

18 May 2022 -18:00

North Sea coalition joins hands to quadruple offshore wind power capacity

Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands are joining forces to make the North Sea the largest source of renewable energy in Europe, as they agreed today at the North Sea Summit in the Danish port city of Esbjerg.

During the North Sea Summit, Prime Minister Alexander De Croo signed the ambitious Esbjerg Declaration on the North Sea as Europe's green energy hub together with his Danish, German and Dutch counterparts.

The four heads of government want to quadruple the combined offshore wind capacity of Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands to 65 GW by 2030 and raise it further to at least 150 GW by 2050, making the North Sea Europe's largest renewable energy plant.

More local, renewable energy

Alexander De Croo: *"The Ukraine crisis underscores the importance for us, as European countries, to step up our own energy production. By investing more in renewable, we not only become less dependent on others, we will also better protect our citizens and businesses from high prices and work towards a liveable environment. This agreement positions Belgium as one of the leading European countries that are also linking the shift to locally generated renewable energy to successful industrial policy."*

The energy ministers of the four countries also signed a cooperation agreement in Esbjerg. Belgium's ambition is to quadruple offshore wind capacity to nearly 6 GW by 2030 and 8 GW by 2040. Our country also is pioneering the very first hybrid energy island in the North Sea and interconnections with Denmark and the United Kingdom. This should ensure a steady supply of cheap wind energy for our Belgian households and businesses.

Lower bills and CO2 emissions

Energy Minister Tinne Van der Straeten: *"Today is a historic day for Europe and for our country. Energy supply is being weaponised and our families and businesses are slapped with record bills. This green acceleration allows us to replace gas and oil, especially from Russia, with offshore wind and green hydrogen more quickly. This helps us increase our energy independence, lower our bills and reduce CO2 emissions. Belgium is accelerating the energy transition by quadrupling its offshore wind capacity by 2040 in the Belgian North Sea, constructing a hybrid energy island and creating interconnections with North Sea countries."*

Belgium has become one of the absolute world leaders in offshore wind energy. In 10 years' time, Belgium became number two worldwide in terms of offshore capacity per capita, behind Denmark but ahead of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Germany. Today, our country is generating 2.26 GW of offshore energy. By 2030, that should be tripled to 6 GW, ensuring that every Belgian has access to North Sea electricity. A further expansion to 8 GW is planned by 2040.

As part of the European recovery plan, Belgium is attempting another world first: building the very first hybrid energy island in the Belgian North Sea to connect its own wind farms and interconnections. Floating solar panels in the North Sea are also being considered.

Economic return

Being ahead of the pact also provides a great economic return. Many Belgian companies have become world leaders in wind energy and are helping to build large wind farms in countries such as Scotland, France and the United States. The wind energy industry already accounts for 14,000 jobs today. By 2030, it is expected that a further 10,000 new jobs will be added. Many Belgian energy companies and important offshore players are therefore present at the North Sea Summit.

[Click here to read the Esbjerg Declaration \(PDF\)](#)

[Click here to read the Statement of Energy Ministers \(PDF\)](#)

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