

29 May 2015

### **No suspension of gas extraction from Eemskanaal cluster in Groningen field**

The gas extraction from the Eemskanaal cluster does not need to be limited. This was the ruling given by the interim relief judge of the Council of State's Administrative Jurisdiction Division in an interim judgment today (29 May 2015). A few inhabitants of the city of Groningen had asked the interim relief judge to suspend the decision to approve gas extraction from the Eemskanaal cluster. According to them, gas extraction from the Eemskanaal cluster corresponds to significant security risks. The interim relief judge, after consideration of the interests concerned, sees no reason to reduce gas extraction from this cluster.

### **Eemskanaal**

The interim relief judge is of the opinion that, in anticipation of the final judgment, there is no reason to reduce the gas extraction from the Eemskanaal cluster. It is significant that research by the State Supervision of Mines shows that seismic activity was about the same in both 2013 and 2014 in spite of the fact that gas extraction levels were 23% lower in 2014. Reduced gas extraction in 2014, according to State Supervision, could not be clearly identified as a reason for the decrease in seismic activity. In the opinion of the interim relief judge, the inhabitants have not produced evidence to show that there is any "doubt as to the accuracy of the conclusions in the recommendation from State Supervision". The interim relief judge also considers it to be significant that gas extraction from the Eemskanaal cluster has actually significantly reduced because of the cohesion with the reduced gas extraction in and around the Loppersum clusters.

### **Urgent procedure**

The Administrative Jurisdiction Division's interim relief judge, in this interim judgment, also indicates that further research is required in order to thoroughly investigate all of the objections. That was not possible in an urgent procedure such as the present one. The judge therefore gave an interim judgment after considering all the interests involved. The Administrative Jurisdiction Division will hold a hearing on 10 and, if necessary, 11 September 2015 to consider the 40-plus applications for review in depth before giving a final judgment in the case.

### **Groningen field**

The Minister's decision in January 2015 approved the extraction of up to 39.4 billion Nm<sup>3</sup> of gas from the Groningen field in 2015. On 14 April 2015, the interim relief judge decided that for the time being gas could be extracted from clusters in and around Loppersum if extraction from other locations is no longer possible and if necessary for the security of supply.