

Press Release

## **17<sup>th</sup> WINDFORCE Conference: Tap the Offshore Wind Potential!**

**Bremerhaven, 5 October 2021 – The increasingly serious climate change makes it necessary to exploit existing potentials of offshore wind. The wind industry and hydrogen association WAB e.V., as the voice of the supply chain, therefore used the stage of the 17th international WINDFORCE Conference to present a list of messages on the future of the wind and hydrogen industry to the German government, which is still in office. The motto of this year's conference is "Offshore Wind: Creating Value to Protect the Climate" and will be taken up thematically not only in the panel discussion. With international guests and national experts, the international sustainable development of the supply chain for offshore wind and "green" hydrogen is in the foreground of the traditional class reunion of the offshore wind industry.**

The WAB messages contain, among other things, the proposal for an interim target for offshore wind expansion of 35 gigawatts by 2035, to which the demand for "green" hydrogen from offshore wind energy needs to be added. The goal: to reverse the downward trend of employment and value creation in Germany through rapid tenders and new contracts. Onshore wind energy, the requirements for a domestic "green" hydrogen economy and the area of sector coupling are further contents of the messages to the outgoing and the future federal government. The 17<sup>th</sup> WINDFORCE Conference brings together more than 200 experts on offshore wind power and the emerging "green" hydrogen economy from Germany and other countries in Bremerhaven's Fishery Harbour on 5 and 6 October. The partner country for this year's conference is Scotland.

"For the new federal government, it should be about securing long-term export potential, the stability of the energy supply system and the attractiveness of the German market for international investors. This will require additional tenders in the coming years. For the necessary climate protection, we need to align the long-term targets with the energy demand," said Jens Assheuer, Chairman of the WAB e.V. Board.

"In addition to climate protection, which cannot be delayed, the energy transition in this country should again be accompanied by growing employment. The current, politically imposed offshore wind expansion gap has led to the number of jobs in this sector in Germany falling further from around 24,500 to 21,500 since 2018, and with it investment, as the wind:research institute has determined. This trend must be reversed! To this end, all acceleration potentials for bringing forward construction activities in the North Sea and Baltic Sea must be examined and short-term political support initiatives must be realised, for example in qualification. After the political focus has so far been on formulating expansion targets for 2030 and 2040 and formulating a national hydrogen strategy, the next federal government will be concerned with enabling rapid implementation of the expansion," said WAB e.V. Managing Director Heike Winkler.

Lower Saxony's Energy and Climate Protection Minister Olaf Lies underlined the enormous potential of offshore wind energy and at the same time emphasised: "In view of the capacity of only around 7.5 gigawatts installed at sea so far, we are running out of time. We must set expansion targets that will enable us to achieve climate neutrality quickly. 40 gigawatts in 2040 are simply not enough here.

And yet it is clear: the future of our energy lies in clean electricity and clean gas. Much more offshore wind power is possible than we have so far envisaged in Germany. The recent study by the Offshore Wind Energy Foundation has made this clear to us once again. It assumes a potential of 60 gigawatts at sea. That would make the electricity generated by 60 large coal-fired power plants superfluous. So the potential is huge and it shows: we are not switching off electricity in Germany, on the contrary: we now have the opportunity to further expand this new form of climate-friendly electricity generation with the corresponding effects for jobs and investments on the coast. Because industry follows energy."

In his video message to the WINDFORCE Conference, Scottish Energy Minister Michael Matheson emphasised the economic opportunities arising from the energy transition with wind energy and "green" hydrogen. The most ambitious scenario of his ministry assumes that the industry has the potential to employ more than 300,000 people by 2045 - significantly more than the oil and gas industry at present - also thanks to the export of "green" hydrogen. "Green hydrogen is not only an opportunity to reduce energy and emissions, but also an economic opportunity," said Matheson.

Bremen's Senator for Science and Ports Dr Claudia Schilling also addressed the opportunities for the offshore wind industry. "Without the generation of green electricity, which has to be expanded by a factor of 8 to 10, the energy turnaround will not succeed, we will not be able to achieve our CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets in Germany and Europe and worldwide," she said. This means an enormous market volume for the industry, she said. "It is my firm conviction that this industry has passed its low point, many opportunities have not been seized in Germany, but many potentials still lie ahead," said Dr Claudia Schilling. This also applies to Bremerhaven. If a new federal government now sets the right course for the expansion of renewable energies, Bremerhaven will contribute its strengths in research and in the maritime economy and profit considerably from this, said the senator.

Participants at the conference will hear high-level expert presentations from all sectors of the offshore wind industry and its linkage to the emerging "green" hydrogen economy. One of the focal points is international cooperation for achieving climate goals and jointly accelerating climate-smart value creation. "We are delighted with our partner Scotland and the Scottish session," said WAB Managing Director Heike Winkler. "And it is fantastic that Liz Burdock, CEO of the US Business Network for Offshore Wind and Giles Dickson, CEO of the European wind energy association WindEurope have made their way to Bremerhaven to participate in the 17th WINDFORCE," said Winkler.

*Pictures: © WAB e.V./Wirrwa*

*More information about the conference: <https://windforce.info/windforce2021/en/>*

#### **About WAB e.V.**

Bremerhaven-based WAB is the nationwide contact partner for the offshore wind industry in Germany and the leading business network for onshore wind energy in the north-west region. The association fosters the production of "green" hydrogen from wind energy. It comprises some 250 smaller and larger businesses as well as institutes from all sectors of the wind industry, the maritime industry as well as research. [www.wab.net](http://www.wab.net)

#### **Contact**

Hans-Dieter Sohn | Senior Communications and Marketing Manager WAB e.V. | +49 173 2382802 | [hans.sohn@wab.net](mailto:hans.sohn@wab.net)