

U Commission

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The Danish Chamber of Commerce response to roadmap regarding protecting marine environment

The Danish Chamber of Commerce thanks the EU Commission for the opportunity to respond to the roadmap regarding protecting marine environment.

We support the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and its complementary policies like the European Green Deal. We believe the protection of marine life, mitigating the negative impacts of the climate crisis, and ensuring healthy, sufficient, and resilient marine life are crucial aspects of the green transition. However, this protection should go hand in hand with the green transition and increased renewable energy utilization.

Since offshore wind is a critical component in the green transition, the EU's Offshore Renewable Energy Strategy should not receive lower priority than marine protection. Protection of mankind against climate change requires all necessary solutions and offshore wind is crucial to the EU's goal of climate neutrality in 2050. Wind energy is currently the only renewable offshore technology which functions on a commercial basis. Therefore, there is area for improvement in the MSFD's prioritization of renewable energy sources, specifically offshore wind.

There is a need for a master plan that will include all sea basins and the development of onshore infrastructure too – Southern countries included. Landlocked countries can benefit from both, the industrial activity and increase electricity trade of clean electricity. Of course, it is crucial to have exclusion areas for fishing, nature protection and defence, but if all these exclusions remain up until 2050, it will not be possible to build wind farms in the least costly areas. Climate neutrality will still be doable, but way more expensive. Thus, Maritime Spatial Planners (MSP) need to think longer term and factor in climate mitigation in their approach.

The environment must be protected through Habitats and Birds Directives, Natura 2000 and national protections. The wind industry is establishing its own fora to support environmentally acceptable development – e.g. Offshore Energy and Nature Coalition. The EU can also use funds for research into co-location – e.g. fisheries, tourism, O&G – and environmental and cumulative impacts. As more cross border projects come forward, a shared environmental impact methodology will become increasingly important.

It is crucial that the Commission specifies designated areas in MSP for offshore wind production in Europe. This should be a high priority for the Commission in both MSP and MSFD.

Best regards,

Ulrich Bang

Head of climate and energy