



Belgian Federal Council for Sustainable Development

Summary of the Advice on state concessions for wind turbines at sea

- Requested by Mrs Magda Aelvoet, Minister of Consumers protection, Public health and Environment; and by Mr Olivier Deleuze, Secretary of State of Energy and Sustainable Development
- Prepared by the *Energy and Climate* working group
- Endorsed by the General Assembly of June 20, 2000

The Federal Council for Sustainable Development FRDO-CFDD (the acronym comes from the Dutch *Federale Raad voor Duurzame Ontwikkeling* and the French *Conseil Fédéral du Développement Durable*) takes a position in this advice on the proposed Royal Decree concerning conditions and the procedure for granting state concessions in execution of Article 6 of the Law of 29 April 1999 on the organisation of the market for electricity. This Article allows for the federal Minister responsible for electricity to grant state concessions in marine areas under Belgian jurisdiction with a view to the construction and operation of electricity production infrastructure. Although other energy sources may be considered and are provided for in the law (use of tidal energy, for example), the main area where this proposal will apply is that of electricity production by wind turbines at sea.

The Council feels that a sustainable energy policy must be based on the development of renewable energy sources and rational use of energy. A legal framework setting out the criteria and procedures for the granting of state concessions in the North Sea would be essential to a rapid start to the exploitation of the potential for renewable electricity production found there. This draft Royal Decree should be considered within the broader framework of a policy for the development of renewable energy sources and the resolve to achieve objectives in this area.

The Council is of the opinion that this legal framework must be implemented as quickly as possible and that the procedure for granting concessions must be simple, quick and efficient. It nonetheless maintains that precautions must be taken in the granting of these concessions. Available space must be put to optimum use, as concerns both production facilities and electrical cables, to reduce costs and environmental impact. The marine environment must be protected and possible interactions between energy projects and other activities taking place at sea must be considered. Moreover, measures must be taken to ensure the financial viability of projects and the actual use of concessions granted. The Council furthermore emphasises the need to invest in order to transport the electricity produced by the network.