

Action Plan for extended cooperation in the High-Level Group on Interconnections for South-West Europe

The Member States of the High-Level Group on Interconnections for South-West Europe (also referred to as “*the Sides*”) agree on an Action Plan with actions to be completed by 2030 at the latest and identified three priority cooperation areas:

- cooperation on cross border interconnections and the swift implementation of electricity priority projects;
- Support the development of offshore infrastructure and accelerate offshore RES deployment;
- Tap into the renewable hydrogen potential of the Iberian Peninsula (including storage and supporting the rollout of hydrogen electrolyzers).

The Sides expressed their intention to coordinate and cooperate on the above-mentioned three priority areas in the framework of the HLG SWE and they agree to make the best endeavours to meet the objectives defined for these areas.

The Sides agree to amend the HLG SWE Memorandum of Understanding to reflect the extended scope of the High-Level Group and to set up appropriate working groups, involving TSOs, NRAs and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate the cooperation toward the achievement of the cooperation objectives.

The Sides intend to strengthen cooperation to explore and facilitate the modalities of energy transition with a view of reaching climate neutrality in Europe by 2050.

I. Increasing electricity interconnections between Portugal, Spain and France

The strategic role of interconnections to achieve a fully integrated, secure, competitive and clean internal energy market and the better integration of the Iberian Peninsula into the EU energy market remains a key objective.

Working towards the achievement of the electricity interconnection targets (15% of interconnection capacity by 2030) is also a recognised objective.

The Sides support the swift completion of on-going electricity PCIs (see Annex).

Actions
Further development of the electricity cross-border connections and identification of new interconnection projects to ensure well-functioning market and better integration of the Iberian Peninsula into the EU energy market.
Strive to accelerate the implementation of ongoing electricity priority projects. Work closely with the promoters and all parties involved in the different Member States to identify elements of the process that can be brought forward, in order to accelerate the entry into operation of the projects.

II. Support the development of offshore infrastructure and accelerate offshore RES deployment

Regulation (EU) 2022/869 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2022 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure (revised TEN-E Regulation) implements elements of the EU wide Strategy to harness the potential of offshore renewable energy for a climate neutral future, adopted by the European Commission in November 2020. The Strategy proposes to tap into the vast potential of all Europe's sea basins and increase Europe's offshore energy capacity to reach installed capacity of at least 60 GW of offshore wind and at least 1 GW of ocean energy by 2030, with a view to reach by 2050 300 GW and 40 GW of installed capacity, respectively. The Strategy acknowledges the high natural potential for offshore wind energy and the good natural potential for ocean energy of the EU's Atlantic Ocean and of the Mediterranean Sea.

The Strategy recognises the role the HLG SWE can play in supporting the development offshore RES and infrastructure in these sea basins.

The revised TEN-E under its new chapter on offshore grid development requires Member States, with the support of the Commission, within their specific priority offshore grid corridors, to conclude a non-binding agreement on goals for offshore renewable generation to be deployed within each sea basin by 2050, with intermediate steps in 2030 and 2040, in line with their national energy and climate plans, and the offshore renewable potential of each sea basin. Two priority offshore grid corridors are of relevance for France, Portugal and Spain: South and West offshore grids and Atlantic offshore grids.

The Sides have agreed to cooperate in the framework of an extended configuration of the HLG SWE to facilitate the process to establish the aforementioned non-binding agreements.

In the Lisbon Declaration, the Member States of the HLG SWE committed to articulate the scheduling of renewable energy investments with a view to accelerating the energy transition and ensuring security of energy supply in order to anticipate future electricity interconnection needs.

In this context, the Sides intend to support the identification of concrete offshore renewable energy priority projects that are of cross-border relevance¹ and follow up on their swift implementation.

Actions
Support the implementation of offshore TEN-E provisions by facilitating the establishment and periodic revisions of the non-binding agreement on goals for deployment offshore renewable energy for the priority corridors South and West offshore grids and Atlantic offshore grids.
Support the identification of concrete offshore renewable energy priority projects that are of cross-border relevance and follow up on their swift implementation. In this context, discuss concrete plans for developing potential joint and hybrid offshore projects, including by

¹ e.g. renewable projects that are located close to the territorial waters of neighbouring countries or cross-border projects in the field of offshore renewable energy.

regular exchanges with key actors from regulators, TSOs, research & innovation institutions and offshore wind industry, aiming at optimizing generation and grid investments.
Exchange best practices on public acceptance, especially as regards onshore grid connection and impact of offshore RES and infrastructure on other marine activities.
Cooperation on offshore tenders/auctions by means of sharing information regarding the national tender schedules and plans for offshore wind deployment including at the regional level.
Cooperation and better coordination of maritime spatial planning and environmental assessments, including for the preparation of offshore renewable energy priority projects.

III. Tap into the renewable hydrogen potential of the Iberian Peninsula (including storage and supporting the rollout of hydrogen electrolyzers).

In order to implement the ambition of the European Green Deal, hydrogen networks and electrolyzers have been added as new infrastructure category in the revised TEN-E framework

In this context, additional cross-border infrastructure should be assessed in view of its long-term potential to tap into the renewable hydrogen potential of the Iberian Peninsula and the renewable and low carbon hydrogen potential in France.

The Member States of the HLG SWE agreed to explore this further through a Commission-led study to explore the renewable hydrogen potential in the Iberian Peninsula as well as the renewable and low-carbon hydrogen potential in France and assess the necessary cross-border infrastructure.

The Sides intend to identify concrete hydrogen and electrolyser priority projects from a regional perspective and support their implementation.

On 20 October 2022 the Leaders of France, Portugal and Spain agreed to create a Green Energy Corridor, connecting Portugal, Spain and France with the EU's energy network.

The Sides intend to enable the implementation of this agreement.

Actions
Cooperate on a study on exploring further the renewable hydrogen potential of the Iberian Peninsula as well as the renewable and low-carbon hydrogen potential in France and assess the necessary cross-border infrastructure.
Support the identification of concrete hydrogen and electrolyser priority projects from a regional perspective and support their implementation.
Support the development of projects enabling the creation of a Green Energy Corridor, connecting Portugal, Spain and France with the EU's energy network.

Annex: List of electricity priority projects HLG SWE

PCI	Project	Status	Commissioning date
2.17	Portugal — Spain interconnection between Beariz — Fontefría (ES), Fontefria (ES) — Ponte de Lima (PT) (formerly Vila Fria / Viana do Castelo) and Ponte de Lima — Vila Nova de Famalicão (PT) (formerly Vila do Conde) (PT), including substations in Beariz (ES), Fontefría (ES) and Ponte de Lima (PT)	Permitting	12/2024
2.27	2.27.1 Interconnection between Aragón (ES) and Atlantic Pyrenees (FR) [currently known as "Pyrenean crossing 2"] 2.27.2 Interconnection between Navarra (ES) and Landes (FR) [currently known as "Pyrenean crossing 1"]	Planned but not yet in permitting	09/2030 (2.27.1) 12/2030 (2.27.2)
2.7	France - Spain interconnection between Aquitaine (FR) and the Basque country (ES) [currently known as "Biscay Gulf"]	Permitting	12/2028