



THE DECLARATION OF ENERGY MINISTERS

on The North Sea as a Green Power Plant of Europe

Energy security and the fight against climate change are crucial to the future of the European Union. Recalling the Versailles conclusions on energy, the European Commission's communication on Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy, and the most recent IPCC report and taking note of the European Commission's REPowerEU announcement of 18 May, we aim to take urgent and immediate action. The recent geopolitical events will accelerate our efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption and promote the deployment of renewable energy for more energy resilience in Europe.

Therefore, we will increasingly **replace fossil fuels, including Russian oil, coal and gas, with European renewable energy from the North Sea**, including offshore wind and green hydrogen, contributing to both EU climate neutrality and energy security.

Together, we have set **ambitious combined targets for offshore wind of at least 65 GW by 2030**. Based on the North Sea as a Green Power Plant of Europe, together we aim to **more than double our total 2030-capacity of offshore wind to at least 150 GW by 2050, delivering more than half of the capacity needed to reach EU climate neutrality** according to the European Commission's Strategy on Offshore Renewable Energy.

This will contribute to large-scale onshore and offshore production of **green hydrogen**. **We have set combined targets of about 20 GW production capacity already by 2030** and look to expand our production even further for 2050.

On this basis, we take the first practical steps to **realise our common vision of the North Sea as a Green Power Plant of Europe together:**

- Denmark will **establish the world's first multi-phased and largest energy island in the North Sea** with an initial capacity of **3 GW offshore wind by 2033 and connections to Belgium and Denmark**. Work on preparing the ground for further connections to Germany and the Netherlands has priority.
- Belgium will establish **the world's first offshore energy island**, a hybrid project combining offshore wind generation and cross-border interconnection.
- Belgium and Denmark will work closely together on hybrid renewable energy projects, including the connection between both the Danish Energy Island and the Belgian Energy Island.
- Belgium will establish **5.8 GW offshore wind capacity by 2030 and 8 GW by 2040**.
- Denmark will reach at least **10 GW total offshore wind capacity by 2030 with a view towards up to 35 GW in the North Sea by 2050** and potentially more depending on European demand for green power.
- Denmark and the Netherlands will explore how to **connect the energy island in the Danish EEZ to a Dutch energy hub**, including perspectives for offshore green hydrogen production.
- The Netherlands will establish about **21 GW offshore wind capacity around 2030**.
- Germany and Denmark already developed a first of its kind hybrid offshore wind cooperation project and intend to cooperate on the Bornholm Energy Island in the Baltic Sea including hybrid interconnections and will also **engage in hybrid renewable energy projects in the North Sea**.
- Germany will establish at least **30 GW offshore wind by 2030, 40 GW by 2035, and 70 GW by 2045**.
- Together, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands will accelerate and mature ongoing efforts to develop and expand offshore energy as part of an integral vision of the North Sea with the aim to **realise a future proof offshore energy system in the North Sea**, as a first step by **expanding the world's first energy island to its maximum potential capacity of 10 GW at 2040 at the latest**.
- We aim to support our common vision by developing cooperation projects and will therefore launch analytical work as a first step towards establishing **the next of several major energy hubs and islands** in the North Sea, including a collective process to identify options for the exact location, capacity and technical configuration.
- We will **begin planning for multiple energy hubs and islands** by undertaking a screening of the potential for offshore wind, and where relevant green hydrogen production, in our entire North Sea territory. This will be carried out in a coordinated manner, building on and consistent with mandatory national and EU planning procedures with the goal of achieving the highest efficiency and common benefits. We will also build on and further intensify research efforts, and explore new ways of building out renewable energy, including innovative partnerships with industry.
- To reach these strategic goals, each of our four Member States will commit a team of experts to this task with a view towards **presenting preliminary findings within one year**, taking stock in December 2022 at the margins of the Energy Council.

In order to support these steps, we commit to continue to engage also with the European Commission, EU Member States, third countries, regional fora, industry and global partners based on the following principles:

- We will work together and also fully support the European Commission's **Strategy for Offshore Renewable Energy setting a 300 GW ambition for the EU to reach climate neutrality** as regards follow-up actions such as EU guidance on concluding cooperation agreements between Member States on cross-border renewable energy projects as well as on cost-benefit analyses and cross-border cost allocation as well as a fair distribution of costs and benefits of such projects.
- In order to support the realisation of projects, we will take **all relevant and appropriate steps to speed up regulatory and permitting processes as much as possible and invite the European Commission to actively support these efforts**, while promoting balanced co-existence of renewable energy and a healthy marine ecosystem.
- We will review existing regulation at national and EU-level as envisaged in the European Commission's REPowerEU plan. To this end, **renewable energy should be considered as being in the overriding public interest and serving public safety** and regulatory sandboxes should be explored in dialogue with industry and relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations, including those focussing on environmental aspects. This will enable testing of innovative policies, technologies, products or services that aim to **advance the balanced coexistence of renewable deployment and environmental protection**, with the aim to contribute to biodiversity and preserve, and where possible improve, the marine ecosystem of the North Sea.
- We will work together and also support the European Commission in **strengthening the electricity market arrangements** at Union level to enable the swift realisation of joint and hybrid offshore renewable energy projects by considering possible distributional effects on costs and benefits of market actors including TSOs and offshore wind farm developers, a fair distribution of costs and benefits between them, an efficient utilisation of grid and market resources and the effective grid and market integration of offshore renewable electricity.
- We will fully **engage and support the regional cooperation in the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC)**. Therefore, analytical work related to establishing additional energy hubs will take place in the NSEC with the inclusion of the European Commission, building on the work of the Support Groups.
- We see the state of the **marine ecosystem of the North Sea as a shared responsibility**, and therefore stress the importance of regional cooperation. We will therefore explore the potential for cooperating on a joint process for environmental impact assessments and formal safety assessments.
- The expansion of offshore wind and the realisation of large-scale energy hubs should fit in a broader vision on the use of the North Sea, making sure the North Sea can be used effectively and efficiently for multi-use purposes. We will work together with our relevant fellow Ministers to integrate offshore energy efficiently.
- We support the work of the Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan (BEMIP) and other regional efforts to promote offshore wind. We will explore how the progress achieved at this Summit in relation to the North Sea could provide further momentum to build out offshore wind in the rest of the EU.

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- In the development of energy hubs, we will **explore ways to promote onshore and offshore production of green hydrogen** including the necessary **transmission and pipeline infrastructure** and we will explore the possible synergies of cooperating on offshore hydrogen production and transmission. We will also consider how an appropriate regulatory framework and support for the required technological innovation for green hydrogen can support European industrial leadership, development and production of green fuels and the phase-out of imported natural gas.
 - We support the European Commission's plan to develop a **well-functioning market for green hydrogen** in order to accelerate the buildout and support a high security of supply of affordable green hydrogen and energy for industry. In order to scale up capacity nationally and regionally, we will build on the ongoing work to establish an IPCEI on green hydrogen and consider further options for cross-border cooperation. For a well-functioning green hydrogen market across Europe, we will accompany and support the necessary EU regulation for green hydrogen.
 - We support **increased electrification of Europe**, including ensuring a well-functioning single market for electricity and a transmission grid that connects electricity production offshore to consumption centres in order to ensure a high security of supply of affordable energy for consumers, including households.
 - In order to facilitate an accelerated build-out of hybrid interconnectors bringing large scale offshore wind to European consumers, we recall the instrumental role of **the Connecting Europe Facility** and **the Renewable Energy Financing Mechanism** to steer **a more speedy** and targeted co-financing of **electricity interconnections, hybrid projects** and **renewable energy generation**, that supply European consumers across the Union with affordable, renewable energy. We will work towards strengthening these **EU financing instruments** based on an improved and more effective use of existing Union funds. We also call on the European Investment Bank to deepen its already active support to the buildout of renewable energy.
 - We call on the European Commission to support the Member States, regions and stakeholders in using all the relevant EU financing instruments, such as the cohesion policy funds, Horizon Europe and InvestEU, for stimulating renewable energy in a synergetic way.
 - We will monitor the **development of technology for solar photovoltaic** within offshore wind farms. Where feasible and necessary we will take steps together to remove barriers for large-scale demonstrations so the technology can further develop and we will gain valuable insights in the operational and environmental challenges. The objective is to create the opportunity for offshore solar to become a viable addition to offshore wind farms.
 - We will cooperate to keep **physical and digital security** of offshore infrastructure on top of the European agenda.
 - We will **continue to collaborate closely with our industries across European borders** to realise the full potential of renewable energy in our societies. In this regard and, where necessary, we will use targeted measures to develop critical technologies for the green transition. To support the competitiveness of European industry and reach EU climate neutrality, we will continue to improve energy efficiency through investments and system integration in order to reduce our dependency on energy import, whilst exploring opportunities for diversification based on openness to trade and investments.

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