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New utility company Fluvius comes into being on 1 July

The merger of Eandis and Infrax has been completed, and its new name will be adorning the public space from the beginning of 2019.

The general meetings of Eandis and Infrax on Thursday have given their final approval to the merger of the two utility companies. This will create a new utility company with the name Fluvius on 1 July 2018. It will, among other things, manage the natural gas and electricity networks for the whole of Flanders. But the mains drainage and cable television activities of Infrax are now also part of Fluvius. In 2019, a new handwritten Fluvius logo will replace the well-known names Eandis and Infrax. The completed integration process will result in annual savings of EUR 110 million as from 2022.

The plan to merge the two operating companies Eandis and Infrax dates from May 2017, when the boards of directors of both companies and the fourteen municipal associations they work for approved the merger for the first time. The last few months have been spent thoroughly preparing the complete integration. And today, the shareholders of Eandis and Infrax gave their final approval to continue as one operating company for the 308 Flemish municipalities as from 1 July 2018. The new company bears the name Fluvius, Latin for 'river' or 'stream'.

Although a merger of Eandis and Infrax was still considered problematic a few years ago, the support for unification has increased strongly in recent years. The future challenges in the energy sector are too important and expensive to maintain two separate utility companies.

Piet Buyse, President of Eandis and Wim Dries, President of Infrax:

"This is a historic moment for the Flemish energy sector. All 308 Flemish municipalities have, for the first time, opted for one company that will support them in the management of most of their utilities. In this way, Fluvius will become the largest inter-municipal company in Flanders. We are convinced that this choice will result in better efficiency and less inconvenience on our streets in the coming years."

Utilities for everyone

The distribution networks for electricity and natural gas are of immense strategic importance to our society. Without them, a modern society is unthinkable. The quality of these networks and the services of Eandis and Infrax is also very high: Flanders is in the top 5 of regions and countries with the most reliable energy networks in Europe. Fluvius wants to continue along this strong professional path in the years ahead.

But Fluvius is more than a unified utility company for natural gas and electricity in the 308 Flemish municipalities. The company wants to be the best operating company for most utility-related networks in Flanders. Fluvius is also the main drainage system operator for 84 Flemish municipalities, operates the cable distribution network in 91 municipalities and manages all municipal public lighting.

This multi-utility approach (multiple utilities within one company) will result in financial and operational efficiency within Fluvius. The better the utility activities can be mutually harmonised in terms of planning and approach, the less inconvenience they will cause and the less often streets and pavements have to be dug up. This will benefit everyone.

15% savings and a € 36 lower network rate for the average family

The combination of Eandis and Infrax also provides a positive financial effect. The merger is the start of a process of integration and economisation that will increase to annual and recurring savings of € 110 million in 2022. This represents 15% of the operating costs of the new company and translates into a reduction of the distribution network rate of € 36 per year on the final bill for natural gas and electricity for the average household. This is realised by, among other things, avoiding double investments, economies of scale and natural staff reductions. Over the next few years, 500 employees will retire and not all of these employees will be replaced.

Major challenges for the future

Fluvius will also be an important supporting partner in achieving climate targets and implementing the energy transition in Flanders. As from January 2019, the company will start installing the **first digital energy meters**. These are an important tool for the transition from centralised to decentralised energy production, and to continue to properly and efficiently manage the grids in this new landscape. In the coming years, Fluvius wants to evolve from a 'network operator' to a real '**system operator**': a neutral player strongly supporting all market parties in the new energy landscape. The new role as **independent data administrator** also fits in the framework of that assignment.

Right up to your front door

Authorities, regulators and suppliers will be contacting the company under the new name of Fluvius as from 1 July 2018. For the end customer things will stay the same for a while. They will not start to see the new Fluvius logo until the beginning of 2019, when the different customer processes of Eandis and Infrax are sufficiently aligned. At that moment in time, the logos of Eandis and Infrax will disappear from vehicles, uniforms and buildings, and any contact through all types of media (offices, website, social media, telephone numbers, email) will always be received by Fluvius.

The new Fluvius logo is clearly different from the rather technical logos of Eandis and Infrax. Fluvius will have a unique and handwritten logo. The company wants to focus on stronger relationships with its customers and stakeholders during the coming years. This ambition to further enhance customer experience is also reflected in the new slogan of the company: 'Tot bij u' = 'Right up to your front door'.

Walter Van den Bossche, managing director and Frank Vanbrabant, CEO:

"Eandis and Infrax have always scored very well with regard to the professionalism and reliability of our services. In that area, we are among the best in Europe and we want to keep it that way. But in the coming years we would also like to pay extra attention to our customers and make them even more central to everything we do. Our new Fluvius logo and the slogan 'Right up to your front door' reflect that ambition. We are ready to go all the way!"

Fluvius in a nutshell

- Registered office: Brusselsesteenweg 199, 9090 Melle, Belgium
- President: Piet Buyse (mayor of Dendermonde)
- Vice-president: Wim Dries (mayor of Genk)
- Managing Director: Walter Van den Bossche
- CEO: Frank Vanbrabant
- Number of employees: 5330
- Operating company for 14 municipal associations: Gaselwest, Imea, Imewo, Infrax West, Inter-Aqua, Inter-Energa, Intergem, Inter-Media, Iveg, Iveka, Iverlek, PBE, Riobra and Sibelgas.

- Turnover: € 3.1 billion
- Value of all Fluvius assets (energy, cable, mains drainage, heating): € 11 billion
- Investments in 2017: € 681 million

- Total electricity grid length: 142,000 kilometres
- Total gas network length: 57,000 kilometres
- Total mains drainage length: 11,000 kilometres
- Total cable network length: 20,500 kilometres

- Total number of connections: 7 million
- Number of electricity connections: 3.5 million
- Number of gas connections: 2.2 million
- Number of mains drainage connections: 630,000
- Number of cable connections: 540,000

- Subsidiaries: De Stroomlijn (64,3%), Atrias (50%), Synductis (25%).

What does Fluvius actually do?

- It constructs, manages and maintains the distribution networks for natural gas and electricity in all 308 Flemish municipalities.
- It constructs, manages and maintains the mains drainage system in 84 municipalities.
- It manages the cable distribution network in 91 municipalities. (Telenet uses this network to offer its services to households and businesses, Fluvius uses it to offer extra telecommunication services to its municipal shareholders).
- It manages the public lighting system in all 308 Flemish municipalities.
- It constructs heating networks.
- It is the social energy supplier for customers who are dropped by the commercial market.
- It promotes the rational use of energy and water (RUE and RUW). It processes and pays the RUE premiums to families and businesses.
- It acts as a one-stop-shop for the application and payment of green certificates.
- It supports municipalities in making public buildings energy-efficient, in cooperation with the commercial market.

Press contact

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About Fluvius

Fluvius is the new utility company created by the merger of Eandis and Infrax, which takes place on 1st July 2018. Fluvius is responsible for the construction, management and maintenance of distribution grids for electricity, natural gas, sewerage, cable distribution and heat, and manages the municipal public lighting park. In total, the company manages 230,000 kilometres of utility grids and 7 million connections. Fluvius is active in all 308 Flemish municipalities. Until the beginning of 2019, the brand names Eandis and Infrax will remain visible in the streetscape. After that, all activities will be carried out under the name Fluvius.