



PRESS RELEASE – Wednesday December 10th 2014

1^e edition of the Belgian Offshore Day in the Port of Oostende

On Wednesday December 10th, the first edition of the Belgian Offshore Day took place on the **Rebo-site** in the **Port of Oostende**. The Belgian Offshore Day is a business event that, as the name suggests, completely fits within the framework of the offshore wind business. All regional players operating in the sector were present and had the opportunity to put their knowledge and working methods in the spotlight.

The highlight of the day was the demonstration with a helicopter from **North Sea Helicopters Flanders** and a service boat (Geosurveyor X) of **GEOxyz**. The helicopter dropped two passengers on the deck of the boat. The landing surface was barely 25 m².

Both companies are a good example of how an SME can adapt its offer into a new market. The Offshore Wind business had a thriving start with the development and construction of the wind farm C-Power.

The construction of four other parks was delayed with the postponement of the Stevin connection. This high-voltage link will make it possible to distribute the electricity generated by these new parks across the Belgian grid. With the approval that was given for this pylon, the booming offshore wind industry can begin a second period of growth and innovation.

Secretary of the North Sea, **Bart Tommelein**, explained his vision on the future of the Belgian offshore wind industry. A look ahead on the next phase for the Belgian offshore wind industry was given with a panel discussion where the focus is no longer on the construction of the wind farms but on the challenges that arise from the successful exploitation of such a park.

The Belgian Offshore Day is an excellent substantiation that entrepreneurs believe in the strategic decision of the port authority to develop the Port of Oostende as a service port.

Earlier this year, the Port launched its master plan in the framework of the European project 'Sustainable Seaports'. In that project an answer was sought to the growing influx of companies and a strategy was worked out for the organization on land of the blue energy sector.

With the support from the European Regional Development Fund, Flemish Minister for Mobility and Public Works Hilde Crevits, Flemish Minister for Energy, Freya Van den Bossche, the four Flemish seaports, the provinces of West and East Flanders, the Dutch Zeeland Seaports and the province of Zeeland together invested 794 428 euro in the European project "Sustainable Seaports."

The main purpose of this Belgian Offshore Day was to enlighten the concessionaires of the new parks that there is already a critical mass of offshore industry present on the Rebo site. In other words, there can be a lot of added value created by local suppliers. This in turn results in local employment.

The promoters **e-BO Entreprises**, **C-Power** and **Senvion** can already look back on a successful first edition. *"The Belgian Offshore Day will provide a platform to continue to encourage innovation and to position the Belgian companies firmly on the map as pioneers," explains Christophe Dhaene of e-BO.*