



NORTH SEA SUMMIT 2026

HAMBURG DECLARATION OF ENERGY MINISTERS

From national to regional: delivering on our joint vision of the North Seas as Europe's Clean Power Hub

Europe faces a critical moment in its energy transition: with intense global competition, accelerating climate change, high electricity costs and a changing geopolitical landscape, utilising the vast potential of offshore renewable energy is crucial. At the same time, offshore wind energy is increasingly put under stress. In several North Seas States, offshore wind auctions have recently failed to attract bids. Rising financing costs and costs for components, uncertainty about future electricity demand and electricity prices have created insecurity among the offshore wind industry.

In this environment, we see a great advantage in complementing the national with a regional approach to benefit from a more reliable and efficient sea-basin wide offshore renewable deployment. Doing so will contribute to promoting a stable, secure and affordable energy supply, drive local value creation, strengthen our industries and competitiveness, increase our strategic autonomy and generate jobs while moving towards a decarbonised energy system.

The European Union (EU) and the United Kingdom (UK) both target climate neutrality by 2050 and Norway has committed to becoming a low emission society by 2050. Recalling the Ostend ambitions of 300 GW of generation capacity in the North Seas by 2050, offshore wind power will play a key role. Offshore renewable and low-carbon hydrogen¹ and ocean energy could contribute in reaching this goal in some areas of the North Seas.

¹ While respecting other forms of hydrogen production in accordance with national preferences, this Declaration refers explicitly to hydrogen produced from offshore electricity or on offshore facilities and the corresponding offshore transportation infrastructure.

Building upon the Esbjerg and Ostend Declarations, the Energy Ministers of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom therefore meet today in Hamburg to build on our ambitions as well as on the work undertaken by the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC). In addition, we welcome Iceland as an observer to this Declaration.

To turn our vision of a regional approach to offshore wind development into reality and to turn the North Seas into the largest clean power hub in the world, cross-border offshore wind energy projects, hereinafter referred to as 'cooperation projects', comprising hybrid offshore wind projects including transmission infrastructure with grid connections to more than one country, as well as cross-border radially connected offshore wind farms are the cornerstone of this approach. Cooperation projects will support the integration of vast amounts of renewable electricity across the North Seas Region, improve security of supply, and can lower consumer prices across Europe. Some projects may be linked to offshore hydrogen production for better utilisation. Offshore renewable and low-carbon hydrogen could help to reduce reliance on fossil energy imports from other regions and strengthen energy security.

To realise our common vision, we will work together across the North Seas along the following nine priority areas.

Establishing cooperation goals for the North Seas

- (1) National radially connected offshore wind projects form the backbone of the offshore energy deployment in the North Seas. At the same time, scaling up cooperation projects is essential for Europe to realise its 300 GW offshore wind energy ambition in the North Seas by 2050 and strengthening Europe's energy independence, security of supply, and system resilience.
- (2) Several countries in the region have significant offshore renewable potential beyond their own electricity needs, while others face spatial limitations. Where appropriate and under the right conditions, including a broadly accepted, functional cost-benefit sharing framework that aims to provide a fair distribution of costs in line with the distribution of benefits and full respect for national planning prerogatives, enhanced coordination could help to optimise the use of available offshore potential and deliver additional system benefits for the region and beyond.
- (3) To reach our joint ambitions more efficiently, by 2050, EU Member States that are signatories to this Declaration (hereinafter referred to as 'participating EU Member States') and the United Kingdom together aim to develop up to one third of our joint 300 GW offshore wind energy ambition in the North Seas, i.e. up to 100 GW, through cooperation projects that yield the most benefits for the region in terms of reducing system costs. As a first milestone of this cooperation goal, we welcome the existing plans of the Transmission System Operators (TSOs) and project developers to implement cooperation projects of up to 20 GW² in the 2030s.

² Based on the Offshore TSO Collaboration's (OTC) pilot analysis as laid out in their Expert Paper III (17.04.2025)

Enhancing coordination of cross-border planning for cooperation projects

- (4) A regional approach for developing cooperation projects can harness efficiency potentials and minimise impacts on the marine space and environment. This requires a coordinated sea basin process that builds on existing EU and national planning processes, while respecting the principle of voluntary participation. It may include: national ambitions towards the common aim of offshore renewable deployment, the assessment of needs as part of the Offshore Network Development Plans (ONDPs), the joint identification of the most promising sets of projects, based on cost-benefit assessment methods that are aligned with the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity (ENTSO-E) and consider the specificities of hybrid projects including generation assets, and fair and transparent cost-benefit-sharing agreements.
- (5) We welcome the efforts by ENTSO-E to enhance the coordination of grid planning at sea basin level by integrating the ONDPs in the Ten-Year Network Development Plan (TYNDP) as well as efforts by Great Britain's National Energy System Operator (NESO) in this regard. Considering these planning processes, we see the need to further develop the joint assessment of hybrid projects, in close cooperation with National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) and relevant governments, to better reflect market effects of added generation.
- (6) To address the identified needs, we call upon the Offshore TSO Collaboration (OTC), to cooperate with NSEC, to regularly carry out a coordinated analysis at sea basin offshore grid level based on approved TYNDP scenarios and cost-benefit methodologies, to continue identifying potential future cooperation projects building on NSEC's mandate³ from 10th April 2025. The results should then be made available to inform the ONDP and TYNDP processes, where relevant.
- (7) The first project sets identified in this sea basin offshore grid plan will be consulted with North Seas States with the aim of becoming a flagship proposal on the path towards a closely interconnected offshore grid. Further development and realisation of these project sets will take place on a voluntary basis and needs to involve relevant governments (both hosting and non-hosting), TSOs through the OTC and concerned NRAs. The participating EU Member States call on the European Commission to act in a facilitating role through NSEC.
- (8) We call upon the OTC and on the Hydrogen Networks for the Northern Seas (HyNOS) to join forces in identifying the interfaces needed to establish the groundwork for advancing towards a coordinated offshore system planning that combines offshore wind with hydrogen production as well as energy transportation, where relevant.
- (9) As North Seas States, we will support the development of cooperation projects in our national network planning processes while ensuring full consistency with national priorities and regulatory frameworks. We call on the concerned North Seas States and NRAs to exchange views and assess proposed OTC project sets and cross-border cost-benefit sharing proposals, in a regionally coordinated process, in order to enhance coordination and to enable the iterative development process of promising project sets at sea basin level.

³ NSEC Mandate to support OTC cooperation (10.04.2025)

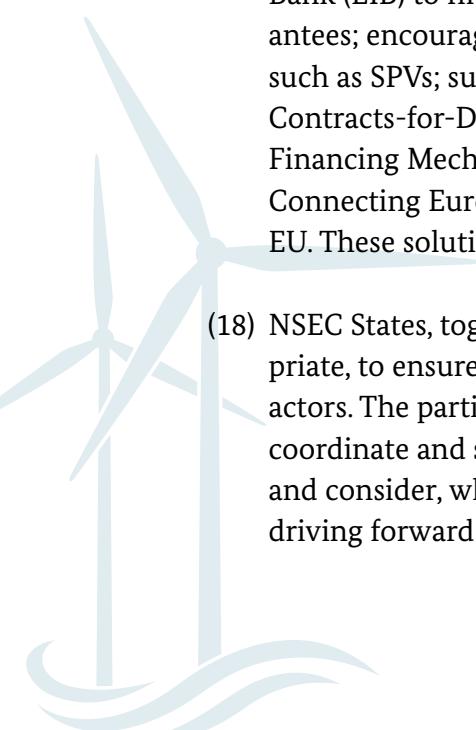
- (10) The participating EU Member States acknowledge the proposal for a European Grids Package adopted by the European Commission on 10 December 2025 and will actively engage in the ongoing EU legislative process. They share the view that enhanced coordination at national, regional and European level is necessary to ensure a fully interconnected and optimised grid.
- (11) We will further enhance cross-border cooperation on Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and equivalent plans, in particular within the North Seas Energy Cooperation (NSEC) and the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative (GNSBI), while respecting voluntary participation. We further aim to streamline our cooperation with the OSPAR Commission, the North Seas MSP Collaboration Group and the North Sea Shipping Group. By doing so, we will strive to balance human activities at sea and find cross-sectoral solutions to strengthen our ecosystem.
- (12) Participating EU Member States and the UK⁴ will continue their work within NSEC to support and promote regional coordination on MSP for cooperation projects to ensure efficient coordination and in this regard welcome the joint database on offshore wind sites. The participating EU Member States and the UK will support the OTC work with regard to regional spatial considerations. We also recognise the importance of MSP as a tool to anticipate grid and maritime spatial constraints, assessing potential wake effects and promoting positive impacts on the marine environment. Within NSEC, the participating EU Member States and the UK will explore approaches for sharing environmental data across the sea basin and will involve the responsible public authorities, including TSOs, MSP authorities and NRAs.
- (13) The participating EU Member States call on the European Commission to address the cross-border coordination of MSP authorities with regard to cooperation projects in the upcoming revision of the MSP Directive. The revision of the MSP Directive will be the basis for the European Ocean Act (as announced in June in the Ocean Pact) and bring a strengthened governance framework supporting delivery on ocean related objectives (including offshore energy targets).
- (14) We uphold our shared responsibility to protect the marine ecosystem and maintain a good environmental status. We envisage to initiate a process to identify potential conflicts of interest resulting from the planned expansion of offshore wind energy in the North Seas maritime boundary areas and agree to work towards common solutions.

Strengthen financing for offshore wind development

- (15) Reaching the 300 GW offshore wind ambition, including a significant share of cooperation projects, requires intensive collaboration and major, particularly private investments. A coordinated approach at sea basin level, including connections to the UK and the Channel Islands, entails voluntary and nationally agreed financing arrangements, as well as mutually accepted cost-benefit sharing principles, between hosting and potentially non-hosting countries as recommended in the EU cost-sharing guidance⁵ and taking into account least-cost alternatives.

⁴ In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding of 12 December 2022 on offshore renewable energy cooperation between the participants of the North Seas Cooperation (NSEC) and the United Kingdom.

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52024XC04277>

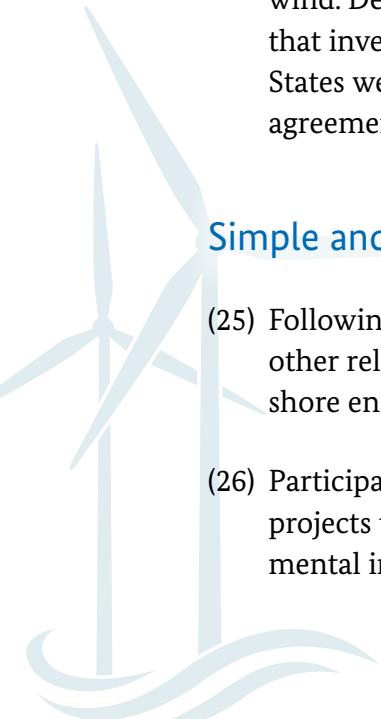


(16) To address these challenges, a voluntary framework supporting the planning and financing of cooperation projects is set out. We will work towards establishing the Offshore Financing Framework (OFF) for cooperation projects. This framework will build on existing instruments and processes such as the framework for trans-European networks for energy (TEN-E) and the identification of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest, to support the cooperative planning and financing of projects aligned to the North Seas offshore wind cooperation ambitions. The OFF should provide supportive conditions and processes to:

- Support involved governments to define cooperation project sets, as identified and proposed by the OTC, to enable cost and planning efficiencies.
- Support the involved countries to establish fair cost-benefit sharing agreements for electricity generation and transmission assets of cooperation projects, based on a coordinated and mutually agreed view of a given project set, considering infrastructure and generation assets.
- Increase the overall pool of capital supporting both the development of and the realisation of cooperation project sets without unfairly burdening individual countries' finances.
- Investigate options to improve access to an increased volume of affordable capital for cooperation projects. E.g. participating EU Member States call on the European Commission to call on InvestEU implementing partners benefitting from the EU budgetary guarantee under InvestEU to better facilitate the financing of cooperation projects.
- Support access to finance as a gap-filler for projects where costs exceed benefits for host and non-hosting countries compared to least cost alternatives, but where projects have a regional benefit.
- Promote the exchange of best practices regarding regulatory frameworks, including on TSO financing models such as special purpose vehicles (SPVs), while ensuring that regulated TSOs always retain ownership of the asset.

(17) To this end, participating EU Member States call on the European Commission to support implementing and adequately equipping these solutions to improve the financing of cooperation project sets. This includes enhancing conditions for the European Investment Bank (EIB) to finance cooperation projects and for its ability to leverage InvestEU guarantees; encouraging the financing of regulated offshore grid assets through mechanisms such as SPVs; supporting options for developing joint offshore wind support schemes like Contracts-for-Difference (CfD) also implemented nationally or via the Renewable Energy Financing Mechanism (RENEWFM); and EU funding into cooperation projects, e.g. via the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) under the current multiannual financial framework of the EU. These solutions are detailed in the OFF Annex provided with this document.

(18) NSEC States, together with the UK, intend to use the NSEC working structure, where appropriate, to ensure seamless and efficient interaction between the different processes and actors. The participating EU Member States call upon the European Commission to further coordinate and streamline interactions with EU institutions and instruments in this regard and consider, where appropriate, assigning a high-level facilitator to provide support for driving forward project sets.



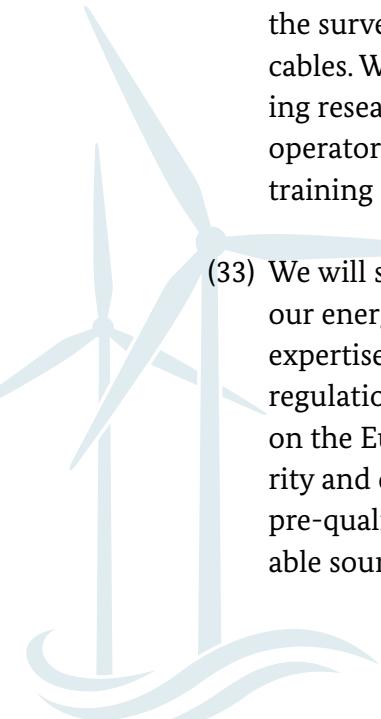
- (19) Participating EU Member States and the UK aim to identify and agree to work as far as possible towards the implementation of initial and economically promising flagship project sets by 2027, based on the OTC proposal entailing up to 20 GW generation capacity as a first step towards realising cooperation projects at a large scale.

Ensuring viability and investment certainty for cooperation projects

- (20) Hybrid projects need to have a solid business case and market design.
- (21) The participating EU Member States intend to work with the European Commission to further assess market arrangements, notably for the first hybrid projects, to address hybrid-specific risks. The UK is committed to developing a domestic framework for hybrid interconnector projects to be delivered, and participating in the development of the most suitable market arrangements to make these projects viable. In particular, offshore wind farms that are already tendered or operational and are exposed to a restructuring of bidding zones may experience a change in the conditions of their original business case. To address this risk resulting from bidding zone restructuring, we propose to assess suitable mitigation mechanisms. Further, we aim to assess the instruments under the EU Electricity Regulation to address the risk of cross-zonal market access restrictions.
- (22) Where necessary and appropriate, we will explore support for projects through, e.g., domestic and cross-border two-sided CfDs or equivalent price security mechanisms, including strengthening the European Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) market.
- (23) We are committed to assess and further develop our national regulatory frameworks ensuring investor certainty in cooperation projects, including cross-border liability, connection and balancing schemes, where relevant, based on best practices in the North Seas Region.
- (24) Participating EU Member States and the UK intend to pursue ambitious measures to be able to set a sound investment framework for offshore renewables, create offtake certainty in line with our decarbonisation ambitions and thus improve the business case for offshore wind. Demand is a crucial prerequisite in this regard, as sufficient and timely offtake ensures that investments can be realised and sustained over time. The participating EU Member States welcome the ongoing work of the European Commission on a sectoral tripartite agreement on offshore wind and grids.

Simple and fast permitting procedures

- (25) Following the call of our Heads of States and Government, we, the Energy Ministers and other relevant Ministers, will further simplify and speed up permitting processes for offshore energy.
- (26) Participating EU Member States and the UK will explore the potential to advance offshore projects through coordinated planning and permitting (including cooperation on environmental impact assessments).



- (27) The participating EU Member States welcome the recent EU measures for accelerating permitting procedures and will uphold their efforts for a timely transposition into national law and implementation. The UK is committed to reform its planning system to accelerate the transition to clean power by 2030.
- (28) The participating EU Member States acknowledge the European Grids Package's measures to simplify and accelerate permitting procedures for all grid infrastructure, renewable energy projects, storage projects and recharging stations while ensuring public acceptance and benefit-sharing.
- (29) We acknowledge the need for adequate staffing and resources for national approval authorities.

Fostering resilience and security of offshore energy infrastructure

- (30) Considering the need to secure our offshore energy infrastructure against actions committed in the maritime sea and air space by malign actors and to negligent nautical behaviour, it is essential to continue to pursue a high level of physical and digital protection of our energy infrastructure and to ensure its resilience. Thereby, offshore energy infrastructure can simultaneously become instrumental to enhance the surveillance of our maritime sea and air space.
- (31) We emphasise the importance of close and continuous cooperation between national authorities and operators of offshore energy infrastructure, e.g. on the collection and exchange of security-relevant data to enhance situational awareness and understanding in the North Seas Region.
- (32) We encourage the industry to continue their efforts to enhance the security of offshore energy assets by design, ensure adequate security standards in close cooperation with national authorities, including for components, and install innovative systems that enable cooperation on detecting, monitoring and responding to security threats and to improve the surveillance of our maritime space, e.g. radar equipment on offshore wind farms and cables. We will continue and enhance the dialogue with the offshore industry on facilitating research, development and deployment of such technologies. Furthermore, we call on operators to establish clear, simple and fast reporting chains for incidents, as well as expand training on security and crisis management planning.
- (33) We will support the efforts to cooperate closely to establish a high level of cybersecurity for our energy infrastructure. We will share best practices as well as operational and technical expertise on implementing cybersecurity as well as data security standards to align national regulations and procedures where appropriate. The participating EU Member States call on the European Commission to provide guidance on implementing common cybersecurity and data security provisions as required in the NZIA Implementing Act specifying the pre-qualification and award criteria for auctions for the deployment of energy from renewable sources.

(34) We support the efforts to enhance resilience and recovery capacities of our offshore energy infrastructure in the North Seas in case of incidents and call on the industry to harmonise or ensure interoperability, in particular of offshore High-Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) components, to ensure swift repairs.

Offshore renewable hydrogen transport, storage and production

(35) We aim to enhance cooperation in research, development and demonstration on offshore hydrogen production, and to support efforts to encourage hydrogen offtake in hard-to-abate sectors. We aim to contribute to technological progress and explore the potential for the deployment of offshore hydrogen systems across the North Seas Region, in a coordinated manner with other offshore energy infrastructures, for which we intend to collaborate with NSEC on innovation and sharing of data. To this end, participating EU Member States and the UK intend to consider ways to work towards creating the necessary frameworks, building on the work of the NSEC's hydrogen dedicated support group.

(36) Offshore hydrogen infrastructure, in areas where it has demonstrated cost-effectiveness and provides value to the energy system, could become a key building block for achieving European decarbonisation targets and enhancing energy security and independence. Under some conditions, offshore hydrogen systems could offer significant synergies with the direct use of offshore electricity, while dedicated offshore hydrogen transport infrastructure enables cross-border hydrogen trade between North Seas States.

(37) In order to realise the full range of potential benefits of offshore hydrogen projects and corresponding offshore transport and offshore storage infrastructure, the participating EU Member States and the UK welcome the strengthening of coordinated offshore infrastructure planning and call upon electricity and hydrogen TSOs to undertake a joint assessment within the OTC and HyNOS.

(38) Building on the conclusions of the 2024 and 2025 Copenhagen Forum, the participating EU Member States and the UK encourage the European Networks of Network Operators (ENTSO-E, the European Network of Network Operators for Hydrogen (ENNOH) and the European Network of Transmission System Operators for Gas (ENTSOG) during the transition period, i.e. until 31 December 2026) and the equivalent public bodies in the UK to coordinate closely with HyNOS and the OTC for the plan-led development of offshore hydrogen infrastructure in the North Seas Region as part of the future Offshore Network Development Plans.

(39) The participating EU Member States and the UK express the need for assessing the opportunity of a long-term strategy for combining offshore wind and offshore hydrogen projects in the North Seas where it is cost-effective and provides value to the energy system, and call on HyNOS and the OTC to deliver a roadmap for the joint coordinated planning of offshore energy networks until the next North Sea summit.

Strengthening the scale-up of the offshore supply chain

- (40) The participating EU Member States will work to support economies of scale, to maximise the potential of the European market while considering circularity, by aligning on the harmonised, and effective implementation of the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA), with a particular focus on applying non-price criteria, including minimum requirements, and subsequent verification standards.
- (41) We will build on the NSEC tender tool to contribute to stronger coordination and establish a dialogue on national tender timelines and construction schedules for optimal use of logistical capacities and enhanced competition among market actors as envisaged in the upcoming EU sectoral tripartite agreement on offshore wind and grids. We will seek to enhance predictability of offshore expansion and to increase visibility for supply chain and port capacity investments. In this context, we work towards ensuring a stable offshore wind tender pipeline between 2031 and 2040 across the North Seas. We will work together on solutions to de-risk investments, ensure the success of competitive tenders and mobilise private capital. To smoothen the demand for wind turbines, we will provide an overview of the intended tenders for the next five years following this summit.
- (42) We aim to coordinate, with respect to our strategic technology choices to foster compatible industrial approaches, i.a. with respect to turbine size, and facilitate the supply of key offshore wind farm components, such as cables, floating platforms, as well as energy infrastructure and electrolyzers. This could assist in our goal of easing the supply of electricity by further reducing manufacturing costs while facilitating innovation, supporting trade and ensuring future supply chain resilience. In particular, emerging technologies, like floating offshore wind energy, could present opportunities to establish dedicated regional value chains. We will work jointly to provide long-term visibility on floating offshore wind, in order to support investment decisions and enable original equipment manufacturers to adapt and optimise turbine technologies for floating applications.
- (43) We recognise the importance of ensuring a level playing field and fair trade practices for our industries and will work together to protect supply chains. We call upon North Seas TSOs and the wind industry to jointly establish manufacturing standards and interoperability for advanced HVDC technology, thus enabling sound investment decisions by grid component manufacturers and fostering economies of scale.
- (44) Participating EU Member States call upon the EIB to support the ramp-up of production capacities in the offshore wind industry by building on existing schemes for credit guarantees and counter guarantees. We welcome the initiative for a counter-guarantee scheme to support grid component manufacturers under the Grid Manufacturing Package as part of the Affordable Energy Action Plan.
- (45) Participating EU Member States also call on the EIB to accompany the project promoters in securing their financial models for related supply chains, such as hydrogen pipelines or financing for the construction of offshore vessels and manufacturing facilities through credit guarantees, to avoid capacity bottlenecks.

Making the North Seas attractive for skilled workers

- (46) Within NSEC and together with the UK, we will deepen our collaboration on enhanced availability of skilled workers to avoid potential shortages. We consider it important to increase knowledge transfer and to ensure a structural exchange of knowhow and expertise.
- (47) We will support the offshore energy industry in attracting additional workers, including from declining fossil industries, as well as retaining and upskilling the current workforce and investigate cross-border rescue chains.
- (48) Regarding the need to attract young workers, we call on the industry to increase the number of apprenticeships and internships and to develop partnerships with vocational education and training facilities, building on the work of the Erasmus+ Blueprint project FLORES.
- (49) The participating EU Member States welcome the European Commission's plans for a European Wind Academy and call for a timely establishment, emphasising the needs of the offshore wind sector.

In order to provide transparency as to our progress achieved in delivering upon the ambitions set in this Declaration, Annex 1 translates the action points of the Declaration into an action plan. Annex 2 describes in detail the structure of the Offshore Financing Framework.

This Declaration and its annexes do not create any rights or obligations under national or international law. Regarding the participating EU Member States, the Declaration and its annexes do not prevail over the rights and obligations arising from their membership of the European Union.

The work of the North Seas Energy Cooperation should be in line with relevant EU and national legislation, the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, as well as with existing obligations under international law. The actions will be continued in the work of the NSEC support groups and within the framework of the memorandum of understanding between the NSEC and UK.

Any statements of this Declaration do not preempt priorities, structural and financial decisions under the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework.

Annex 1: Action plan to the Hamburg Declaration of Energy Ministers

Annex 2: Offshore Financing Framework



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HAMBURG DECLARATION OF ENERGY MINISTERS

From national to regional: delivering on our joint vision of
the North Seas as Europe's Clean Power Hub

Signed on the 26 January 2026 in the English language.

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