

French eastern borders: situation update on 20th June 2024

On 9th of May 2024, following a two-months period of substantial grid constraints on its eastern borders, RTE had announced that, starting from business day 11th of May 2024, exceptional operational security measures on the capacity calculation processes of Core and Italy North regions were no longer required.

To bring clarity to the situation, RTE would like to share an update of the situation since the 9th of May – to be compared with the March-April period.

The current situation remains constrained due to high exports level towards France's eastern neighbouring bidding zones. Between May 10th and June 15th, in export situations (89% of the time in 2023 and 94% of the time in 2024 during this same period), the average commercial exports from France towards eastern neighbouring bidding zones increased by 40% (6 580 MW in 2023 vs. 9 224 MW in 2024).

To manage these situations RTE is using all conventional actions such as topological measures and costly remedial actions. Nevertheless, due to these unprecedented and massive export flows, additional actions are still required on some timestamps. Two approaches are then applicable:

1. Either continue to offer the maximum capacity on the cross-border market, more particularly on the France-Belgium and France-Germany borders, and then deal with the constraints close to real time. This option was the one adopted beginning of March and led to system security alerts. For this reason, RTE, when all other remedial actions were not sufficient anymore, applied exceptional measures to limit the cross-border capacities in March and April via the "validation process".
2. Or include relevant Critical Network Elements and their Contingencies (CNECs) as inputs to the Core Capacity Calculation. This was the option adopted by RTE since beginning of May to stop activating exceptional limitations – in line with RTE's communication published on the JAO portal on the 9th of May 2024.

This second point resulted in the addition of 19 CNECs (or 38 considering they are sent twice, one per direction) to the Core Capacity Calculation on the French side.

Since 9th of May 2024, the RTE operational process is back to the principles applied 'before the March-April tense period', meaning:

1. RTE still counts on the capacity calculation process to include its grid constraints, and now with more accuracy by including these 19 new CNECs – which are kept only if they comply with the criteria of the 5% sensibility threshold, as required by the Core Day Ahead Capacity Calculation methodology.
2. Only when strictly necessary from an operational grid security perspective, RTE sends Individual Validation Adjustments (IVAs) directly on the elements for which the computation led to unsolvable overloads. The average value of these IVAs (in MW) is much lower than the exceptional limitations applied during the March-April period.
3. It is important to note that the IVAs are only applied when all other Remedial Actions (non-costly and costly ones, namely Countertrading and Redispatch) will not be sufficient to guarantee the minimum requirements in terms of operational security of the grid.

RTE remains committed to adjust and improve its operational processes to offer maximal and secure cross-border capacities to the market. The following actions are ongoing:

- Pursue the efforts to minimize the impact on the market by continuously adapting and improving our regular individual validation mode. More specifically RTE focuses on excluding the 'new CNECs' (added since beginning of May) from its individual validation mode.
- Elaborate a proactive communication plan for the August-October period that would allow Market Participants to be aware of the possible constraints to come in the following days or week.