STELLINGEN

Behorende bij het proefschrift

Regulating Offshore Electricity Infrastructure in the North Sea

Towards a New Legal Framework

1. The North Sea is becoming a main location for the production of renewable energy. This energy needs to be transmitted to the onshore grids via offshore electricity cables and related infrastructure. However, the current legal framework for offshore electricity infrastructure is not able to facilitate the cost-effective construction of a meshed offshore grid (MOG, an electricity network that connects offshore wind farms with the onshore electricity grid of at least two but possibly more coastal states) in the North Sea.

2. Therefore, adoption of a new legal framework is required for the cost-effective development of the MOG. This new legal framework should be based on a combination of various instruments, at international, EU and national level, that together facilitate the cost-effective development of the MOG.

3. The backbone for the legal framework should be a mixed partial agreement that allows all North Sea coastal states, regardless of their status towards the EU, to participate in the agreement.

4. Decision-making, governance and (geographical and time-wise) planning of the MOG should be based on a centralised process rather than on bilateral contacts between coastal states.

5. Like other electricity grids, the MOG is a natural monopoly and requires a form of supervision by a regulatory authority. For the offshore grid, this supervision should be based on close cooperation between the coastal states' regulatory authorities.

6. The market rules for electricity cables that are used both for the connection of offshore wind farms and for interconnection between two or more coastal states should be adapted to the specific characteristics of these assets, in order to allow for the most efficient use of the grid and the renewable energy sources connected to it. The currently existing (nationally oriented) support schemes should also be revised to enable the connection of offshore wind farms to hybrid assets.

7. Regarding the large amount of submarine cables needed for an offshore grid, and the possible environmental impact of the presence of these cables in the maritime environment, it needs to be discussed whether a removal obligation for submarine cables should be introduced in OSPAR or IMO Guidelines.

8. "Nothing retains the form that seems its own, and Nature, the renewer of all things, continually changes every form into some other shape. Believe my word, in all this universe of vast extent, not one thing ever perished. All have changed appearance. Men say a certain thing is born, if it takes a different form from what it had; and yet they say, that certain thing has died, if it no longer keeps the self same shape. Though distant things move near, and near things far, always the sum of all things is unchanged." – Ovid, Metamorphoses (XV 254)