

CONNECTING THE PORT OF CALAIS TO RTE'S VERY HIGH VOLTAGE NETWORK: A MAJOR STEP TOWARDS DECARBONISING CROSS- CHANNEL TRANSPORT

Calais, 9 January 2025: the Port of Boulogne Calais has just taken an essential step towards achieving carbon neutrality on the cross-Channel link by 2035 by signing a €6.7 million contract with RTE (Réseau de Transport d'Electricité) for the delivery of 100MW of electrical power to the Port of Calais.

The Port of Calais is the main entry and exit point for freight and passengers between the European Union and the United Kingdom. Every year, there are almost 25,000 sea crossings between Calais and Dover, 1.8 million heavy goods vehicles, 1.3 million cars and 68,000 coaches.

The decarbonization of this link represents an important step in the European policy to decarbonize transport. This project is fully in line with the Clydebank Declaration, formulated at COP 26 in Glasgow and signed by France and the United Kingdom in particular, which aims to create green maritime corridors in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from maritime transport by 40%.

An important step has already been taken with the arrival of two P&O Ferries' hybrid diesel-electric ferries, the P&O Pioneer and the P&O Liberté, between Calais and Dover in 2023 and 2024. These hybrid vessels are expected to reduce fossil fuel consumption by around 40%, thanks to their architecture, the use of high-capacity batteries and electric propulsion when maneuvering in port.

Another major ferry operator, DFDS, has made a spectacular commitment to decarbonizing its cross-channel fleet by using electric propulsion. Announced in 2023, this commitment was confirmed in May 2024 at the "Choose France" trade fair. DFDS management announced that it would be renewing its cross-Channel fleet of six ferries (three in Calais and three in Dunkirk) with electric-powered vessels by 2035, including two from 2030, at a total cost of €1 billion.

The geographical location of the Port of Calais: a major advantage for 100% electric shipping

The Port of Calais has an exceptional geographical opportunity, given the short nautical distance (less than 50 kilometers) separating it from its mirror port, Dover, and its proximity to the Gravelines nuclear power station. The combination of these factors makes 100% electric crossings a particularly appropriate solution.



The TIDES project is entering the implementation phase with the signing of a contract for connection to RTE's extra-high-voltage electricity network.

The TIDES (Terminal Integration to Deliver Electricity to Ships) project supported by the Port of Boulogne-Calais is designed to offer maritime operators an ultra-efficient solution for recharging the batteries of their future electric ships on the quayside, with a level of power unmatched to date in any port. The challenge is to inject sufficient electricity during the port of call to enable ferries to make the entire sea crossing in electric mode.

In concrete terms, the infrastructure will make it possible to supply power of 20 to 35 MW per ship a limited port call of 45 minutes. In order to preserve the cross-Channel business model, it is not feasible to extend the turnaround time. Up to three ships can be treated simultaneously.

The project is now entering phase 1, with the formalization of the agreement between Port Boulogne Calais and RTE for the connection of the Port of Calais to the high-voltage electricity grid to provide the port with 100MW of power.

The contract, worth €6.7m, is the culmination of discussions begun in 2023 with the high-voltage grid operator to study the option best suited to our needs.

After several options were considered, considering budgetary aspects and technical or environmental risks, it was decided to connect to the Les Garennes substation, which has a voltage of 90,000 volts and is located in the immediate vicinity of the port.

The formalization of commitment between the Port of Boulogne Calais and RTE means that we can now secure the energy resources that the port will need by the beginning of 2030 at the latest, DFDS's first new 100% electric ships arrive.

The year 2025 will be devoted to the technical and legal study and the financial package for phase 2, which will involve developing the electrical system linking the entrance transformer to the quays to enable ships to recharge.

For Benoît Rochet, Managing Director of the Port of Boulogne Calais: *"Securing a high-voltage electricity from RTE is a key step towards decarbonizing the Calais-Dover link. The next few years will be devoted to designing the infrastructure needed to transform and distribute the energy and to connect and recharge the ships. The power to be delivered in such a short space of time is so important that there is currently no equivalent automated connection system in service in the maritime world. The Port of Boulogne Calais will be a pioneer in this field."*

The TIDES project represents an estimated investment of €45m by the Port of Boulogne Calais. An application for a European subsidy will be submitted as soon as the level progress of the phase 2 studies allows.



PRESS RELEASE

Calais, 9 January 2025

Christophe Coulon, Vice-Chairman of the Hauts-de-France Region with responsibility for mobility, transport infrastructure and ports, added: *"The REV3 regional dynamic, the foundation of an ambitious energy transition, is guiding the sustainable transformation of the Hauts-de-France seafront. As France's leading port region in terms of tonnage, it stands out for the exemplary nature of its infrastructures, such as the Port of Boulogne- Calais, European leader in the processing of seafood products (Boulogne-sur-Mer) and European leader in cross- Channel freight (Calais), and the Port of Dunkirk, a major player in trans-oceanic trade and industrial-port decarbonization. This vision is part of a collective strategy combining economic performance, environmental responsibility and sustainable attractiveness, essential priorities for strengthening our role as a sustainable European logistics hub."*

Connecting the Port of Calais to the RTE extra-high voltage network is a key step in this. Much more than technical progress, this partnership paves the way for a carbon-neutral future for the cross-Channel link by 2035. Supported by the Hauts-de-France Region and driven by the commitment of maritime, port and industrial players, this achievement illustrates an exemplary mobilisation to combine competitiveness and sustainable development, for the benefit of our region and its international reputation".

Laurent Cantat Lampin, RTE's Hauts-de-France regional delegate, is delighted with the public electricity network operator's involvement in this project, which will help to develop the Calais area: *"RTE is pleased and proud to be supporting the economic development of the Port of Boulogne Calais and the Calais area by providing high levels of electrical power to the very heart of the port's facilities within a short timeframe. This project to electrify cross-Channel vessels is a first in France and will help to achieve France's objectives in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. RTE's teams, together with all players in the region, working hard to make this possible."*

Press contacts :

Port Boulogne Calais

Isabelle Fauquet
isabelle.fauquet@portboulagnecalais.fr
+33 (0)7 85 54 04 47

RTE

Anne-Sophie Pinon
anne-sophie.pinon@rte-france.com
+33 (0)7 62 44 67 06

About Port Boulogne Calais

Operated by the Société d'Exploitation des Ports du Déroit (SEPD), headquartered in Calais, the Port Boulogne Calais is a port hub combining the ports of Boulogne-sur-Mer and Calais. It is France's 1st fishing port, 1st passenger port, 2nd European port for Ro-ro traffic (roll on - roll off), Europe's leading centre for the processing and marketing of seafood products and France's 4th cargo port.

The new port of Calais, an investment of €863 that has doubled its capacity, was opened in October 2021.

Press contact: Isabelle Fauquet isabelle.fauquet@portboulagnecalais.fr
+33 (0)7 85 54 04 47

