

24 Apr 2023 -18:16

Declaration of Ostend – North Sea Summit 23

At the invitation of Belgium, the second North Sea Summit took place in Ostend today. In the Ostend Declaration, a North Sea coalition of nine countries commits to develop the North Sea into the world's largest green energy power plant. Below is the joint statement of the nine heads of state and government.

OSTEND DECLARATION

ON

THE NORTH SEAS AS EUROPE'S GREEN POWER PLANT

DELIVERING CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS

AND ANCHORING THE RENEWABLE OFFSHORE INDUSTRY IN EUROPE

Recalling the declaration on the North Seas as a Green Power Plant of Europe in Esbjerg signed by the Chancellor of Germany and the Prime Ministers of Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands on 18 May 2022.

The President of the French Republic, the Prime Ministers of Luxembourg, Norway, the United Kingdom and the Taoiseach of Ireland are joining this Ostend declaration.

Further recalling the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 6th Assessment Report on Climate Change and the newly published 6th Assessment Report – The Synthesis Report, stressing the need for urgent and upscaled action in order to fight climate change and its effects on our peoples, economies and welfare.

Underlining that energy security and the fight against climate change are crucial to the future of Europe, we need to strengthen our cooperation to ensure affordable, secure and sustainable energy, while at the same time, continuing our efforts to protect the marine ecosystem. In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and attempts of energy blackmail against Europe we will accelerate our efforts to reduce fossil fuel consumption as well as dependence on fossil fuel imports and promote the rapid upscaling and deployment of renewable energy for an energy resilient Europe and guarantee the resilience of our offshore energy infrastructure.

Our common endeavour is to produce European renewable energy from the North Seas, including offshore wind and renewable hydrogen, contributing to competitive energy prices, climate neutrality and energy security.

Following the Esbjerg Declaration of 18 May 2022 and the North Seas Energy Cooperation Dublin Joint Statement of 12 September 2022, we are strongly committed to accelerating the deployment of offshore renewables and offshore renewable energy systems.

We will jointly develop The North Seas as a Green Power Plant of Europe, an offshore renewable energy

system connecting our countries with a particular focus on joint hybrid/ multi-purpose and cross-border offshore projects and hubs, offshore wind and renewable hydrogen production at massive scale as well as electricity and hydrogen interconnectors and national projects, including the possibility for co-financing by countries without direct access to the sea.

We will further endeavour to accelerate deployment of offshore renewables and connectivity within the maritime area encompassed by the signatory countries of this Declaration, including the Irish Sea, the Celtic Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean.

We support the development of a well-functioning market and infrastructure for hydrogen, recognising that flexibilities in national approaches in development and deployment will be necessary in a transition period.

We will seek to develop a resilient, transparent and sustainable regional offshore renewable energy supply chain and further aim to safeguard the supply of relevant critical raw materials through import diversification, increased European output, and the enhanced circularity of offshore renewable energy and grid infrastructure.

We will take all relevant and appropriate steps to advance the balanced coexistence of renewables deployment, biodiversity and environmental protection, as well as to contribute to healthy and robust marine ecosystems. We encourage all relevant institutions to address all bottlenecks and barriers arising from permitting procedures, in order to speed up the green transition.

We will take all relevant and appropriate steps to secure our critical infrastructure in the North Seas, in order to protect our common interests, uphold international law and react effectively to growing traditional and hybrid threats. We will work together to increase the security of offshore and underwater infrastructure within NATO and the EU.

We aim for a cost-efficient buildout of offshore wind that will harvest the potential of the North Seas in the most beneficial way for both the connected countries and Europe.

Given the potential role of carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) for contributing to decarbonisation, and the potential of the North Seas to store CO₂ in geological formations, we underline the need to better coordinate storage and offshore infrastructure planning in those countries who intend to use formations under the North Seas for this purpose.

We will build on the work already accomplished under the framework of the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) and the NSEC-UK Memorandum of Understanding on offshore renewable energy cooperation and will implement strategies to achieve our goals in close cooperation with the European Commission. In doing so, we will strive for a balanced coexistence of economic and ecological needs.

Together, we have set ambitious combined targets for offshore wind of at least 120 GW by 2030 in the North Seas. Based on the North Seas as a Green Power Plant of Europe, together we aim to more than double our total 2030-capacity of offshore wind to at least 300 GW by 2050.

This will contribute to large-scale onshore and offshore production of renewable hydrogen. Germany, Denmark, The Netherlands and The United Kingdom have set combined targets of about 30 GW production capacity already by 2030 and look to expand their production even further for 2050.

We need to focus on implementing the ambitions set in this declaration and we note the progress and ambitions made both individually and between the countries of this declaration.

Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister
Rue de la Loi 16
1000 Brussels
Belgium
+32 2 501 02 11
<https://premier.be>
contact@premier.be

BramDelen
Spokesperson (NL)
+32 497 30 82 05
bram.delen@premier.be

FrançoisBailly
Spokesperson (FR)
+32 488 07 05 12
francois.bailly@premier.be