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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: Any other business
Coexistence between renewable energy and biodiversity
- Information from the Danish delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note prepared by the Danish delegation, on the above-mentioned subject for consideration under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 2nd December 2021.



Coexistence between renewable energy and biodiversity

For the EU to achieve our climate targets there is a need to expand the capacity of renewable energy significantly. According to the Commission's 'Strategy on Offshore Renewable Energy', reaching EU climate neutrality by 2050 will for example require 300 GW offshore wind capacity, which corresponds to expanding the capacity by a factor of 25. That requires an annual deployment approximately equal to the level of the entire current EU capacity.

The deployment is therefore at its core a Europe wide initiative, contributing with green electricity and reductions across Europe. Member States are working together across borders to ensure that electricity can flow where it is most needed and thereby contribute to a cost-effective path to EU climate neutrality benefitting many member states.

By integrating large amounts of renewable energy into the grid, Member States will be able to phase out fossil fuels and electrify key sectors such as transport and heating, while maintaining a high security of supply and affordable consumer prices. Moreover, building out renewables and in particular offshore wind at large scale will enable European leadership in the production of green hydrogen, which will support emission reductions in hard-to-abate sectors such as heavy industry and heavy transport.

Regulatory framework to balance priorities

However, deployment of renewable energy at large scale, including offshore, requires a regulatory framework that provides the right amount of certainty for Member States, developers and investors. This includes a balanced approach to the question of co-existence between renewable energy and biodiversity. It is of utmost importance that we find balanced solutions to accelerate the development of renewable energy all over Europe without jeopardizing the protected nature. Co-existence is the key going forward. Already, partnerships are being established between authorities, renewable energy developers and biodiversity experts to ensure a responsible rollout, reflecting the serious biodiversity and climate challenges facing the EU.

Parts of EU's current relevant regulatory framework were established decades ago and do not reflect this reality. In some instances, there is a growing need to make difficult choices and give priority to one interest at the expense of another. To this end, further work on updating the EU framework is needed to guide the Member States in finding a better balance, when it comes to renewable energy deployment and biodiversity. We would like to invite other Member States and the Commission to engage in a dialogue on how to approach this issue in view of the Green Deal and in line "fit for 55" ambitions.