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**Joint Declaration of Intent**  
**on further energy cooperation regarding hydrogen infrastructure**

**between**

**The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the  
Federal Republic of Germany**

**and**

**The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of the  
Netherlands**

The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal Republic of Germany (“German Side”) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy of the Netherlands (“Dutch Side”) (collectively the “Participants”),

Are committed to the ambitious climate objectives defined within the European Green Deal and national climate legislation;

Emphasise their strategic partnership, long-standing and close friendship and determination to work together through enhanced bilateral and multilateral cooperation to address climate change, accelerate the global energy transition and safeguard international energy security;

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Build on the very favourable conditions for a cross-border hydrogen ecosystem that is embedded in the integrated European market (i.e. the existing infrastructure and geological formations, the large potential for energy production in the North Sea, as well as the import potential via the ports and the high industrial demand);

Build on the Joint Declaration of the Dutch-German government consultations of 27 March 2023, in which both countries reached the understanding to develop a common vision for hydrogen import policies and cooperate more closely towards a synchronized coupling of their hydrogen grids;

Emphasize the strong cooperation in energy matters in general and hydrogen in particular, which was deepened during a bilateral expert workshop on hydrogen infrastructure on 14 February 2023 in Berlin by creating common understanding of an interconnected Dutch-German hydrogen infrastructure and of the necessary measures to ensure swift coupling of the emerging grids;

Make reference to ongoing procedures at European level aiming at an ambitious ramp-up of a European hydrogen market, such as the ongoing State aid procedure for Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) and the selection of hydrogen infrastructure and electrolyzers as Projects of Common Interest (PCI);

Make reference to the Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) between the Government of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and the Government of the Netherlands on cooperation regarding the cross-border connection of pipeline infrastructure of CO<sub>2</sub> and hydrogen in the Delta Rhine Corridor (DRC) project signed on 14 November 2023;

Make reference to the Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) between participants on the cooperation under the framework of H2Global signed on 14 November 2023;

Have regard to the Ostend Declaration and its objectives to expand offshore renewable energy and hydrogen as well as to construct a meshed offshore energy grid in the North Sea; and

Reaffirm the importance of the Dutch and German ports within the forthcoming European hydrogen infrastructure and global import chains of hydrogen and its derivatives.

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THE PARTICIPANTS HAVE REACHED THE FOLLOWING UNDERSTANDING:

**I. Objective and status of this Joint Declaration of Intent**

1. This bilateral declaration outlines the joint Dutch-German understanding regarding hydrogen infrastructure cooperation more concretely and defines next steps and topics for exchange.
2. This bilateral declaration is not legally binding and does not create any rights or obligations under international law.

**II. Guiding principles and national processes underpinning the hydrogen cooperation**

1. The Participants will conduct the cooperation under this bilateral declaration subject to all applicable laws and regulations, recognizing responsibilities and provisions of the relevant European and national legal frameworks.
2. For the Netherlands, Gasunie subsidiary Hynetwork Services will become the Hydrogen Network Operator (HNO) and is developing the national hydrogen backbone. A phased roll out plan has been published. Construction of the hydrogen backbone has already begun in the industrial cluster in Rotterdam.
3. Within the revised National Hydrogen Strategy (NWS 2023), Germany has identified the need for a well-developed hydrogen network that is interconnected with its neighbouring countries. The hydrogen core network (“*Kernnetz*”) aims to connect important centres of consumption and production as well as storage facilities and cross-border points for imports. One of the criteria to model the hydrogen core network is the embedment into a European hydrogen network.
4. For Germany, obtaining swift approval for the IPCEI projects from the European Commission is essential for the launch of the Northwest European hydrogen grid. Most of the German IPCEI infrastructure projects (e.g. “*GetH2*” and “*HyperLink*”) have been granted early construction approval by the German government.

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### III. Subjects and methods of cooperation

#### Cross-border hydrogen infrastructure

1. The Participants intend to achieve a synchronized coupling of their hydrogen grids. In order to ensure a cross-border connection in line with the project time planning by the Transmission System Operators (TSOs) and HNO and to fuel the supply of hydrogen to the industry, the Participants strive for a rapid implementation of both the Dutch hydrogen backbone and the German hydrogen core network.
2. Taking into account the ongoing procedures at national level, such as the modelling of the German *Kernnetz* and of the Dutch backbone, the Participants have the intention to support and enable the TSOs and HNO in the implementation of the following retrofitted hydrogen interconnection points (IP) as of 2032:
  - IP Bunde-Oude Statenzijl; retrofitted by *Gasunie Germany* and *Gasunie*;
  - IP Kalle-Vlieghuis; retrofitted by *Thyssengas* and *Gasunie*;
  - IP Elten-Zevenaar; retrofitted by *OGE* and *Gasunie*;
  - IP Vreden-Winterswijk; retrofitted by *OGE* and *Gasunie*.

The Participants acknowledge and support the DRC project which enables a substantial increase of the planned transmission capacities and will thus contribute to the further development of the newly built cross-border energy infrastructure in the near future.

3. Given each country's institutional, regulatory and organisational approach to network planning, the Participants strive to continue their close exchange on network development in order to safeguard synchronisation and detect potential hurdles as early as possible. This should be accompanied by constant progress monitoring and close cooperation at administrative level. This takes into account that the EU Hydrogen and gas markets decarbonisation package is still under negotiation at EU level.
4. The Participants strive to provide an enabling framework for private-sector hydrogen projects with cross-border dimensions. Ongoing cooperation efforts among the companies at project level are at the core of the grid coupling process and the Participants will make the strongest efforts to facilitate their implementation while providing an adequate and enabling regulatory framework. This takes into account that

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the EU Hydrogen and gas markets decarbonisation package is still under negotiation at EU level.

5. The considerable project activity in the area of hydrogen production and infrastructure is also expressed in the high number of applications as Projects of Common Interest (PCI) in the Dutch-German border area and the North Sea. PCI candidates have the potential to build trans-European hydrogen corridors. The Participants will cooperate to implement the Dutch and German PCI projects after the 6<sup>th</sup> PCI list has been published by the European Commission. To that end, the Participants will jointly support applications of PCI projects to EU funding instruments such as the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). Also, they intend to align their national approval procedures in implementing the PCIs.
6. The Participants are aware of the high geological potential for hydrogen storage in the Dutch-German border region and will endeavour to utilise the potential. Potential sites for hydrogen storage may include:
  - Zuidwending (Netherlands)
  - Epe (Germany)
  - Jemgum (Germany)
  - Xanten (Germany)
  - Nüttermoor (Germany)
7. The Participants have reached the understanding to constantly screen and identify areas for exchange and potential cooperation with regard to hydrogen infrastructure. Such topics may include:
  - Ensuring coordination on maintaining project time planning for grid coupling, e.g. mutual warning in cases of delay
  - Accelerated planning and approval procedures with the involvement of all responsible authorities and project promoters
  - Norms and standards for operating hydrogen grids, e.g. harmonisation of purity levels to enable bidirectional cross-border flows
  - Mapping of stakeholders with respect to hydrogen infrastructure to create transparency about the distribution of responsibilities in both countries and to facilitate exchange
  - Exchange on financing instruments for hydrogen infrastructure at national level

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- Exchange on the development of the hydrogen economy including the realisation of the necessary infrastructure, which could be extended to related topics, such as the transport of hydrogen derivatives or the creation of bundled energy corridors.

#### **IV. Governance of the cooperation**

1. The Participants will institutionalize their cooperation by setting up an ad-hoc ministerial working group on expert level that convenes on a regular basis or whenever deemed necessary by one of the Participants. The ad-hoc working group may serve for a mutual update on hydrogen policy and issues or challenges to be addressed regarding the joint actions described in this Joint Declaration of Intent. Additionally, ministerial representatives at Director-General level will meet to exchange on hydrogen once or twice a year. The ad-hoc working group is supported by the German Energy Agency (dena) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Germany and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Netherlands. Participation of other stakeholders such as regional governments from the border regions is possible if needed.
2. A bilateral follow-up workshop will be organised in the first half of 2024 and will include market actors and other stakeholders who will take stock of the progress made in interconnecting the emerging hydrogen networks, following up on the first workshop on 14 February 2023 in Berlin.

#### **V. Costs**

1. Each Participant will bear its costs with regard to the activities to be undertaken in furtherance of the cooperation established by this Joint Declaration of Intent.
2. The Participants may consult each another from time to time regarding the division and sharing of any third-party costs that arise in relation to any activity undertaken under this Joint Declaration of Intent.

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## **VI. Review and amendments**

1. The Participants intend to review this Joint Declaration of Intent regularly, with a view to ensuring that it continues to be effective.
2. This Joint Declaration of Intent may be amended in writing and only with the joint approval of the Participants. Each Participant may end cooperation under this Joint Declaration of Intent in writing at any time but should strive to provide written notice of its intent to do so to the other Participant three months in advance.
3. Any dispute arising from the interpretation or implementation of this Joint Declaration of Intent will be resolved through consultations between the Participants.

This Joint Declaration of Intent is signed in Duisburg on 14 November 2023 in duplicate in the English language.

This Joint Declaration of Intent will come into effect on the date of signature and will be applied until 2032.

For the Federal Ministry for Economic  
Affairs and Climate Action of the Federal  
Republic of Germany

For the Ministry of Economic Affairs and  
Climate Policy of the Netherlands

(Signature)

(Signature)

Dr. Philipp Steinberg, Director General for  
Economic Stabilization and Energy Security

Mr. Hans Vijlbrief, State Secretary of  
Economic Affairs and Climate Policy