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State Environmental Service of the Republic of Latvia

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Regarding the transboundary environmental impact assessment of the Curonian Nord offshore wind farm in the Lithuanian marine territory of the Baltic Sea

The State Environmental Service of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – the Service) would like to express its gratitude to the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania for the information provided regarding the results of the environmental impact assessment (hereinafter – the EIA) Report for the Curonian Nord offshore wind farm (hereinafter – the Project).

Please be informed that the public information and participation process concerning the EIA Report of the Project in Latvia was carried out from 11 November 2025 to 12 December 2025. Information regarding the prepared EIA Report and the options for public participation was published in the local newspaper “Kurzemes Vārds”, made available on the Service’s website¹, and sent directly to relevant stakeholders in accordance with the national procedure for EIA in a transboundary context. A public transboundary consultation was held on 21 November 2025, and the video recording and minutes of the meeting were subsequently published on the Service’s website.

The Service has received responses from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia, the Nature Conservation Agency, Dienvidkurzeme Municipality, the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia, and the State Centre for Defense Military Sites and Procurement. No comments were received from the public.

Dienvidkurzeme Municipality has established that its previously submitted proposals have been taken into account partially (for example, the assessment of impacts on shipping routes, fisheries,

¹ <https://www.eva.gov.lv/lv/parrobezu-ietekmes-uz-vidi-novertejumu-projekti/atkrastes-veja-elektrostaciju-parkabuvniecibas-projekts-baltijas-jura-lietuvas-ekskluzivaja-ekonomiskaja-zona-ignitis-renewables>

and potential pollution has been carried out). The Municipality has no further comments or proposals.

The Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (hereinafter – LIAA) has informed the Service that it has reviewed the EIA Report. LIAA notes that cumulative impacts may arise if several offshore wind farms are constructed or decommissioned simultaneously in nearby areas, including the planned Latvian offshore wind farm ELWIND. Such overlapping activities may limit access to feeding grounds, displace fish populations, alter prey distribution, and affect marine mammals sensitive to underwater noise. The EIA Report identifies the potential for cumulative impacts with ELWIND, particularly concerning migrating and wintering bird species, which depend on benthic habitats. Additional attention should be given to benthic organisms that may be disturbed during construction and on which other species rely. LIAA also notes that Lithuania plans to develop two offshore wind farms with a total capacity of 1.4 GW by 2030, and that their implementation schedule does not overlap with the planned construction start of ELWIND, thereby reducing cumulative impact risks.

The Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Latvia requested additional information from the State Joint Stock Company “Latvian State Radio and Television Centre” (hereinafter – LVRTC) and the State Limited Liability Company “Maritime Administration of Latvia”. In view of the above, they have noted that upon reviewing the EIA report, prepared by the Lithuanian Coastal Research and Planning Institute, it has been concluded that the Project is planned in close proximity to Latvia’s Exclusive Economic Zone, where the Latvian Coast Guard Service is responsible for carrying out search and rescue operations (SAR). These operations rely on specialized maritime rescue radio systems (GMDSS and AIS) operated from base stations located along the Latvian coastline.

LVRTC does not possess research studies assessing the potential impact of wind farm presence on the operation of these specialized maritime radio systems (GMDSS and AIS). Furthermore, the submitted EIA report lacks an evaluation of the possible effects on the functioning of these systems.

In the opinion of LVRTC, the EIA report should be supplemented with an assessment of potential impacts on the specialized maritime rescue radio systems, and it should also include mitigation measures to be implemented by the project developer in the event that any disturbances to the functioning of GMDSS and AIS systems are identified following the implementation of the proposed activity.

Nature Conservation Agency of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – Agency) notifies, that in letter of 7 October 2024 No. 4.9/6255/2024-N they informed that research had been initiated with the aim of establishing a new marine Natura 2000 protected area (hereinafter – MPA) within the LIFE programme project “*Research of marine protected habitats in EEZ and determination of the necessary conservation status in Latvia*” LIFE19 NAT/LV/000973 LIFE REEF² (hereinafter – LIFE REEF project), and indicated which research results are or will be available.

² The Project “Research of marine protected habitats in EEZ and determination of the necessary conservation status in Latvia” LIFE19 NAT/LV/000973 LIFE REEF <https://reef.daba.gov.lv/public/eng/>

According to the LIFE REEF project results³, it is planned to expand the existing MPA “Nida – Pērkone” by creating a new MPA “Papes kalva” (see Figure 1)⁴.

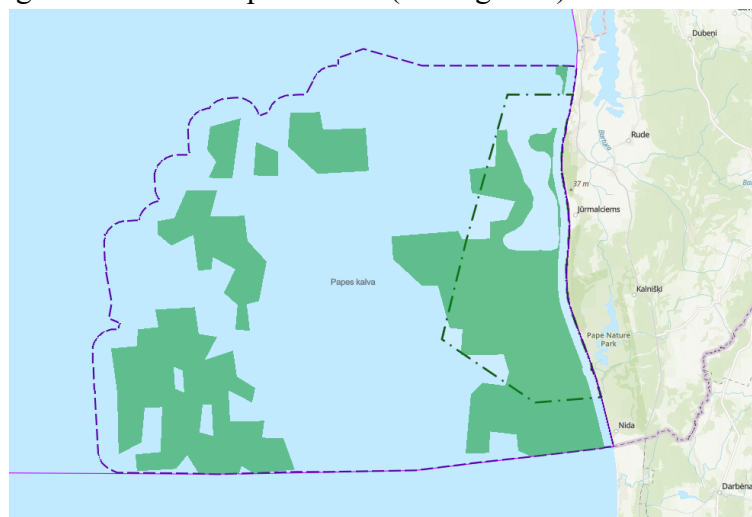


Figure 1: purple dashed line – “Papes kalva”, green dashed line – “Nida – Pērkone”, green polygons – nature reserve zones; pink line – LV–LT border.

The EIA report does not assess LIFE REEF project data or the potential impact on biodiversity in the planned MPA “Papes Kalva”. The EIA report states that the nearest MPA in Latvia is located 23.5 km from the planned wind farm, therefore the impact on Natura 2000 sites has not been evaluated (*Fig. 9.1.1. Distances from the PEA territory to the boundaries of Natura 2000 areas designated in Latvia*).

The EIA report indicates that in Lithuanian marine waters, in order to avoid impacts on marine habitats, a 2 km buffer zone from protected areas is planned. The Agency requests that a 2 km buffer zone also be established from the planned MPA “Papes Kalva” in Latvian marine waters. The purpose of establishing this area is⁵:

- Protection and conservation of the EU priority habitat Reef (1170),
- Protection of migratory and wintering bird concentration sites,
- Protection of fish spawning, juvenile nursery and feeding grounds.

Otherwise, the Lithuanian project threatens Latvia's efforts to establish an ecologically based network of Natura 2000 sites at sea after several years of targeted research. The planned Natura 2000, which concentrates a large amount of biodiversity, should be treated in the same way as an existing Natura 2000 site.

The EIA report states: “... due to a lack of sufficient data on seabird wintering sites in Latvian waters, it is currently challenging to assess the potential impacts on wintering birds” (5.4.3.4.4 *Potential cumulative impact of similar activities and transboundary effects*). The Agency disagrees with this statement, as noted in letter No. 4.9/6255/2024, aerial surveys of wintering waterbirds in

³ The Project “Research of marine protected habitats in EEZ and determination of the necessary conservation status in Latvia” LIFE19 NAT/LV/000973 LIFE REEF https://reef.daba.gov.lv/public/eng/about_the_project/

⁴ Cartographic material <https://ozols.gov.lv/kartes/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=2b6589662e91439bb0b890ae6acb2703>

⁵ LIFE19 NAT/LV/000973 LIFE REEF Mid-term reports - <https://vide.sharepoint.com/sites/LIFE19NATLV000973LIFEREFFVidusposmaatskaites/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FLIFE19NATLV000973LIFEREFFVidusposmaatskaites%2FShared%20Documents%2FLIFE%20REEF%20AJT%20dabas%20aizsardz%C4%ABbas%20pl%C4%81ns%2FAJT%5FDA%5Fpl%C4%81na%5Fpielikumi%5F19%2E11%2E2025%2F9%2E%20pielikums%2E%20Zin%C4%81tniskie%20pamatojumi%2FPapes%20kalva&viewid=a76d22f3%2Dd8da%2D4f81%2D81ec%2D52ab37b57091&ga=1>

Latvia have been conducted since 2016⁶. For example, according to 2023 aerial survey results, *Alcidae* were recorded off Liepāja and south of it. The wind farm could cause disturbance, negatively affecting wintering bird congregation and feeding areas.

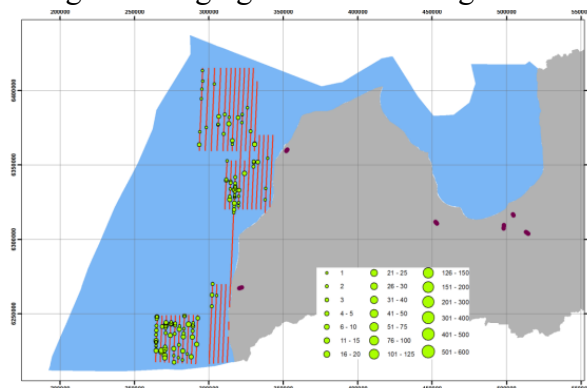


Figure 2: Distribution of all *Alcidae*, including those not identified to species level, recorded during aerial transect surveys in winter 2022/2023.

Neither the EIA report nor the bird survey report contains information that the above-mentioned data were requested or analyzed. The Lithuanian side has not requested data, so we invite you to contact the Agency with a request to provide aerial surveys of wintering waterbirds at sea and data from the LIFE REEF project in order to improve the EIA report.

The Agency requested that monitoring programs and subsequently obtained monitoring data and results be submitted to the Authority so that we can verify that the Planned Activity will indeed not affect biodiversity on the Latvian side (letter No. 4.9/6255/2024-N). The Authority has not received such information. (Original letter can be found in the attachment *Nature Conservation Agency_Curonian Nord*)

State Centre for Defense Military Sites and Procurement has stated that as the location of the wind farm is near to the border of the Republic of Latvia, Latvia must participate in the transboundary consultation process on the environmental impact assessment as an affected country in order to receive all information about the planned project, its possible alternatives and be able to immediately respond to any risks or changes of the location identified within the framework of the environmental impact assessment.

All other authorities informed the Service that they have reviewed the documentation received and have no comments or additions regarding the transboundary impact assessment.

The Service kindly asks to consider the above-mentioned opinions and comments in the EIA report.

Regarding the next steps, we kindly request that you provide the information referred to in Article 6 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context concerning the final decision on the Project, in order to formally conclude the transboundary consultation process. In addition, we kindly ask to be informed of the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the Project.

The Service would like to express its willingness to continue the successful bilateral cooperation

⁶ Monitoring reports of waterbirds wintering in the sea 2016-2024 <https://www.daba.gov.lv/lv/biologiskas-daudzveidibas-monitoringa-parskati#jura-ziemojoso-udensputnu-uzskaites>

that has been established in the field of environmental impact assessment in a transboundary context.

Enclosed documents: 9 files (*Dienvidkurzeme Municipality_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *Ministry of Agriculture_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *Ministry of Foreign Affairs_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *Ministry of Health_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *Ministry of Smart Administration and Regional Development_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *LIAA_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *Ministry of Transport_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *Nature Conservation Agency_Curonian Nord.pdf*; *VAMOIC_Curonian Nord.pdf*)

Sincerely yours,
Director of Permitting Board

D. Kaleja

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CONTAINS TIME- STAMP

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