

**Statement from SEAT (SafeElectricityArmaghTyrone) 6<sup>th</sup>**  
**April 2009**

**“Undergrounding is cheaper, safer and more reliable”**

**“Undergrounding NOT ruled out.”**

Anti-pylon campaigners accompany world renowned scientist to Stormont.

NOTE: Please use with attached media release from NEPP  
(02.04.09)

Representatives from NEPP and SEAT accompanied Professor Noack to Stormont where he addressed the Environment Committee. He presented the findings of the Askon Report (Oct 08) – the only project specific feasibility report carried out on this route so far. The authors of this report have spent significant time carrying out detailed aerial and land analysis of the area under consideration. As a result anti-pylon groups North and South of the border believe the ASKON Report to be the most robust and accurate report on the Interconnector thus far.

SEAT wishes to stress that they welcome the Interconnector wholeheartedly as long as it goes UNDERGROUND. It is only the overhead aspect of the proposed project that SEAT has objections to.

SEAT is the overall representative group for the communities of Armagh and Tyrone who are campaigning for this ultra high voltage 400KV line to be placed underground. SEAT objects to this line – to be the most powerful in NI – being placed on overhead pylons because of the well established adverse effects on health, environment, agricultures, tourism and property valuation. SEAT has the support of many local representatives and MLA’s including Tommy Gallagher, Danny Kennedy, Cathal Boylan, Dominic Bradley, Tom Elliott, William Irwin and Lord Maurice Morrow.

Professor Friedhelm Noack, of the University of Ilmenau, Germany, presented the following conclusions to the MLA’s:

- This system can be placed underground at a price LESS than the equivalent overhead system when investment and transmission costs are both taken into consideration.
- Underground lines such as he has suggested are MORE RELIABLE than the equivalent overhead system –the probability is that a total failure will occur once in every 100,000 years. We all know that overhead lines experience total failure much more often than this!

- His suggested system is MORE EFFICIENT than the equivalent overhead line as transmission losses are considerably lower with the underground option. Professor Noack estimates that a saving of 539 million Euros will be made over the 40 year lifespan if the line is placed underground.
- This underground system is SAFER than the equivalent overhead line. The electric field disappears and the magnetic field is significantly reduced. The line – if undergrounded – can be placed between 11-17 metres from a dwelling.
- The underground system has obvious environmental benefits in terms of land use, visual impact, land and property valuation and tourism and heritage responsibilities.

There are vast discrepancies between the Askon Report and the PB Power Report commissioned by NIE and EirGrid. SEAT is confident that the Askon Report stands up to objective scrutiny and has the more reliable findings. We would also like to point out that even the PB Power Report agrees that undergrounding is viable and technically feasible.

EirGrid's response to the Askon Report is to suggest that undergrounding would be an "unacceptable experiment" as lines of this length have never been attempted before.

(The Cavan Tyrone 400KV Interconnector will span approximately 45KM if the proposed overhead route is followed. It may become shorter if undergrounding is chosen as the route may become more direct.)

EirGrid and NIE fail to point out that:

- A 22KM stretch of 400KV cable has been undergrounded since 1997 in Copenhagen.
- A 40KM stretch of 500KV cable has been undergrounded in Japan since 2000.
- A 20KM stretch of 400KV cable has been undergrounded in London since 2005.

These are only a few examples of such projects in use already at this time – hardly untested and experimental.

EirGrid and NIE also fail to publicise the fact that in Denmark in 2008 the government unanimously declared that all future high voltage lines will be underground. Denmark's system operator, Energinet.dk, carried out a major technical study and concluded that utilisation of offshore renewable energy is inextricably linked with onshore underground cables. Surely an island like Ireland, where it is estimated that we have enough offshore wind power to power the island TEN times over should be following the example of the Danes?

SEAT is committed to continuing this undergrounding campaign with energy and vigour for as long as is needed to protect the communities and environments of Armagh and Tyrone.

SEAT continues to maintain links and co-operate closely with our colleagues in NEPP representing the communities of Meath, Cavan and Monaghan.

**The next major SEAT event will be an information evening in the City Hotel, Armagh, on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May at 8.00pm. All welcome.**

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