

11th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea

Sylt, 18 March 2010

Ministerial Council Declaration

18 March 2010

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL**SYLT DECLARATION****18 March 2010**

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 on the island of Sylt

Acknowledging the positive outcome of the evaluation of the Cooperation carried out since the 2005 Schiermonnikoog Wadden Sea Conference, confirming that the Cooperation is a pioneering model for the protection and management of a trans-boundary ecological system of international importance and the need for a continued effective Cooperation to conserve the Wadden Sea;

Appreciating the refreshment of the Joint Declaration on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the Governance Arrangements;

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 for the Nature Conservation Area, which is to achieve, as far as possible, a natural and sustainable ecosystem in which natural processes proceed in an undisturbed way. This is done in the recognition that this can only be attained in cooperation with those who live, work and recreate in the area and are willing to endow its protection. Conditions for safety and sustainable development must be maintained;

Welcoming with appreciation the inclusion of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea on the UNESCO World Heritage List and thus the global recognition of its outstanding universal value;

Welcoming with appreciation the designation of the Danish Wadden Sea as a national park;

Appreciating the support and input of the Wadden Sea Forum and other stakeholder fora and the wider community for the protection and sustainable use of the Wadden Sea and to further sustainable regional development;

Recognizing the unique status of the Wadden Sea, notably in the Year of Biodiversity 2010 and its contribution to the biodiversity targets of the European Union, as well as the targets of the Convention of Biological Diversity;

Welcoming the Quality Status Report 2009, which provides a comprehensive overview of the status of the Wadden Sea and a valuable basis for developing appropriate policies and management initiatives;

Acknowledging the recommendations of the 12th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium for the further development of the protection and management of the Wadden Sea as an ecological entity;

Recognizing the improvements of the environmental and natural status of the Wadden Sea and the need to continue to act on specific areas to further improve the status of the Wadden Sea and expand the cooperation for the protection and management of the Wadden Sea, as outlined in the Policy Assessment Report;

Acknowledging the shared landscape and cultural heritage of the Wadden Sea Region.

Welcoming the international cooperation, in particular with West Africa, the Republic of Korea and The Wash/North Norfolk Coast to further the international protection of tidal areas and their biodiversity;

Concerned about the possible impacts from human uses, invasive alien species and particularly climate change;

Determined to meet these challenges and to continue to protect and manage the Wadden Sea for present and future generations;

and therefore share the view to:

Governance Wadden Sea Cooperation

1. **Authorize** the Wadden Sea Board to commence its activities as the governing body of the Cooperation, to provide strategic and collective leadership and to ensure performance and accountability through good governance and good external relations and communication with all key stakeholders in accordance with Article 5 (2) of the Joint Declaration.
2. **Appreciate** the willingness of stakeholders to act as advisors to the Board.

Wadden Sea World Heritage

3. **Welcome** the inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea on the World Heritage List under natural criteria (viii), (ix) and (x) by decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee at its 33rd Session, Seville, June 2009 and **acknowledge** that the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value adopted by the Committee encompassing the current rules and regulations and management and enforcement activities governing the protection of the Wadden Sea constitutes the basis for the future protection and management of the property according to Article 155 of the Operational Guidelines.
4. **Agree** to start in the forthcoming period a possible nomination of the Danish Wadden Sea in accordance with encouragement of the World Heritage Committee and the nomination of the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park including, where necessary and appropriate, minor boundary modifications for inclusion on the World Heritage List to complement the existing property.
5. **Instruct** the Board to initiate and organize the development of an overall Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, in order to meet the request of the World Heritage Committee, the Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park, and the Danish National Park, pending formal

approval by its forthcoming board, and as a first step to adopt a Wadden Sea Communication and Marketing Programme 2010-13.

6. **Engage** in a close cooperation with the African Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) with a view to promote and strengthen cooperation on management and research on the African Eurasian Flyways with relevant state parties as requested by the World Heritage Committee and **establish** cooperation for the protection and management of migratory birds relying on the Wadden Sea.

Nature Conservation and Management

7. **Adopt** the Wadden Sea Plan 2010 in Annex 1, as elaborated in accordance with §6 of the Schiermonnikoog Declaration.
8. **Acknowledge** the broad spectrum of harmonisation already achieved within the trilateral cooperation and its value added, in particular with regard to monitoring and assessment at an integrated ecosystem level.
9. **Focus** future harmonisation efforts on high priority challenges, for example climate change, invasive non-native species, decline of birds, and on fisheries, in the national implementation of the Birds, Habitats, Water Framework and Marine Strategy Framework Directives.
10. **Support** the further development of integrated assessments and reporting in the framework of these Directives, including investigating the option of preparing a common integrated Natura 2000 Wadden Sea report.
11. **Increase** collaboration in relation to appropriate assessments under the Habitats Directive, and especially to exchange experience on the interpretation and application of site integrity, in combination effects and compensation measures.
12. **Support** the start of necessary further developments of the Wadden Sea Plan during the Danish presidency, e.g. regarding the harmonized application of European legislation and taking account of the preliminary recommendations of the High Level Review study on strategic elements.
13. **Authorize** the Board to develop and adopt a programme of projects and measures for the forthcoming period to support the implementation and further development of the Wadden Sea Plan with a view to strengthen and, where necessary, also restore the natural functioning of the Wadden Sea, incorporating the appropriate actions and activities of this Declaration.
14. **Welcome** the Guidance for Goose Management in the Wadden Sea Region as prepared under the leadership of the Wadden Sea Forum, in cooperation with the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation, and **declare** their willingness to support the development of a Goose Management Plan in cooperation with relevant authorities, to achieve a balanced management to accommodate geese in the Wadden Sea region.
15. **Reaffirm** the guidelines concerning taking and releasing of seals from the Leeuwarden Declaration (§§60 and 61) and **instruct** the Board to update the Seal Management Plan, which will expire this year, for the period 2011 – 2016, based on an evaluation of the current Plan.

Sustainable Use of the Wadden Sea

16. **Reaffirm** the concept of sustainable use as defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity in protecting and conserving the ecological integrity of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, thus supporting lasting economic prosperity and social well-being.
17. **Acknowledge** promising developments of recent years towards sustainable fisheries, notably on shrimps and blue mussels, and ask the Board to develop Wadden Sea wide trilateral policy principles for a further development of sustainable fisheries, inter alia aiming at the consistent implementation of the Natura 2000 objectives, in close cooperation with the fisheries sector and nature NGOs.

Landscape and Cultural Heritage

18. **Acknowledge** that a comprehensive draft cultural landscape strategy has been developed in the framework of the LancewadPlan project. The cooperation on landscape and cultural heritage takes place to a large extent outside the Cooperation Area, for which the governments of The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark have declared their cooperation.
19. **Request** the Board to discuss and evaluate the draft strategy in order to decide together with the relevant regions upon whether or not parts of it may be accepted by the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation.
20. **Encourage** the competent authorities to develop the accepted parts into a trilateral policy provided that the principles and policies of the Wadden Sea Plan are reflected.

Climate, Sea Level Rise and Coastal Protection

21. **Concerned** that climate change and its consequences such as enhanced sea level rise, higher storm surges, increased temperatures and increasing sediment deficits will have impacts on the ecology and landscape of the Wadden Sea and may affect the safety of the inhabitants.
22. **Aware** of the long time scales of the processes and reactions involved, and thus of the urgent need to strengthen natural processes, to continue mitigation activities and to start concrete measures for adaptation to the expected impacts of climate change in the Wadden Sea Area and to ensure the safety of the inhabitants of the region and the ecological integrity.
23. **Aware** that more knowledge is needed for adaptation and mitigation measures and therefore **determined** to improve the trilateral knowledge base and **instruct** the Board to
 - Initiate a trilateral study on sustainable solutions to balance the expected sediment deficits on the basis of research questions specified by the CPSL.

- Initiate a project developing model spatial plans for pilot sites in the Wadden Sea region with the aim of developing a practicable spatial planning methodology to meet the challenges of climate change.
 - Establish a working group focusing on increasing the adaptability of the Wadden Sea ecosystem and landscape to climate change, also responsible for coordinating and supervising the above studies.
24. **Support** the global and national efforts to mitigate causes of climate change at the regional level, by calling especially upon local and regional competent authorities and stakeholders, to work towards developing the Wadden Sea Region into a CO₂-neutral area by 2030 or before, putting the focus on the special threats for coastal zones by global warming and sea level rise.

Alien Species

25. **Support** the ongoing international efforts to prevent and manage alien species introductions *inter alia* by ratifying the 2004 International Convention for Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments (BWM Convention) as soon as possible, but in all cases not later than 2013 and instruct the Board to investigate the possibility to get involved in already ongoing ballast water projects covering the Wadden Sea (e.g. the Interreg Project "North Sea Ballast Water Opportunity).
26. **Instruct** the Board to develop during the period until the next Ministerial Conference a common strategy for dealing with alien species introductions in the Wadden Sea, also taking account of the request of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee and the BWM Convention.

Shipping and Ship's Safety

27. **Acknowledge** the progress made in improving ship safety and reducing the environmental impact of shipping since the designation of the Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) in 2002 by the IMO and the improvements resulting from the implementation of the Schiermonnikoog Declaration.
28. **Welcome** all efforts to reduce air emissions and water pollution in shipping and in the harbours in the Wadden Sea Region by e.g. the introduction of environmentally friendly energy and logistic infrastructure (so called "Clean Shipping Approach")
29. **Recognize** the importance of shipping to the Wadden Sea Region but also that it is necessary to continue to raise the awareness of the Wadden Sea as a PSSA and the ongoing efforts of the IMO and the EU to enhance the shipping safety and to reduce the environmental impact from shipping.
30. **Coordinate** and **handle** within the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme the collection of relevant shipping and environmental data for the Wadden Sea PSSA, taking into account existing data bases as SafeSeaNet in order to avoid additional effort.

31. **Coordinate** and **intensify** raising the awareness and education for the Wadden Sea PSSA and other relevant regulations to mariners and relevant stakeholders.
32. **Establish** within the already existing framework of the DenGerNeth Agreement the coordination mechanisms for issues related to the Wadden Sea PSSA.
33. **Encourage** the competent authorities to complete the entries concerning the Wadden Sea PSSA in charts.
34. **Enhance** the awareness of the shipping community for container losses. and support relevant studies concerning prevention of the loss of containers.
35. **Closely follow** the steps and outcome of the project “Sub-regional risk of spill of oil and hazardous substances in the Baltic Sea (BRISK)” under HELCOM and to **encourage** the competent authorities to consider to transfer the experiences and the methodological approach accordingly to the North Sea, taking into account the objectives and requirements of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.
36. **Reaffirm** the importance of shipping safety with respect to any offshore activity. The safety of shipping in the North Sea Area should be kept at least at the present level, irrespective of which kind of offshore development might occur, and where feasible be enhanced.
37. **Instruct** the Board to evaluate the interrelation and potential conflicts between the interests of shipping and wind energy production and their potential implications for the Wadden Sea ecosystem.
38. **Instruct** the Board to discuss the PSSA Evaluation Report and further steps of implementation with the relevant competent authorities and develop a vision on the impact of shipping and ship’s safety on the Wadden Sea PSSA.

Communication

39. **Convinced** that the perception of and the identification with the Wadden Sea as a shared ecological and cultural heritage constitute an essential basis for a successful Wadden Sea protection in the long term, and therefore **strengthen** the communication about the Trilateral Wadden Sea and the Cooperation, in particular regarding the World Heritage Site and the Danish and Hamburg National Parks, by developing a trilateral communication strategy, which should include the activities of the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS), and **enable** the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat accordingly to fulfil these tasks.

Monitoring, Assessment and Scientific Research

40. **Aware** that an acceleration of global change entails unprecedented effects on the geomorphology and biodiversity of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, and that in order to be able to cope with these changes, a joint interdisciplinary research agenda for the protection of natural values and the development of sustainable use perspectives in a changing world is needed.
41. **Support** the establishment of a trilateral research platform preferably directly connected with existing national networks. The platform will elaborate a trilateral agenda for policy-relevant research in consultation with the Board, based upon

the QSR analysis and the outcome of the scientific symposium, and initiate trilateral research projects, explore financing possibilities, and communicate the outcome with the Wadden Sea Board.

42. **Reconfirm** the central importance of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP), which was further revised to fit the requirements of relevant EC Directives as stipulated in the Schiermonnikoog Declaration, as the indispensable basis for the joint status assessment and the successful management of the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity.
43. **Reconfirm** the continuation of TMAP and **incorporate**, as necessary, parameters to develop TMAP in order to facilitate an integrated assessment across the relevant EC Directives and better monitor new challenges, e.g. climate change and its impacts, and agree on a long term development strategy to increase its value to a wider range of stakeholders.

Wadden Sea Forum

44. **Take into account** the activities and recommendations by the Wadden Sea Forum on sustainable development and participatory processes, in particular with regard to
- The development of a sustainability indicator tool for the Region
 - The further development of ICZM and marine spatial planning
 - Future energy generation developments along and adjacent to the Wadden Sea
 - Trilateral goose management
 - The inscription of the Dutch-German Wadden Sea as a World Heritage site.
45. **Support** the cooperation with WSF as an independent stakeholder organisation for the period 2011-2013 with a focus on the elaboration of joint projects regarding integrated management and the protection of the Wadden Sea and **welcome** the mutual exchange of information, ideas and visions and **acknowledge** the function to act as a platform for developing conflict solutions.

International Cooperation

46. **Welcome** the aim of the OSPAR Ministerial Meeting 2010 to further develop the ecosystem approach for the Northeast Atlantic Ocean, as well their contribution to the further specification of the Good Environmental Status (GES) definition under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, because both activities are highly relevant for the protection of the Wadden Sea, which is the world's largest tidal flat ecosystem and World Heritage site
47. **Offer** to support these activities by contributing the extensive experience of the Wadden Sea states with integrated ecosystem management and sustainable human use in a transboundary context.
48. **Continue** the cooperation with Korea in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding, concluded in 2009 with emphasis on information exchange and capacity building.

49. **Acknowledge** the ongoing cooperation with WWF WAMER for sustainable development of the West African Ecoregion, which plays a key role for migratory birds passing through the Wadden Sea.
50. **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.

Cooperation 2010 – 13

51. **Thank** Germany for chairing the Cooperation during a prolonged period of time.
52. **Welcome** the chairmanship of Denmark for the forthcoming period 2010 – 2013.
53. **Hold** the next Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the regular Trilateral Governmental Council meeting in 2013 on the invitation of the Danish Government.
54. **Hold** the 13th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium in 2012 in the Netherlands on the invitation of the Dutch Government. Sylt, Germany, 18 March 2010

Sylt, Germany, 18 March 2010

For the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany

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Ursula Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary

For the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark

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Karen Ellemann, Minister of Environment

For the Government of the Kingdom of The Netherlands

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Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality