricity Kevin, Enda  
See report that was published over the weekend.  
Thanks  
XX

## Letter to Michel Barnier



03 May 2017  
Mr. Michael Barnier  
Chief Negotiator - Task force for the Preparation and Conduct of the Negotiations with the United Kingdom under Article 50 TEU  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200  
1040 Brussels  
Building BERL - 1049  
EirGrid Plc. and SONI Ltd position following the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU

Dear Mr Barnier,  
I am writing to you regarding energy issues which relate to our business. EirGrid and SONI are the electricity transmission system operators of Ireland and Northern Ireland respectively, and together, operate the single electricity market (SEM) on the island. As you will be aware, both Ireland and Northern Ireland are small energy markets and operating them together makes sense - providing economies of scale and increased security of supply while also supporting the delivery of ambitious renewable targets across the island.

In preparation for the forthcoming negotiations with the United Kingdom, we would like to highlight the importance of seamless trading in energy in Ireland and Northern Ireland. I would like to invite you to visit our offices in Dublin or Belfast during your upcoming visit or any future visits. The SEM has over the past decade, delivered competition in energy generation and supply across the island and has ensured that

Electricity sector in Northern Ireland - Northern Ireland Affairs Committee - House of Commons  
NS Note: As Sinn Féin do not take their seats at Westminster, they are not represented on the NI Affairs Committee. The former SDLP MP for South Belfast Dr Alasdair McDonnell was a member of the committee at the time. The report makes a number of recommendations and was published on April 28th 2017. Part of the introduction states: 4. Energy policy is devolved to the NI Executive, but energy policy, markets, systems and infrastructure are complex and interconnected, which means that the UK Government continues to play an important role, both directly and indirectly, in shaping the electricity sector in Northern Ireland. In addition, following the referendum on 23 June 2016 on the UK's membership of the European Union, it is clear that Whitehall will play a leading role in determining Northern Ireland's energy relationship with other Member States, including the Republic of Ireland, during the negotiation process.

May 5th 2017  
From XX  
To: Kevin Brady  
Cc: Enda Gallagher; zzz; PublicAffairs@Eirgrid.com; Valerie Hedlin; Rosemary Steen; aa; bb  
Hi Kevin  
Please see this week's update. Please give me a call if you require any additional information.  
Kind regards  
XX  
(there follows a copy of the weekly update for May 5th published by the Northern Standard on July 26th in Part I)

The email in answer to the FOI request was dated June 8th 2018 and the subject was EirGrid Weekly Update with an attachment stating: Letter to Mr Barnier EC re EirGrid Plc and SONI Ltd position following... (the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU)

security of supply standards have been maintained. Work is also now underway to transition the market design to the latest European Target Model, necessary to facilitate seamless trade with the larger European markets, and providing a step towards the Energy Union's vision of a low carbon energy future. EirGrid and SONI believe that seamless trading in energy is an important element in the negotiations and critical in particular for Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The UK's departure from the EU will also have an impact to the wider economy in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Trade between the UK and Ireland runs at over €1 billion every week, supporting around 400,000 jobs. Businesses, such as ours, strive to serve customers across the island of Ireland seamlessly and efficiently, relying inherently on the backdrop of free movement of people, goods and services - without borders and without tariffs. We believe that disruption to this would be detrimental to the economies North and South of the border and have a negative impact to businesses and society.

We would very much welcome a visit from you to our offices to better understand the nature of our business and discuss the challenges that we face. Alternatively, I and members of my team, would be happy to brief you at any stage in your office in Brussels.

Kind regards,  
Fintan Sive  
Chief Executive

## Brussels visit organised by Sinn Féin

August 8th 2017

Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: Matt Carthy  
To: Carmel Fields (DFA, Brussels)  
Carmel, a chara,

This September I will host a delegation from Ireland to the European Parliament in Brussels, regarding the North South Interconnector.

At present plans are advanced for a North South Interconnector to serve the entire island of Ireland. However, there has been much debate about the urgent requirement for such a project, the cost and timeframe of same and whether the associated high-voltage power-lines should be undergrounded or pylon supported.

The delegation travelling to Brussels comprises of members of Parliament (Dublin and Belfast), community representatives and electricity experts primarily from the Irish border region. The delegation, which will have visited the undergrounding of the ALEGO project between Belgium and Germany the previous day, will be interested in the concerns regarding the North South Interconnector project.

I will host a hearing during the delegation on **Wednesday 6th September** in room P5A033 from 11.30-14.00. I would like to invite a representative from the Irish Permanent Representative to the EU to speak at the hearing. Let me know if there is a particular timing within that slot that you would prefer, otherwise more particular timings will be arranged closer to the date.

I hope the group can raise relevant issues as to the scope of the North-South Interconnector to the Irish Permanent Representative, and receive a dialogue on this subject. I look forward to hearing from you. I miss,  
Matt Carthy MEP.

August 16th 2017

Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: VV (official at DCCAE)  
To: Matt Carthy  
Dear Mr Carthy,  
Carmel (Fields) sent me on your recent email to her in connection with your upcoming meeting in the European Parliament with a group regarding the North South Interconnector.

I would be grateful if you could email me with details of who the group are and the context of the meeting to assist us in responding to your invitation. Alternatively, if it is more convenient, you could give me a call at +3531 xxxxxx and get an understanding of the format and content of the meeting. Regards,  
VV

August 21st 2017  
Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: Eamonn Confrey (DCCAE)  
To: VV (person at DCCAE)  
a chara,  
Many thanks for your response. The group of twenty delegates visiting the European Parliament will consist of community stakeholders interested in the implementation of the North-South Interconnector. This will include representatives of Safe Electricity for Armagh-Tyrone, Monaghan Anti-Pylon Movement and North East Pylon Pressure group. Along with the community organisations, elected representatives will be present from both Dublin and Belfast parliaments, and local council representatives.

The meeting will include speakers from the Commission, EirGrid and Eurocables. The content of the meeting will discuss the scale and potential of the North South Interconnector, and

allow the Commission to also give feedback on this project. As mentioned in the initial email delegates will have received a briefing the previous day on the ALEGO project, an interconnector of a similar scale that is being undergrounded between Belgium and Germany.

The meeting will take the form of a panel-like discussion, with an introduction from each speaker, and a discussion including questions & answers with the group. However, I will keep you updated with regards the format of the meeting, subject to any changes.

The meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday September 6th** in room P5A033 from 11.30-14.00. Let me know if you have any other questions; I look forward to hearing further confirmation from you. I miss,  
Matt Carthy MEP.

August 21st 2017  
Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: Eamonn Confrey (DCCAE)  
To: XX  
As discussed,  
Eamonn

August 29th 2017  
Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: XX  
To: Enda Gallagher  
any more thoughts or decisions on yere side on this?

August 29th 2017  
Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: Enda Gallagher  
To: XX  
They are meeting tomorrow morning to discuss.... Ye'd have mark Norton

and who was the no. 2 you had in mind?

August 29th 2017  
Invitation to speak at hearing on North-South Interconnector at the European Parliament  
From: XX  
To: Enda Gallagher

Ideally would have been Natasha (Sayee) who is our NI person - but she is on leave. So would likely be Rosemary, or me, or another NI head but can't think of anyone right now.

August 30th 2017  
PR re Brussels  
From: XX  
To: Eamonn Confrey; Enda Gallagher  
For info: Carthy to bring anti-nylon campaign to EU parliament  
30th August 2017 by Matt Carthy MEP

Sinn Féin MEP Matt Carthy will host a delegation to the European Parliament in Brussels on Tuesday and Wednesday 5th and 6th September which will hear at first hand of the technological advances that will facilitate the North-South Interconnector to be undergrounded if the political will is forthcoming. Speaking today, Matt Carthy said:

"The delegation will consist of stakeholders and community representatives who live along the proposed route of the North-South Interconnector, where a pylon-supported interconnector would have major negative implications.

"Campaigns groups involved will include those who voice the interests of citizens, such as the North East Pylon Pressure Campaign (NEPP) group, the County Monaghan Anti Pylon committee, and Safe Electricity for Armagh & Tyrone (SEAT), along with elected representatives and journalists.

"It is entirely possible for the Interconnector to be undergrounded in Ireland. This is what expert opinion across Europe is pointing to. It is what is happening with the Aachen-Liege (ALEGO) Interconnector between Belgium and Germany.

"I will bring the delegation of Irish community representatives to the headquarters of EirGrid, the company coordinating the building of