



North Seas Countries agree on closer energy cooperation

Luxembourg, 6 June 2016

North Seas region countries (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) have today agreed to further strengthen their energy cooperation.

The aim is to create good conditions for the development of offshore wind energy in order to ensure a sustainable, secure and affordable energy supply in the North Seas countries.

A political declaration and action plan signed today by nine Ministers and Vice-President for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič and by Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Arias Cañete, will also facilitate the building of missing electricity links, allow more trading of energy and further integration of energy markets. Reinforcing regional cooperation will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance security of supply in the region. These are key objectives of the Energy Union.

Vice-President Maroš **Šefčovič** said: *"Today's declaration is an important step towards an Energy Union that will deliver the climate commitments we made in Paris last year. Close regional cooperation and pooling together of energy sources will be essential to unlock the full potential of the North Sea resources at the lowest cost."*

Commissioner Arias **Cañete** said: *"Today marks a turning point in cooperation in the North Seas region. We now have a concrete action plan that will deliver results. This strategy will boost interconnection and renewables capacity, help fight climate change and bolster energy security, which are the central goals of the Energy Union."*

Energy cooperation between the countries will focus on four main areas:

- Spatial planning will aim at optimising the use of limited space in this intensively used sea. This will include data sharing, finding common approaches to environmental impacts, and the coordination of permitting procedures.
- The electricity grid has to be developed so that it is able to accommodate large scale offshore wind energy. Markets should be well connected to allow electricity to flow when and where it is needed. The regional work in this field will include coordinated grid planning and development, but also exploring potential synergies with the offshore oil and gas sectors.
- In future participating countries will share information about their individual offshore infrastructure needs. This will help plan the investments as well as align support schemes and mobilise investment capital for joint projects.
- The aim is to identify best practices and ways to harmonise technical rules and standards across the region. The cooperation also aims to reduce costs throughout the lifecycle of generation facilities. To achieve this, the participating countries will work towards mutual recognition of national standards.

Previous [Commission studies](#) have shown the potential for up to €5.1 billion worth of savings when taking a coordinated approach to offshore grid development. This is due to fewer and shorter cables being required to connect offshore wind installations to land. There are also clear benefits to further market integration, facilitated by new interconnectors. Finally, gains could be realised by closer cooperation on environmental and marine management with respect to infrastructure development.

The declaration was signed today by Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. The initiative remains open to the participation of all countries with an interest in the North Seas.

For more information

The text of the political declaration will be available on the website of [DG Energy](#).

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Attachments

[Political Declaration on Energy Cooperation between the North Seas Countries FINAL.pdf](#)