



The 2025 Joint Statement of Ostend on the North Seas Energy Cooperation

‘Stronger together in the North Seas’

Ostend, 6 November 2025

Context

In line with their renewed Political Declaration of December 2021, and building on the Odense recommendations of October 2024, the members of the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC), the Ministers and the European Commission on behalf of the European Union represented by the Commissioner for Energy and Housing, reconfirm that NSEC remains the framework for facilitating enhanced regional cooperation between NSEC members, that delivers upon our combined offshore renewables ambition, including through a joint vision to remove bottlenecks for the expansion of wind farms, turning the North Sea into an offshore interconnection hub, and the promotion of cooperation projects.

The offshore renewable energy sector offers tremendous opportunities but faces significant challenges such as rising costs driven by market pressures and supply chain constraints. NSEC remains the platform to address both of these.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing welcome the close involvement of NSEC in the preparations of the upcoming North Sea Summit 2026 and endeavour NSEC to follow up on the outcomes of the Summit.

Furthermore, the Ministers also take note of the European efforts to support the development of offshore renewable energy and remove bottlenecks in our energy infrastructure to complete the Energy Union, and welcome the upcoming European Grids Package and the launch of the tripartite agreement on offshore wind and grids.

In this context the Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing welcome the work done under the Belgian 2025 co-presidency of NSEC regarding the topics mentioned below.

Financing and de-risking mechanisms

The Ministers welcome the European Commission's initiative to engage the European Investment Bank Advisory Hub in developing innovative financing and de-risking solutions for cross-border infrastructure with preliminary outcomes presented at the 2025 Ministerial

meeting. This should contribute to identifying solutions to address the financing challenges grid operators and developers are facing. NSEC stays committed to exchanging on financing and de-risking of offshore wind energy projects, including cross-border projects, e.g. through EU instruments, auction design and power purchase agreements.

Maritime spatial planning and ecology

NSEC has developed a spatial database of planned offshore wind farms in the North Seas region which will support coordination of maritime spatial planning and set the groundwork for further work within NSEC and beyond, including the elaboration of best practice on environmental mitigation measures. Additionally a study on wake effect modelling within the North Seas region is being conducted.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing acknowledge the work of NSEC to promote a balanced co-existence of offshore wind energy and nature in the context of the new European Ocean Pact.

Non-price criteria

NSEC is seeking a common understanding on non-price criteria with the goal to facilitate the development of offshore installations and the implementation of the Net-Zero Industry Act. The NSEC Tender Planning Tool is a concrete example of how we can regionally share information. to improve visibility for the supply chain.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing support and encourage the further development of the NSEC Tender Planning Tool.

Supply chain and industry leadership

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing acknowledge that one of the immediate challenges for the industry is transparency and predictability of demand. A stable pipeline of projects, minimising troughs and peaks can help meet these challenges. The aforementioned Tender Planning Tool could play a central role as it contributes to market transparency allowing for better planning and coordination.

This pipeline also has the potential to leverage the scale of the regional development in the supply chain providing long term certainty via centralised or aggregated procurement.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing call to move towards a more coordinated pipeline of projects to prevent supply chain bottlenecks.

Joint regional planning of offshore grid development & Offshore Network Development Plans

The Offshore TSO Collaboration (OTC) in the North Seas focuses on regional collaboration to support the development of cooperation projects in the North Seas, providing an inspiration for the entire European Union.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing welcome the work of OTC on the developed “grid map¹” that provides an initial impetus for clusters of hybrid projects that

¹ [Joint Planning in Europe’s Northern Seas](#)

combine offshore wind power generation with cross-border transmission capacity, to maximize welfare, synergies and cost efficiency.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing encourage NSEC and OTC to continue their ongoing discussions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of various non-binding cost-sharing methods and look forward to discussing the initial results at the 3rd North Sea Summit in Hamburg

The NSEC members have updated their regional non-binding goals for offshore renewable generation by 2050 in December 2024. The Offshore network development plans (ONDPs) should be updated as part of the next Ten Year Network Development Plan Package. In this context, the Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing call on ENTSO-E to ensure further integration of onshore reinforcement needs. The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing strongly encourage European Network of Network Operators ENTSO-E, ENNOH and ENTSOG, during the transition period, (i.e. until 31 December 2026) to ensure close and structured coordination with Hydrogen Networks for the Northern Seas (HyNOS) and the OTC on the offshore hydrogen potential, and maritime spatial planning needs. These plans should also continue to include offshore goals and infrastructure needs in the North Seas.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing also welcome the results of the non-binding sea-basin cross-border cost-sharing assessment performed by ENTSO-E, as foreseen under the TEN-E Regulation. Building on this informative analysis, NSEC will continue to discuss an optimal and cost-efficient planning for unlocking the North Seas offshore potential at regional level.

Resilience and security

NSEC aims to strengthen resilience through enhanced data and best-practices exchange, coordinated approaches, and cooperation with competent authorities, while avoiding duplication of efforts and overlap with other cooperation fora. During a workshop organized by the Belgian co-presidency, a mapping exercise was carried out to assess the added value of NSEC and to reflect on its position in this area. It was concluded that NSEC provides clear added value by facilitating the exchange of best practices, including the integration of surveillance equipment in offshore wind farms and consideration of security aspects in tender designs.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing welcome this work and call for continued progress in this vital area.

Foster cooperation within NSEC and beyond

Capitalising on the first mover experiences of the North Seas region in offshore energy development and regional integration, first exchanges with other high-level regional energy collaborations in the EU have taken place, focusing on energy infrastructure and aiming to explore synergies and facilitate the exchange of best practices.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing agree on the benefits of inter-regional dialogue and recognize that cooperation with other relevant fora, such as the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative accelerates offshore deployment, supports nature restoration, and promotes the sustainable use of the North Seas.

Hydrogen

Hydrogen infrastructure could be an important building block for achieving the North Seas region's decarbonisation targets while also strengthening its energy security, resilience, independence and cost-effectiveness.

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing welcome the work on offshore renewable hydrogen and call for continued cooperation and progress. They take note of the progress so far, including the Strategy Note and the Recommendations on Offshore Renewable Hydrogen.

NSEC-UK

The Ministers and the Commissioner for Energy and Housing support the continued close cooperation between NSEC and the United Kingdom, in execution of the Memorandum of Understanding between both parties. They reaffirm the interest to strengthen the economic relations between the European Union and the United Kingdom, and welcome the outcome of the EU-UK summit (19 May 2025) in the field of energy. Building on this momentum, NSEC will continue to pursue a close and constructive cooperation between the UK and the NSEC members states in the North Seas basin on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding of 18 December 2022.

Nature of this Joint Statement

This Joint Statement does not create any rights or obligations under national or international law and does not intend to replace or modify any existing legal obligations. The contents of this document remain within the framework of the 2021 Political Declaration on energy cooperation between the North Seas Countries and the European Commission.

The work of the North Seas Energy Cooperation should be in line with relevant EU and national legislation, the EEA agreement, as well as with existing obligations under international law.

This joint statement does not have any financial implications.