



NORTH SEAS COUNTRIES AGREE ON CONTINUOUS COOPERATION IN ORDER TO REACH THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE NORTH SEAS

We need to untap the potential of the North Seas in order for the European Union to reach the ambition of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. The North Seas has the potential to reach a capacity of approximately 20 percent of EU's electricity production in 2040. That is 15 times more energy than produced in the North Seas today.

But without cooperation and coordination between Member States this potential will not be unleashed. This is why the Ministers of the North Seas Energy Cooperation are gathered today on 20 June in Esbjerg at the shore of the North Seas to assess the results of three years of close regional cooperation. Today, Ministers will set the direction for the next steps in the continued important cooperation.

“Denmark is proud to host the Ministerial Meeting of the North Seas Energy Cooperation in Esbjerg. Regional cooperation is pivotal in order to optimize the huge potential of the North Seas and thereby secure the next steps in Europe's green energy transition”, says Minister for Energy, Utilities and Climate and co-president of the North Seas Energy Cooperation Lars Chr. Lilleholt.

At the Ministerial meeting the ministers and the European Commission, agreed to work together to achieve an indicative aggregated capacity of EU Member States of the North Seas Energy Cooperation of at least 70 GW by 2030 based on their current plans for offshore wind power development.

Since Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden the United Kingdom and the European Commission signed the political declaration in 2016 the North Seas Energy Cooperation has proven a valuable forum to discuss options and common solutions.

For example, a number of potential hybrid projects have been identified that combine offshore generation and interconnection which could provide cost reductions and better use of the geographical scope of the North Seas. Barriers for realising the hybrid projects including regulatory treatment have been identified as well as possible solutions. In order to take the next steps forward we need continuous regional dialogue.

“The North Seas Energy Cooperation is an important regional cooperation to coordinate our joint efforts for wind offshore deployment in the North Seas. At today's Ministerial meeting we send a clear signal to investors that we continue and deepen our successful cooperation. We will explore concrete options for joint projects and we will intensify our common work on overcoming existing barriers such as for the implementation of hybrid projects in the North Seas”, says Secretary of State Andreas Feicht from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy

Furthermore, the cooperation has led to coordination of the timing of tenders when applicable. When planning and deployment of new offshore wind farms overlap, prices tend to increase. Timing of tenders within the North Seas Energy Cooperation ensures better planning of new offshore wind farms. This is a

concrete win-win result that helps to bring down the cost of renewable energy by avoiding unfavourable bottlenecks of tenders.

Furthermore the cooperation provides for a constant flow of knowledge among the countries as well as industry. The North Seas countries have continuously shared experiences and best practices, thereby supporting each other in everything from technical standards to creating tender designs for offshore wind. However, over the past years we have realised that we have still only just scratched the surface of the potential of offshore wind. As we see a continuous decrease in cost of offshore wind, new possibilities arise and the need for cooperation rises with it.

“Offshore wind will be the single biggest asset in EU’s quest to be a climate change leader. Luxembourg is ready to play its part, in securing the ambitions of the North Seas by among other things actively participating in future joined tenders of new large scale projects”, says Minister for Energy and Spatial Planning Claude Turmes from Luxembourg.

The future holds new challenges as the space in the North Seas is not unlimited. This will require increased coordination and cooperation between countries in order to reach the full potential. Today, the ministers therefore agreed on the necessity of continuing to work together as well as maintaining an open dialogue with all stakeholders in order to secure that the North Seas fulfils its potential role in securing a climate neutral future.

