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Friedrichskoog, 27.10.2017

forsa survey: high approval ratings for crude oil production off the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein

30 years' safe oil production on Mittelplate drilling and production island

30 years' incident-free production from Mittelplate, Germany's biggest crude oil reservoir. And the drilling and production island is intended to make a key contribution to a secure energy supply in future, too. Two-thirds of the population of Schleswig-Holstein are in favour of continuing crude oil production in the Wadden Sea tidal flats. This is the outcome of a current representative telephone survey taken by the opinion research institute forsa in Schleswig-Holstein on the occasion of Mittelplate's 30-year anniversary.

The familiarity with the international exemplary project for environmentally compatible crude oil production has continued to grow and meanwhile amounts to 73 per cent (2012: 70%). Significantly more than two-thirds (71%) of the citizens of Schleswig-Holstein are convinced that crude oil and natural gas will also continue to be needed in the foreseeable future so that our energy supply remains secure and affordable. For this reason, over two-thirds (67%) of the respondents are in favour of continuing the Mittelplate project.

Mittelplate makes a significant contribution towards ensuring the domestic energy supply. Mittelplate's production volume of 1.3 million tonnes of crude oil is substantially higher than that imported from Saudi Arabia, for instance (2016: 0.8 million t). About 3 million litres of Mittelplate oil are produced per day. This feedstock is processed on the west coast into numerous highly valuable products and is contained in thousands of everyday objects.

The "black gold" is a key economic and job creation engine on the west coast and of immense macroeconomic benefit: about 1,000 jobs depend directly on this domestic source of oil. Since production was launched, royalties amounting to over 1.2 billion euros have been transferred to the state of Schleswig-Holstein.

Geologists assumed that there were oil reserves off the coast of Schleswig-Holstein as early as 1955. After seismic measurements had been taken, exploration wells drilled confirmed this assumption. In August 1980, the well Mittelplate 1 struck the oil deposit. Construction and transport concepts were developed and the plans were approved by the relevant policymakers. The construction of Mittelplate island began in June 1985. Supplementary offshore extraction commenced in the year 2000. The eastern flank of the reservoir has since been developed by means of very widely deviated high-tech wells drilled. Following the commissioning of the pipeline link and the completion of the modern T-150 drilling rig, the island was further modernised in 2005. Since production commenced in October 1987, over 34 million tonnes of crude have been extracted from the Mittelplate crude oil reservoir.

Top priority is assigned to safety on the Mittelplate drilling and production island. Sophisticated, state-of-the-art technology, multiple safeguards in all work procedures and the use of experienced and responsible skilled staff have constituted an optimal safety package for 30 years now.

"The topic of crude oil has played a major role in Schleswig-Holstein and especially in Dithmarschen already for over 150 years. The high acceptance in Schleswig-Holstein is attributable to the fact that we have managed to deliver proof over generations that we are aware of our societal responsibility and perform clean and responsible work," emphasises Uwe Balasus-Lange, Head of DEA's business operations in Germany and Denmark.

The long traditional association is also emphasised by Dr Jörn Klimant, District Administrator of Dithmarschen: "Germany's only oil drilling and production island is a top-performing and responsible economic partner, employer and energy provider for the region and far beyond. For 30 years now, Mittelplate has proved in a highly sensitive ecosystem that environmental protection, safety and oil production can harmonise – these are the challenges that engendered innovative power and progress," says Klimant.

Background information

The annual volume of oil currently extracted is sufficient to heat over a quarter of a million households per annum. In addition, the annual production of crude provides enough feedstock for producing about 350 million litres of petrol. The oil is also used to create numerous electronic devices such as computers or smartphones – but also textiles and medications are produced from the feedstock of this crude oil. The basic ingredient for many cosmetics is paraffin, which is refined by further distillation to produce vaseline and medical white oils. Crude oil is also used in agriculture (fertilizer) and in key technologies of the energy transition, namely in insulation material for power stations, solar cells and also in wind turbines. Domestic oil production by the Mittelplate drilling and production island is beneficial to the environment. Transport routes are shorter and the associated emissions of CO2 are substantially lower.

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