

Press Release

WAB welcomes the European Offshore Strategy

Bremerhaven, 19 November 2020 – The German offshore wind industry group and innovation cluster WAB welcomes the offshore strategy unveiled today by the EU Commission and consulted in advance together with WAB members. With the EU-wide expansion target of 300 gigawatts by 2050, it recognises the successful model of offshore wind and places this technology at the centre of European energy supply in the long term. What is now important is the design of the next implementation steps.

WAB is also positive about the strategy's focus on expanding hydrogen production and regional cooperation. "We welcome the importance the strategy gives to maritime spatial planning, which plays a decisive role as a mediator between different activities," said WAB Managing Director Heike Winkler.

In WAB's view, further cooperation between the EU and its long-standing member state Great Britain is also desirable - and a must in view of the British government's ambitious long-term expansion goals. "The UK is an excellent offshore wind market and we and our member companies look forward to further cooperation with our partners on the island," said Jens Assheuer, Chairman of the WAB e.V. Board and Managing Director of WindMW Service GmbH.

However, it is questionable whether the expansion plans of the EU Commission are suitable for adequately limiting climate warming. "The benchmark for the expansion of offshore wind power should be the goals of the Paris Climate Accord. The long-term expansion target for this technology should therefore be kept flexible and not be understood as a cap", said Heike Winkler.

It is important to consider the challenges at national level when further shaping the strategy. These have not yet been sufficiently considered. "For the successful implementation of the expansion plans, the established structures that have stood for the successful expansion of offshore wind power to date need to remain intact," said Heike Winkler. "Offshore wind was already a job engine in this country and should become one again. The influence from Brussels should proactively promote the expansion in the pioneer regions," she added.

"The efficiency gains and cost reductions achieved during the expansion of offshore wind power in the EU to 12 gigawatts have so far been made possible mainly by the supply chain," said Jens Assheuer. "Such progress is often made by small and medium-sized enterprises and can hardly be decreed politically," the WAB head added.

The next implementation steps mentioned in the strategy to coordinate the regional expansion targets for offshore wind and the corresponding electricity grid will now be decisive. Here it is important to incorporate the experience of the national pioneers and their regional clusters appropriately, especially regarding their supply chain. "For the pioneers of offshore wind power, the EU strategy comes late", said Heike Winkler. "It should therefore take into account the national employment structures that have been built up and in no way impede positive national developments in order to avoid setbacks, especially in the area of cost-cutting developments".



Picture

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About WAB

WAB, based in Bremerhaven, is the national contact for the offshore wind industry, the onshore network in the north-west and promotes the production of "green" hydrogen from wind power. Around 250 smaller and larger companies and institutes from all areas of the wind industry, the maritime industry and research belong to the association. www.wab.net

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