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Tittel: Call for a cost efficient and energy efficient meshed North Sea Grid
Uttalelse:

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[Response to open consultation issued by the Norwegian Ministry for Petroleum and Energy on European Unions Energy Union](#)

The North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 to facilitate and enhance partnerships between regions around the North Sea in order to manage the challenges and opportunities the region presents.

The North Sea Commission also works to promote the North Sea Basin as a major economic entity within Europe by encouraging joint development initiatives and by political lobbying at European Union level. The North Sea Commission is the only organisation in the North Sea basin that brings together regional and local politicians with cross-sectoral stakeholders from around the North Sea. The organisation is part of the larger regional political think tank, CPMR (Conference on Peripheral and Maritime Regions) which ensures a pan-European network, legitimacy and strength.

Although the North Sea Region is a successful economic entity, the region also faces a number of challenges and still has plenty to do in order to meet Europe 2020 Strategy targets and the EU energy targets for 2030.

We would like to highlight the role of the North Sea Region in light of the European Commission's Energy Union statement. We enclose our recent North Sea Commission policy statement from our Energy and Climate Change Group calling for the coordinated establishment of a meshed North Sea Grid.

A meshed North Sea Grid will contribute to reinforcing the five dimensions of the Energy Union - energy security; an internal market for energy in EU; energy efficiency; decarbonisation and increased innovation and competitiveness.

The technology for establishing a North Sea Energy Grid exists but progress is hampered by regulatory and political constraints. In order to realise the potential, regulatory barriers to greater cross-border energy cooperation need to be removed. A predictable decision making and efficient processing of planning and permitting procedures is essential for reaching legal certainty. This will ensure planning certainty for applicants and investment certainty for investors. This kind of grid also makes financial sense. Moving to a regional strategic approach to grid planning with full resource sharing could save € 25 - € 75 billion in the period to 2040, compared to the current incremental member state approach.^[1] The European Commission study from 2014, **Benefits of a Meshed Offshore Grid in the Northern Seas Region**^[2] compares the costs and benefits of a “meshed” offshore grid in the Northern Seas region with separate radial connections to shore for each wind farm. The reports shows that a meshed configuration could bring significant benefits and that a ‘meshed’ grid could pay for itself within 1-3 years.

We ask member states and Norway to prioritise efforts to overcome technical and financial obstacles to the grid. We urge the Norwegian government to take a leading role within NSCOGI and other relevant capacities in order to ensure national level coordination and further the work to overcome known regulatory barriers.

Yours sincerely,

Katharine Clarke

Executive Secretary

North Sea Commission

[1] How to build a North Sea Grid without regretting it, Imperial College London and E3G, July 2014

[2] Ecofys, October 2014

Vedlegg:

Policy statement ECCG march 15.pdf (72,55 KB)

Policy statement – North Sea grid NSC – Energy and Climate Change Group

The North Sea Region includes a number of strong economies. Large opportunities exist in the North Sea Region which have to be unlocked, and it is therefore important to acknowledge that not only less advantaged regions need to catch up; also successful regions need to continue to succeed. The North Sea Region has the potential to act as an engine for growth in Europe. North Sea Commission was founded in 1989 to facilitate and enhance partnership between regions around the North Sea. The energy challenge is one of the greatest tests facing today's Europe, and a key issue when working with management of the North Sea.

Europe's energy system is changing and none more so than that associated with the generation and transmission of electricity – and the development of an integrated North Sea electricity grid is a natural and obvious regional response to this change.

The change in the electricity system is characterized by:

- Increased share of energy generated from renewables - resulting in a fluctuating supply
- Increased share of energy generated locally and from a mix of locally based sources – resulting in a decentralized supply model; and
- Challenges in the ability of the current transmission system to balance supply with demand - resulting in a need for a grid to allow the transmission of energy from points of generation to points of consumption.

On the 23rd of October 2014, the European Commission proposed updated 2030 goals. The 2030 policy framework aims to make the EU's economy more competitive, secure and sustainable.

- 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels
- 27% share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix
- 27% improvement in energy efficiency.

The 2030 policy framework aims to build a competitive and secure energy system that

- ensures affordable energy for all consumers
- increases the security of EU energy supplies
- reduces the dependence on energy imports and
- creates new opportunities for growth and jobs.

This climate change driven policy has resulted in serious challenges in delivering sustainable, secure and affordable energy as a key element for future sustainable social and economic growth.

Energy is of particular relevance to the North Sea Commission as the North Sea region (UK, Scandinavia (ex Finland), Germany, France and the Benelux countries) represents 60% of Europe's energy demand whilst the region provides 70-75% of Europe's energy supply.

In addressing this challenge, the North Sea Commission urgently proposes a co-ordinated co-operative policy response involving the regions, nations and the E.U. within the framework of a macro regional strategy for the North Sea region.

Such an integrated approach, encompassing the whole energy system in North West Europe - multi source generation, transmission and storage will, the Commission believes, deliver cost savings and allow for a unified message to be presented to the European public as to the economic, societal and environmental benefits of the EU's energy policy as opposed to a reliance on finite fossil fuel supplies which are increasingly sourced from out of the European Union.

At the heart of this proposal is a meshed North Sea Grid. A meshed grid, the Commission believes, is essential to balance energy generation from diffuse and fluctuating renewable sources with both domestic and commercial demand. A meshed model will minimize the overall length of grid and therefore the cost to consumers of facilitating the transmission of electricity around the region

However much remains to be done.

Research is required on the costs and technical challenges of such a grid, on the legal and regulatory challenges of international energy transmission and the challenges of energy storage.

Finally the public, who will ultimately fund such a project, needs to be convinced of its merits.

If the 20:20:20 targets and the more ambitious targets envisaged for 2030 and beyond are to be met, time is of the essence. The North Sea Commission is of the opinion that a macro-regional strategy for the North Sea region presents an ideal platform to further both the debate on and delivery of an E.U. wide integrated energy and climate change strategy, with a North Sea Energy grid at its heart.

The North Sea Commission therefore asks the European Commission and Parliament to ensure that this proposal is at the heart of the preparatory action on the North Sea Region