

The History of Natural Gas industries in Hammerfest

According to the North Stream pipeline sabotage, Norway became the 8th largest gas producer in the world and is therefore very important to the Norwegian people. It is also with 107.34 billion m³ the 4th largest export source. But let us take a look on how that became reality.

It started on the 25th February of 1958, where the Geological Survey of Norway send a letter to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who stated that the chances of finding oil or gas at the Norwegian coastline were insignificant.

Five years later, Norway then stated, that all oil and gas findings would belong to Norway. The search for oil and gas was expanded and many people would search for it.

A firm called Esso got three license's for drilling in the Norwegian continental shelf. The first drilling was on 19 July 1966. But Esso did not find oil in that year. The year after they did but not enough. 17 November 1969, they drilled with the Ocean Viking Platform. Esso discovered a huge oil field. More and more oil was found and Norway announced their discovery in 1970.

In 1973 a conference from the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the area was extended into the Barents Sea. The production's in the Norwegian Sea began in 1993, while the production in the Barents Sea started in 2007.

The biggest gas producer in Norway is Equinor (EQNR.OL). Divers were working on pipeline's, which is a very dangerous job. Divers need up to 70 days of decompression, and suffered permanent physical injury. But they still managed to build pipes to Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Poland and Denmark.

1984, gas was found 140km offshore of Hammerfest, and there was active laboring for ist development. However, there was opposition from environmentalists, fishermen, and the Sámi. The decline in fisheries led to unemployment and depopulation, causing pessimism in the whole town.

According to an interview Hammerfest should have been better prepared for the outcome of the situation. In that time 3000-4000 people came from different areas to benefit from the oil founding's. Through that many cases drug abuse and violence became a daily occurrence. The gas and oil industries became the highest priority and other sectors and the people became less important for the country.

Snow White Hamnefest or Snøhvitfeltet is the fifth largest Norwegian gas field and is a constellation of three areas called Snøhvit, Albatros and Askeladd. In the time of 1985 it was a rotting town which had to close many institutions like schools and therefore many people left the town. But because of high technology advances and a gigantic amount of gas, the area became very rich and was able to provide food and jobs for the people again. It now is a very popular place to live.

Natural gas became more and more important to the whole world and is a huge reason why Norway is a very rich and powerful country. The Nord Stream pipeline sabotage stated in 2022 that Norway is now the number one natural gas source to the European Union. But therefore is also a fragile target to hostile actors. Considering the importance of the country, an attack could have incredible effects.

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