From: [Redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 11:36 AM
To: VITCHEVA Charlina (MARE) <Charlina.VITCHEVA@ec.europa.eu>
Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: Flash report - meeting MARE Director General with wind energy CEOs - 01/02/2021

Dear Charlina,
Thank you for sharing your views with the European offshore wind industry yesterday afternoon.

**Key issues for the industry**

- Offshore wind is at the core of the EU energy transition and can provide a huge contribution to mitigate climate change.
- Increasing 25-fold offshore wind capacity by 2050 means a priority on maritime spatial planning, assessment of interactions with the marine environment and other sea-users.
- Offshore wind would need 3% of the marine space, but currently 60% of this space is under exclusion in EU waters. MS need to factor in long-term climate goals. The wind industry is willing to be actively involved in sea-basin dialogues and multi-use approach. MARE could help developing multi-use practices with MS and at seabasin level.
- The industry considers that there is no real conflict between offshore wind, the marine environment or with fisheries. It can go very well together. Need to put the right science and data. Offshore wind industry is ready to accept compromises for sharing space.
- The Commission should work with MS to simplify permitting procedures and follow best practices. ENER to revise the renewable energy Directive.
- The revision of the state aid guidelines should support mechanisms such as the *contracts for difference* that help bringing down capital costs.
- Main developments of offshore wind are expected in the North and Baltic Seas. Floating wind technology should open up markets in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean in the next 10 years. Spain and Greece are developing offshore wind strategy. Ongoing discussions with Romania and Bulgaria for the Black Sea.
- Europe still leads, but there is increased competition with China and Korea with large public support and distorted practices, potential risk with the UK that has made offshore renewables an absolute priority. Ongoing discussion with the UK on the North Seas Energy Cooperation.

**Main messages from MARE Director General**

- The Commission offshore renewable strategy makes it very clear now that offshore wind is needed to reach EU climate goals. The offshore wind industry enjoys a privileged position.
- DG Vitcheva informed about the Communication on sustainable blue economy, to be adopted in April, with a strong focus on decarbonisation.
- In relation with fisheries, early engagement, good will and diplomacy are needed. Seafood has a low carbon footprint. Fishing and aquaculture have a legitimate case to access the marine space. Coastal communities and fisheries need to see the benefits and services of offshore wind, including to decarbonise ports and fishing vessels.
- DG MARE is conducting a scientific study to document policy discussions on interactions between offshore wind and fisheries. We need to increase our knowledge on long-term impact on biodiversity and marine ecosystems. We are interested to receive suggestions for further studies and to get analysis, studies and data from the industry.
- The EC will initiate a dialogue between public authorities and stakeholders within a community of practices and will involve interested parties at early stage.
- Maritime spatial planning is a flexible tool and some MS have already integrated offshore renewables in their national plans. DG MARE leads for the Commission. We will look very carefully at MS plans and on how offshore renewables targets are reflected.
- Seabasin strategies help to identify cooperation and to get support from the EU funds, in particular regional funds. DG Viteva suggests contacts with REGIO to support critical infrastructures and large investments – WindEurope had not yet been in contact with REGIO but said they would. MARE supports offshore renewables in the new MFF and national plans of the recovery fund.
- Need to consider the large space and potential of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, including within Mission Ocean of Horizon Europe.

**Additional information shared by the industry:**

The EU is global leader on offshore wind that could provide 25% of electricity in the EU by 2050. Jobs creation could increase three-fold in 10 years to reach 200,000 jobs, not only in coastal areas. Key to recovery phase. Example of Polish port of Gdansk. Strong development in the North Sea but more to come in the shallow waters of the Baltic Sea with bottom-fixed offshore wind, and with floating wind in the Atlantic, Med and Black Sea.

**Fear of EP PECH Committee** call for moratorium in the draft own-initiative report on impacts of offshore wind on fisheries. Discussion and amendments are ongoing. For the industry, there is a lack of knowledge and fact-based discussion. Offshore wind has equal rights to access the marine space, even if a new comer.

**Work with environmental NGOs**, notably in the framework of the new *Offshore Coalition for Energy and Nature*: good to build trust and knowledge, improvement to reduce underwater noise with double bubble curtains, contribution to remove unexploded munitions at sea. The industry invites MARE to get involved (MARE and CAB Sinkevicius have met the Coalition several times already since its launch in November 2020 - ENV and ENER as well). EU biodiversity rules can be complementary to offshore wind development. There is already flexibility by MS to include offshore wind farms in and around Natura 2000 areas.

**Hydrogen** and how offshore wind could support green hydrogen

Strong ambition in the EU hydrogen strategy (2020). The bulk of this can be made in Europe by using offshore wind. It has a much higher load factor (above 60%). It is key to decarbonise shipping and aviation.

**Hybrid projects**: TEN-E regulation should include hybrid and long-term planning. Permitting: industry calls MARE to engage with ENER on simplification of permitting procedures and rules. The revision of the renewable energy Directive should set a maximum of 2 years for permitting, include simplification of procedures and an annex on best practices.

**UK/Brexit**: the UK has a solid and ambitious roadmap, ahead of many countries, new investment plans (including ports, infrastructures, supply chains that are so far in continental Europe => increase competition). Fears that the UK could add local content rules.
Best practices and learnings: It is easier to get a permit in the UK. Two topics are now emerging: balancing with environmental and fisheries aspects, and grid connection/interconnection.

North Sea Energy Cooperation: part of the EU/UK agreement. A political declaration is being prepared. Essential to get the UK in, especially on hybrid projects. There is currently an issue with free access visa for offshore wind staff from EU-27 (working in the UK-EEZ, not even onshore).

Participants:
Wind industry:
- Siemens Gamesa Renewable Energy
- RWE Renewables
- Vattenfall Wind
- Vestas
- WindEurope

DG MARE:
- Charlina Vitcheva: MARE director general;

Kind regards,