

ESBJERG GROUP JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT

2025 ACTIONS

FOR MULTIPLE CONNECTED OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY HUBS

Belgium Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands intend to jointly follow up on the Esbjerg Declaration agreed upon on 18th of May 2022 and in the context of the Ostend Declaration on 24th of April 2023 to identify and take ambitious political actions before 2025 in order to enable the transformation of the North Sea into Europe's green power plant.

The Esbjerg Declaration initiated cooperation on the planning of multiple connected and integrated offshore renewable energy projects and hubs, offshore wind production at large scale as well as electricity and green hydrogen interconnectors. We recognise that offshore renewable energy hubs and an increasingly meshed offshore grid are crucial to generate, connect, convert and transport offshore wind energy in the North Sea.

We support the Ostend Declaration and the Ostend Declaration of Energy Ministers in order to achieve our joint vision that a clean and healthy North Sea will act as an environmentally and nature-friendly European green power plant in the global energy transition.

We recognise the conclusions of the TSO Expert Paper "*The Esbjerg Cooperation - Transforming the North Sea into Europe's green power plant*" and will continue to work together with the TSO's.

We therefore confirm our common intent to ensure that the necessary bilateral and multilateral political agreements, as well as practical arrangements, are in place in due time. This is to facilitate the coordination and development of offshore renewable energy hubs. In this sense, we emphasize the importance of a connected and integrated offshore grid in the North Sea to reach our ambitions from the Esbjerg and Ostend Declarations.

We aim to harness the full renewable potential of the energy of the North Sea, increase the interconnection and efficiency of our offshore grids, and contribute to the attainability of affordable green energy for European consumers. The four countries will strive to reach EU climate neutrality goals and ensure European energy security while, at the same time, continuing our efforts to protect and, where possible, restore the marine ecosystem of the North Sea. We will make efforts to support large-scale development and deployment of renewable energy, including offshore wind electricity and green hydrogen. This complements the development of sustainable technologies that greatly benefit the whole North Sea region.

We therefore confirm our common intent regarding the following actions by 2025:

- Establish regular multilateral meetings with the responsible ministries in order to ensure immediate progress on bilateral and multilateral political agreements with end of 2023 as the first upcoming assembly.
- The four Member States will work closely together and ensure that additional – if necessary – bilateral agreements are in place by 2025 to provide the respective TSOs political comfort to begin an inter-TSO dialogue and commit necessary resources to analytical work.
- Regularly exchange with the relevant TSO consortia for the purpose of analysing the potential of hybrid connections between Belgian, Dutch, German and Danish offshore renewable energy hubs.

The agreements will secure the four countries' continued role as global frontrunners in environmentally and nature-friendly offshore wind and will emphasise the North Sea as a pioneering green innovative energy hub. As an international inspiration, it will be beneficial for the global energy transition, combating climate change and reaching the targets of the Paris Agreement without compromising the overall status of the North Sea marine ecosystem. The work done under this statement will be carried out and reported on in the North

Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC). Cooperation is key and we encourage other states and respective TSOs to participate in the creation of a connected and integrated European green power plant in the North Sea.

The content of this statement is endorsed by:

/ energy ministers]