



Statement from the Marine Board-ESF in response to the Open Consultation on EU Action to promote Offshore Wind Energy

The Marine Board-ESF welcomes the **Commission Open Consultation on EU Action to promote Offshore Wind Energy**. The Marine Board views this action as an important contribution to the development of an essential component of the renewable ocean energy sector and is accordingly delighted to have an opportunity to input its views.

The Marine Board regards renewable ocean energy, of which offshore wind energy is currently the most advanced, as a key development sector. The development of an economic and sustainable offshore wind sector will, we believe, bring significant advantages in terms of energy security and supply, reduction of CO₂ emissions and hence contribute to the climate change agenda, provide employment and in particular regional development and represents the application of new knowledge/technology (Lisbon Agenda) to the utilisation of a relatively new marine resource. The development of the offshore wind energy sector will, we believe, also stimulate the development of other forms of renewable ocean energy (e.g. wave energy) through the development of associated technologies and strategies.

The Marine Board welcomes the European Commission target of 20% energy from renewables by 2020 and the ambitious targets for inshore and offshore wind energy advocated by the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA). The Board also supports the EWEA call¹ for a comprehensive **European Policy Framework for Offshore Wind Energy** to address policy, regulation, market, research and development, grid integration and environmental and planning issues in a comprehensive and constructive manner.

As in all aspects of sustainable marine resource development there is a delicate balance to be achieved between the needs of development and of environmental conservation/environmental protection. In addition to impacts during the construction and operational stages, the energy demands / environmental impact of the structures themselves, often built at some distance from the wind farm site, must be taken into account. **Marine Spatial Planning**, incorporating cost-benefit, environmental impact and risk assessments offers an appropriate planning tool. The planning process must be streamlined to take into account development needs while not compromising on legitimate environmental concerns.

In responding to this open consultation, the Marine Board would encourage the Commission to adopt a similar open and proactive approach to the development of other forms of renewable ocean energy such as, for example, wave energy, tidal energy and algal biomass.

¹ Delivering Offshore Wind Power in Europe: Policy Recommendations for large-scale deployment of offshore wind power in Europe by 2020. European Wind Energy Association (2007).
http://www.ewea.org/fileadmin/ewea_documents/images/publications/offshore_report/ewea-offshore_report.pdf