

12th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea
Tønder, 5 February 2014

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Ministerial Council Declaration

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL

TØNDER DECLARATION

5 February 2014

Ministers responsible for the protection of the Wadden Sea of the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany and representing their respective Governments in the **Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council** on the Protection of the Wadden Sea

Reaffirming the objective of the Joint Declaration 2010 to protect and manage the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity shared by the three countries in accordance with the Guiding Principle which is “to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way”;

Welcoming with appreciation the extension of the Wadden Sea World Heritage with the Hamburg National Park and the nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in conjunction with an extension of the German (Niedersachsen) property;

Acknowledging the potentials of having the entire Wadden Sea included on the World Heritage List for reinforcing the existing conservation and management and contributing to regional sustainable development;

Acknowledging also that the key requirement ensuing from the inscription on the List is to jointly maintain the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage;

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation, e.g. along the African-Eurasian Flyway, and with the Republic of Korea and the Wash/North Norfolk Coast;

Acknowledging the contribution of science to the further development of the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity;

[Acknowledging the shared landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea region;]¹

[Noting the Policy Assessment Report which draws attention to a number of areas where it is suggested to further improve the status of the Wadden Sea and expand the cooperation for the protection and management of the Wadden Sea;]²

Acknowledging that conditions for safety must be safeguarded, taking into account climate change effects and sustainable development enhanced at national, regional and local levels;

Determined to meet these challenges and to continue to protect and manage the Wadden Sea for present and future generations in close cooperation with those who live, work and recreate in the area and in this respect appreciate the work of the Wadden Sea Forum;

¹ Reservation Germany

² Pending finalisation Policy Assessment Report

and therefore share the view to:

WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE

Strategy 2014-20

1. **Welcome** the boundary modification in 2011 to include the Hamburg National Park and the nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in 2013 including the extension of the Lower-Saxony National Park for inscription in the World Heritage List in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on the inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea in 2009 which will, when accepted, ensure the representation of the entire Wadden Sea on the List and reinforce its Outstanding Universal Value.
2. **Appreciate** the pride and great and increasing support which the Wadden Sea World Heritage has engendered and received in the Region since the inscription in 2009, underlining the shared responsibility for the protection of this trans-boundary ecosystem and acknowledge its branding quality and catalyst potential for sustainable development and international benchmarking³.
3. **Adopt** therefore the Wadden Sea World Heritage Strategy 2014-20, as in **Annex 1**, and instruct the Wadden Sea Board with its implementation.
4. **Continue** to contribute to the work of the World Heritage Convention in particular the World Heritage Marine and the Sustainable Tourism Programmes.

Foundation⁴

5. **Thank** the Foundation Review Committee for exploring values and functions of a joint Foundation for the Wadden Sea World Heritage.
6. **Agree** to establish a Wadden Sea World Heritage Foundation in line with the recommendations of the Committee and

Sustainable Tourism Strategy⁵

7. **Acknowledge** the engagement of stakeholders, including local and regional governments, in the development of an overall sustainable tourism strategy in a participatory approach supported by the Interreg-North Sea Region Programme PROWAD project in order also to meet the request of the World Heritage Committee.
8. **Welcome** the joint strategy "Sustainable Tourism in the Wadden Sea World Heritage", as in **Annex 2**, as a shared responsibility of governments and stakeholders and their willingness to jointly implement it and instruct the WSB to oversee the implementation of the strategy and action plan.

³ Branding quality, catalyst potential and international benchmarking to be further explained during the drafting process

⁴ Text to be amended on the basis of outcome of the work of the Foundation Review Committee and discussions by the WSB. As a consequence of the anticipated nomination of the entire Wadden Sea as a World Heritage site the Wadden Sea Board will identify future strategic directions for the organisation of the trilateral cooperation

⁵ Currently it is planned to submit the final draft to WSB 9 (October 2013) after conclusion of the consultations over the summer and review of the comments and suggestions

9. **Regard** the Strategy as a contribution to the aims and objectives of the World Heritage Convention and the implementation of its sustainable tourism programme.

Flyway Cooperation

10. **Acknowledge** the central importance of the Wadden Sea for global populations of migratory birds being a key feature of the Wadden Sea World Heritage, noting with concern that many migratory bird populations are in decline.
11. **Appreciate** the progress made within the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative, e.g. setting up a consolidated network of competent bird counters, including further capacity building, and developing preliminary status assessments at the flyway level, initiated in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee to strengthen cooperation on management and research on the African Eurasian Flyways with relevant state parties.
12. **Agree** to continue and where necessary expand the cooperation on management and research in the flyway context, as outlined in the vision in **Annex 3**, shared by relevant organisations.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND INTEGRATED ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

13. **Reconfirm** that the Wadden Sea Plan is the coordinated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage property which also applies to the nominated property.
14. Therefore also **strive** for intensifying the cooperation at the operational management level.
15. **[Continue** the trans-boundary harmonisation efforts of existing EU Directives, and harmonise where relevant the trans-boundary implementation of forthcoming Directives at the earliest possible stage.]⁶

Alien Species Strategy

16. Pursuant to § 25 of the Sylt Declaration **welcome** the ratification of the International Convention for Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) by all three states.
17. **Welcome** in accordance with §26 of the Sylt Declaration a trilateral strategic framework for dealing with alien species in the Wadden Sea, as in **Annex 4**, in response to the decision of the World Heritage Committee on the inscription on the World Heritage List of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea in 2009 and complying with the EU Strategy on Invasive Alien Species, and instruct the WSB to coordinate the development of an alien species and management action plan.⁷
18. **Welcome** the joint application for a trilateral EU LIFE+ project on alien species in the Wadden Sea, expected to be an important input to the development of the

⁶ Reservation Denmark

⁷ Pending discussion of consolidated draft at WSB-9

trilateral management and action plan and, as appropriate, the implementation and possible further development of the Strategy.

Sustainable Fisheries⁸

19. **Stress** the importance of the implementation of their ambitions⁹ to develop Wadden Sea wide trilateral policy principles for a further development of sustainable fisheries and agree to the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries, as in **Annex 5**.

To achieve this ambition the Ministers will **strive** to

20. Incorporate and implement the Framework for Sustainable Fisheries in their national fisheries policies, in order to realize a sustainable fishery in the Wadden Sea and as such introduce level playing field for the fishery sector in the Wadden Sea.
21. Realise a balance between areas with sustainable innovative fisheries and the designation of substantial no-take zones where, in particular, bottom contact with any towed fishing gears is excluded. Sustainable innovative fisheries are characterized by the use of best available fishing techniques, bycatch reduction programs and reduced fishing pressure.

Furthermore the Ministers will

22. **Urge** the MSC-foundation to develop and implement one common certification approach for fisheries activities in the trilateral conservation area, taking account of the European and trilateral conservation schemes, and on that basis support the fisheries in the Wadden Sea in reaching the MSC certificate.
23. **Confirm** their wish to preferably realize sustainable fisheries by negotiations and stakeholder participation. The aim is to realize an economically sound fisheries sector, meeting the changing consumer expectations and respecting the sustainability-limits of the trilaterally protected Wadden Sea.
24. **Instruct** the WSB to arrange an operating schedule including the negotiation phase with a fixed finish date no later than December 2015, and the implementation process.

Natura 2000

25. **Acknowledge** the activities of the member states in designating and enhancing coherence as well as the efficiency of the Natura 2000 Network within the Wadden Sea Area.
26. **Agree** therefore to cooperate in evaluating the assessments under the Habitats Directive, also with the aim to prepare a common Natura2000 roof report.

Breeding Birds

⁸ Study reservation by NL, DK, DE

⁹ From the Ministerial Council Declaration of the Eleventh Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea, Westerland/Sylt, 18 March 2010.

27. **Concerned** about the persistent decrease of breeding bird populations in the Wadden Sea, caused mainly by low breeding success.
28. **Instruct** the WSB to develop and implement a trilateral Action Plan on improving conditions for breeding birds.¹⁰

Seals

29. **Appreciate** the positive effects of long-term trilateral seal policy and management, as reflected by the highest population level ever counted.
30. Therefore **continue** their cooperation in the context of the Seal Agreement, including the Seal Management Plan which will be updated in 2016, reconfirming the guidelines on taking and releasing of seals.

Estuaries

31. **Acknowledge** the essential functions of estuaries in the total Wadden Sea ecosystem and express their concern about the ecological situation of some estuaries.
32. **Contribute** to the recovery of this habitat by taking measures on appropriate temporal and spatial scales, e.g. through integrated management plans for N2000, while safeguarding accessibility and raising safety standards against flooding.

ENERGY

33. **Recognize** that the increasing use of offshore energy and the related construction of electric transport cables through the Wadden Sea contributing to the more sustainable energy supply may negatively impact the Wadden Sea ecosystem.
34. **Recognize** also that recently a substantial number of electric power stations have been built or planned directly adjacent to the Wadden Sea and that the intake of cooling water accumulative may have a significant impact on fish species and that the enhanced emissions of CO₂ are in discrepancy to limiting global warming and enhancing sea level rise cf §24 of the Sylt Declaration.
35. **Instruct** the WSB to review therefore the impacts ensuing from such constructions on the Wadden Sea ecosystem and to consider measures to avoid or mitigate possible negative impacts including looking for best practices with the aim of developing a common code of conduct for the Wadden Sea Area.

CLIMATE

CO₂ Neutral Wadden Sea Region

36. **Welcome** the progress realized at the local level on achieving a CO₂ neutral Wadden Sea region.

¹⁰ WSB-9 will be informed about status Action Plan

37. **Continue to support** the global and national efforts to mitigate causes of climate change at the regional level.
38. **Appreciate** the ongoing efforts, especially at the local and regional levels, to work towards developing the Wadden Sea region into a CO₂-neutral area, and reconfirm the Sylt Declaration §24.

Climate Change Adaptation

39. **Acknowledge** that the overall goal of climate change adaptation in the Wadden Sea Area is to safeguard and promote the qualities and integrity of the area as a natural and sustainable ecosystem whilst ensuring the safety of the inhabitants and visitors, as well as the cultural heritage and landscape assets and sustainable human use.
40. **Adopt** a trilateral Climate Adaptation Strategy as in **Annex 6** on increasing resilience to climate change that is based upon the recognition that dealing with climate change requires the integration of many sectors, activities and fields of expertise and **strive** to implement the priority issues from the Strategy.
41. **Recognise** that spatial planning is an important instrument that can be used to achieve the objectives of climate change adaptation and for safeguarding a good interplay between different layers of governments and non-governmental organisations, and between different sectoral interests.
42. **Express their intention** to implement the trilateral climate change adaptation principles and objectives in their spatial planning process as far as possible, in particular at the local and regional level, also focusing on the integration of land- and sea-based activities.
43. **Monitor** the implementation of the climate change adaptation strategy and embed the results in long-term trilateral climate change policies, including best practices for adapting to climate change.
44. **Recognize** that the morphological development under sea level rise is a critical element of the natural resilience of the Wadden Sea and that trilateral cooperation for the exchange of knowledge on this subject is essential.
45. **Welcome** the successful initiation of a trilateral study on sedimentation behaviour in different tidal basins and **acknowledge** that the study has already in its first year delivered an exchange of knowledge and expertise between institutions and agencies in the Wadden Sea countries and support its further continuation.

MARITIME SAFETY AND POLLUTION PREVENTION OF SHIPPING

46. **Welcome** the engagement of the stakeholders in implementing the agreements of the Sylt Declaration and having developed the vision and operational plans relevant for the Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area.
47. **Appreciate** the vision paper and operational plans and emphasize the importance of the maritime activities and safety of the Wadden Sea PSSA.

48. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to use the operational plans as the basis for reviewing and accordingly implementing the measures of the operational plans as in **Annex 7**, in order to achieve its objectives.
49. **Continue** the dialogue between the competent shipping authorities and the nature conservation authorities in order to achieve an even higher level of safety and cooperation.
50. **Welcome and stimulate** the further development of the green port concept.

TRILATERAL MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

51. **Reconfirm** the central importance of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), as the indispensable basis for joint quality status assessments, the Wadden Sea Plan and the successful management of the Wadden Sea within the European Natura 2000 network and as a World Heritage property.
52. **Adopt** the long-term common TMAP strategy as in **Annex 8** as the basis for the further development of the TMAP and to increase its value in implementing EU Directives and for a wider range of stakeholders including the further development of the information system to allow for a better access of the data.
53. **Agree** to elaborate the next Wadden Sea Quality Status (Outlook) Report for 2016 in time for the 2017 Conference, in order also to be in line with the reporting cycles of the N2000 and Marine Strategy Framework Directives.

SCIENCE COOPERATION

54. **Welcome** the findings of the 13th scientific Wadden Sea symposium and **encourage** discussions within the scientific community regarding a trilateral research agenda, a trilateral research platform and a trilateral research fund.

LANDSCAPE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

A project on indicative planning is under consideration.

WADDEN SEA FORUM

55. **Appreciate** the continuation of the Wadden Sea Forum in working towards a sustainable, environmental friendly Wadden Sea Region

(await input from the WSF on

- The ICZM strategy for the Wadden Sea Region, aiming at sustainability objectives on ecology, economy and society to achieve that economic activities take great social responsibility and safeguard natural ecosystems and cultural historic landscapes.

- The further elaboration of the sustainability indicators and its assessment to provide a measuring instrument of sustainable development for the governments and regional administration.
- The Wadden Sea Region Planning Portal with the visualisation of economic uses and protection schemes on transnational level also to raise awareness for potential conflicts with impacts on the environment.
- The framework of a trilateral goose management scheme and express their willingness to support and cooperate with regional governments to implement the recommendations on accommodating geese whilst minimizing the conflicts with the society).

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

56. **Continue** the cooperation with the Republic of Korea in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding to reinforce the conservation and management of tidal flats.
57. **Deliver** a joint input on tidal flat management at the COP CBD in the Republic of Korea in 2014.
58. **Continue** the exchange of information and experiences on the Wadden Sea and the Wash North Norfolk Coast with Natural England in the framework of the Memorandum of Intent, concluded in 1991.
59. **Intend** to list their Wadden Sea Ramsar sites as trans-boundary Ramsar site “Wadden Sea” on the Ramsar List of international importance and thus contribute to the ongoing efforts of the Ramsar Convention to promote the trans-boundary aspect of the protection and the management of wetlands e.g. through enhanced flyway cooperation as mentioned above.

COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION

60. **Welcome** the Trilateral Communication Strategy and continue and reinforce the communication of the Wadden Sea Cooperation including Wadden Sea World Heritage.
61. **Underline** the importance of an effective and comprehensive information and presentation of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and the Wadden Sea World Heritage to secure public support of the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as a shared entity.
62. **[Enhance** the awareness of the young generation of the Wadden Sea as a shared heritage through development of appropriate educational outreach and products by continuing the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS) as an integral part of the World Heritage communication and education.]¹¹

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION 2014 – 17

¹¹ Pending further discussion on financial support

63. **Thank** Denmark for chairing the Cooperation during a prolonged period of time.
64. **Welcome** the chairmanship of the Netherlands for the forthcoming period 2014 – 2017.
65. **Hold** the next Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the regular Trilateral Governmental Council meeting in 2017 on the invitation of the Netherlands Government.
66. **Hold** the 14th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in 2016 in Denmark on the invitation of the Danish Government.

Signatures

LIST OF ANNEXES:

1. World Heritage Strategy
2. Sustainable Tourism Strategy
3. Flyway Vision
4. Strategic Framework Alien Species
5. Framework for Sustainable Fisheries
6. Climate Change Adaptation Strategy
7. PSSA Operational Plans
8. TMAP Strategy