

bridge

General Assembly 2026

Brussels, 23-24 March

Concept note

Europe’s energy transition is unfolding in a time of profound geopolitical tension. As the Commissioner for Energy and Housing recently underlined, *Europe is not at peace* - and energy has become a central dimension of strategic autonomy and security. Building a resilient, stable and interconnected power grid is therefore not only an environmental or technological goal, but a pillar of Europe’s sovereignty and competitiveness. Research and Innovation should be leveraged to this end.

The 2026 BRIDGE General Assembly will examine how collaborative R&I efforts can reinforce Europe’s energy grids to remain reliable amid rapid electrification, renewable integration, and evolving security threats. Discussions will focus on key pillars: (i) **digitalisation and automation** of grid infrastructure; (ii) **interoperability** and **sectoral integration** to enhance flexibility; (iii) **flexibility and storage solutions** enabling renewable integration; and (iv) **risk management and planning** to address both physical and cyber threats.

Through high-level panels and project showcases, participants will explore how BRIDGE projects can contribute to a more secure, sustainable and sovereign European energy system.

Agenda Day 1

Date 23 March (14.00 – 19:00 CET)

Venue: The Skyline, Rue de Trevès, 74, 1040, Bruxelles

Time	Session
14:00	Registration
14:30	<p>Introduction and keynote</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overview of the policy priorities to future-proof Europe’s grid infrastructure Rosalinde Van der Vlies, Director Just Transition, Consumers, Energy Efficiency and Innovation, DG ENER, European Commission Overview of the financing instruments to support the futureproofing of Europe’s grid infrastructure Martin Lange, Head of Unit - Horizon Europe Energy, CINEA Presentation of the agenda by the BRIDGE Secretariat
15:00	<p>Policy update session on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU Grids package Eduardo Vega Fanjul, DG ENER (C.4), European Commission Electrification Action Plan

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	<p>Ignacio Asenjo, Policy Officer, DG ENER (C.1), European Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean Energy Investment Strategy <p>Bert Saveyn, Deputy Head of Unit, Chief Economist, DG ENER (A.1), European Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying the AI Strategy <p>Antoine-Alexandre André, Legal and Policy Officer, DG CNECT, AI Office</p>
16:00	BRIDGE Projects Speed Dating (interactive session on Success Stories & Lessons Learnt)
16:45	<p>Panel showcasing BRIDGE projects: “Key pillars to reinforce Europe’s energy grids to remain reliable amid rapid electrification, renewable integration, and evolving security threats”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Digitalisation and automation of grid infrastructure</i> <i>Interoperability and sectoral integration</i> <i>Flexibility and storage solutions</i> <i>Risk management and planning for physical and cyber threats</i>
17:45	<p>Panel: “The work of BRIDGE amid Europe’s energy transition”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Regulatory and market frameworks</u> to enable renewable integration, flexible solutions and sector integration: José Pablo Chaves Ávila, Regulation WG chair, Universidad Pontificia Comillas <u>Digitalisation, data exchanges and the use of AI in smart grids:</u> Dune Sebilleau, Data Management WG chair, Trialog <u>Competitiveness in smart grids and market uptake of research outputs</u> presentation of the Repository of BRIDGE promising solutions Andrej Gubina, Business Models WG honorary co-chair, University of Ljubljana <u>Consumer-centric energy transition:</u> Michael Brenner-Fließner, Consumer and Citizen Engagement WG chairs, Joanneum Research
18:25	Conclusions Day 1 and Group photo
18:30	Networking Aperitivo

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Agenda Day 2

Date 24 March (9.00 – 17.30 CET)

Venue: The Skyline, Rue de Trevès, 74, 1040, Bruxelles

Time	Session
09:00	Welcome Coffee
09:15	Welcome and wrap-up from the previous day
09:30	<p>Panel: The role of AI in the energy grids (moderation by the BRIDGE Secretariat)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Van Stiphout, Deputy Head of Unit, DG ENER (C.2), European Commission • Rolf Riemenschneider, Head of sector IoT, DG CNECT, Intelligent Connected Mobility, Energy and Internet of Things Unit • Elissaios Sarmas (NTUA) and Natalie Samovich (ENERCOUTIM) lead members of the ETIP SNET WG4 Task Force on AI technical applications in power grids • Antonello Monti, Professor and expert on digitalisation and AI, Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft
10:15	Regulatory barriers from Innovation fund projects (Ugo Miretti , CINEA)
10:30	Division into Working Group sessions
10:45	2 parallel sessions (Consumer and Citizen Engagement & Business Models)
12:45	Networking Lunch
13:45	<p>2 parallel sessions (Regulation & Data Management)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint meeting (13:45 - 14:45) <i>Supporting the flagship action of the Strategic Roadmap: establishing the governance of the Common European Energy Data Space</i> • Breakout session (14:45 - 15:45)
15:45	Networking coffee
16:15	<p>Plenary: “BRIDGE Working Groups – What are the next steps?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of conclusions from the moderators of the breakout rooms BRIDGE WG Chairs: Andrej Gubina, José Pablo Chaves Ávila, Michael Brenner-Fließer, Dune Sebilléau • DG ENER feedback on the presentations by WGs with definition of priorities for the next activity year
17:15	<p>Closing session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary of key takeaways by the BRIDGE chairs • Final words and thanks from DG ENER and Secretariat
17:30	End of the event