

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION

WILHELMSHAVEN DECLARATION

**14th Trilateral Governmental Council
on the Protection of the Wadden Sea**
Signed in Esbjerg, 15 May 2023

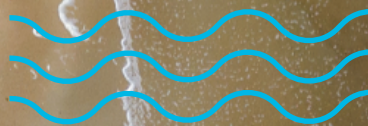


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Together for
ONE Wadden Sea
World Heritage*



THIS PUBLICATION SHOULD BE CITED AS

Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (2023) Wilhelmshaven Declaration. Ministerial Council Declaration of the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea. Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, Wilhelmshaven, Germany.



**Ministry of Environment
of Denmark**



**Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection**



**Ministry of Agriculture,
Nature and Food Quality**

COMMON WADDEN SEA SECRETARIAT

PREFACE

The 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea of Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands was held in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, on 28 November to 1 December 2022. The meeting of the Trilateral Governmental Council and the Wadden Sea Conference were accompanied by an extensive programme developed by numerous partners, all under the event's motto "Together for ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage". The Conference was well visited with over 250 participants.

Hosted by the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection (BMUV) and the Ministry for the Environment, Energy, Building, and Climate Protection of the State of Lower Saxony, the Conference was chaired by BMUV Parliamentary State-Secretary Bettina Hoffmann. Christianne van der Wolf, Minister for Nature and Nitrogen Policy, represented the Netherlands. Charlotte Brøndum, Head of Department of the Ministry of Environment, participated for Denmark. The State Ministers of Environment Christian Meyer (Lower Saxony), Tobias Goldschmidt (Schleswig-Holstein), and Jens Kerstan (Hamburg) also participated.

Due to the concurrent process of government formation in Denmark, the drafted Wilhelmshaven Declaration could not be formally adopted and signed at the time of the Conference. The Danish representatives underlined their firm continued commitment to the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation. It was decided that the signing of the "Wilhelmshaven Declaration" should be done at the earliest possible date after a new Danish government is in place. The delegations thanked Germany for chairing the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation in 2018-2022 and welcomed the Danish presidency.

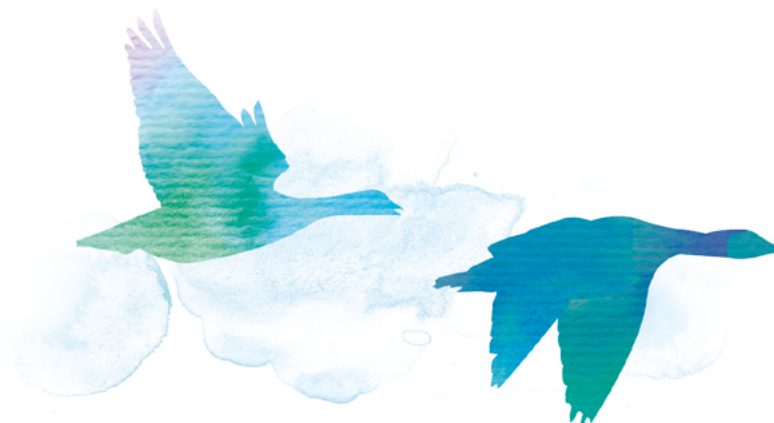
The Conference ended with the political representatives of Germany and the Netherlands issuing a **Joint Statement** on the main issues in the draft Wilhelmshaven Declaration stating to be "united in their willingness to continue and increase the level of ambition in protecting the UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage Site". They agreed to start immediately on several important issues regarding the implementation of the SIMP Integrated Management Plan for ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage.

The two countries, including the three Länder, agreed to intensify cooperation with a.o. site managers and stakeholders and to find solutions towards a climate resilient Wadden Sea World Heritage Site. A joint coordinated research call was pre-announced with the aim to develop more knowledge on the (cumulative) ecological effects of climate change and human activities in the Wadden Sea. Future offshore grid connections and pipelines that need to cross the Wadden Sea will be addressed in a way that their potential impact on the site's Outstanding Universal Value will be mitigated, including the exploration of double usage of fairways for both shipping and cables and pipelines. Finally, together with the responsible shipping authorities and stakeholders, Germany and the Netherlands jointly stated to executing an evaluation and review of existing safety measures to the Particular Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) Wadden Sea.

Other outcomes of the Wilhelmshaven Conference reflected **the support and the engagement** to collectively contribute to **safeguarding the Wadden Sea's Outstanding Universal Value**: Close to 40 different organisations signed up to a new trilateral Dark Sky Vision. Green NGOs, ports, shipowners, and the Wadden Sea Forum signed a Joint Statement on the "Sustainable Shipping and Ports Initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea". The trilateral Partnership Hub was joined by the Wadden Sea's regional partner and ambassador programmes. Launched at the Tønder Conference in 2014, the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative gained new partners, who signed the Flyway Vision. The long-existing Memorandum of Understanding between the TWSC and the Banc d'Arguin World Heritage Site, Mauretania, was renewed to further enhance the partnership two of the main sites along the East Atlantic Flyway.

With the presentation of nine recently updated thematic Quality Status Reports, tribute was paid to the more than a hundred scientists involved in this multi-disciplinary research on the Wadden Sea's status.

With a new Danish government in place, the **Wilhelmshaven Declaration** could formally be adopted and signed at an extraordinary session of the Trilateral Governmental Council in Esbjerg on **15 May 2023**.



The Wilhelmshaven Declaration is a publication of the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat (CWSS)
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IMPRESSIONS OF THE 14TH TRILATERAL GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE WILHELMSHAVEN, GERMANY, 28 NOVEMBER - 1 DECEMBER 2022



“TOGETHER FOR ONE WADDEN SEA WORLD HERITAGE”

WILHELMSHAVEN DECLARATION

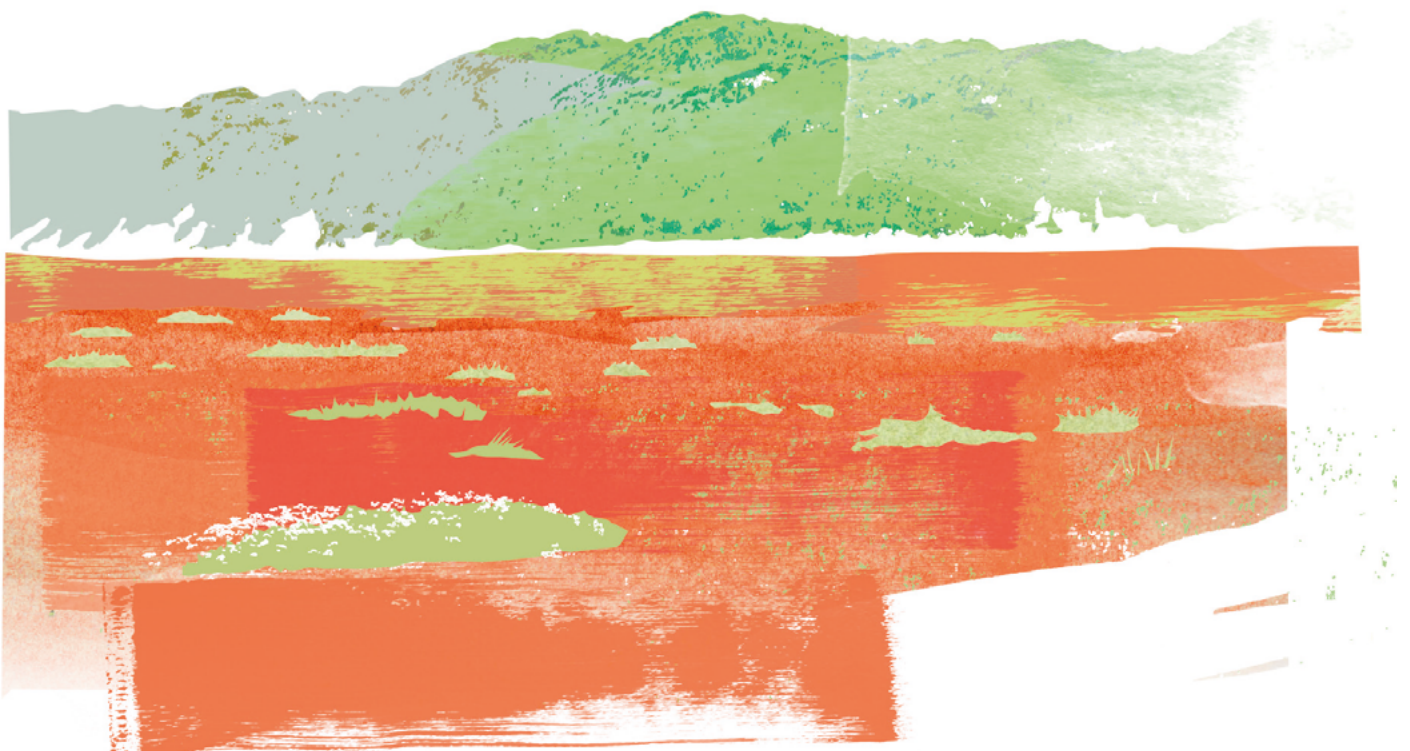
We, the ministers, recall the vision of our cooperation, a Wadden Sea which is a unique, natural and dynamic ecosystem with characteristic biodiversity, vast open landscapes, and rich cultural heritage, enjoyed by all, and delivering benefits in a sustainable way to present and future generations, as well as 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”.

We underline the great responsibility we have for this One Wadden Sea World Heritage and we are determined to take up a high level of ambition needed to achieve our goals and to be internationally respected, bearing in mind the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Acknowledging the different approaches in the Wadden Sea countries and regions in management as a chance and being aware of the benefit of joining forces facing the challenges ahead, our **mission** is to engage as many as possible and to learn from each other in performing to the highest standards, to gain added value a.o. for the mandatory implementation of i.e. EU legislation by the Wadden Sea countries by joining our nature protective competences and by striving for the highest ecological denominator.

This declaration sets the course for operationalising a framework of activities we will take up the next four years:

- We welcome the Trilateral Partnership Hub and the Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research, which will contribute to the improvement of our collaborative approach to sustain the protection of our common World Heritage Site and we will further expand this partnership approach;
- Aware of the international cooperation due to the crucial position of the Wadden Sea for migrating birds along the East-Atlantic Flyway, we will invest in this international responsibility beyond our borders;
- We will foster the implementation of the single integrated management plan to progress on reducing existing as well as upcoming human pressures;
- To safeguard the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site for the next generations, we welcome and support the involvement of the youth.



PREAMBLE

We, the Ministers

responsible for the protection of the Danish, Dutch, German Wadden Sea, inscribed as one World Heritage Site on the UNESCO World Heritage List being

the largest unbroken intertidal back-barrier sand and mudflat ecosystem in the world, a depositional coastline of unparalleled scale and diversity with natural processes undisturbed throughout most of the area and considered to be one of the most important areas for migratory birds in the world

representing our respective Governments in the Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council on the Protection of the Wadden Sea,

Appraise our trilateral cooperation of more than forty-five years and **reaffirm** the objective of the 2010 Joint Declaration and the Wadden Sea Plan 2010 to protect and manage the Wadden Sea as a single ecological entity shared by the three countries in accordance with the Guiding Principle, and pursue to apply the ecosystem approach;

Aware of the manifold challenges arising from the global triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, we must address them together in order to strengthen the resilience of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, including the natural, social and cultural aspects, while ensuring the safety of inhabitants and visitors by minimising the negative impacts of human activities and restoring ecosystems, where necessary and possible;

Committed to contribute, through the work of the trilateral cooperation, to the implementation and achievement of the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;

Determined to take on a position that supports the implementation of the goals of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to demonstrate and improve our transboundary network as effectively managed and protected, including restoration of habitats and species, where adequate and practicable, contributing to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;

Committed to the World Heritage Convention in supporting the international cooperation with partners beyond the Wadden Sea Region by actively contributing e.g. to the UNESCO World Heritage Marine and Sustainable Tourism Strategy Programmes, to the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA), and in the context of our Memoranda of Understanding with Mauritania, the Republic of Korea, and via the Memorandum of Intent with The Wash (GB);

Continue the cooperation along the East-Atlantic Flyway, acknowledging and furthering the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative by enhancing the partnership while recognising the importance of the Arctic component, recalling the Wadden Sea's importance for global biodiversity, in particular as a staging area for migratory bird populations and **welcoming** the new partners of the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative;

Express our great gratitude to all those who have contributed at international, regional, or local level in the outgoing period through their commitment and work to an improved Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation;

Appreciate the engagement of all the participating organisations and networks that jointly founded the multi-stakeholder Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage together with the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation: the Wadden Sea Team of green Non-Governmental Organisations, the Wadden Sea Forum, the research community, and the networks for sustainable tourism and for environmental education;

Acknowledge with appreciation the preparatory work done in exploring the establishment of a joint financial funding instrument to leverage further resources in addition to governmental action for the advancement of the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;

Acknowledge the progress made by the Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research in establishing the Joint Programme on Wadden Sea Research which is dedicated to foster activities for a better protection and science-based management of the Wadden Sea;

Welcome the further integration of social, cultural, natural, economic, and demographic components including landscape and cultural heritage to understand the changes the Wadden Sea Area experiences in order to support sustainable transitions;

Express our continual commitment to the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme as the basis for our management and to adapt it to recognised challenges;

Acknowledge and foster the involvement of the next generation as the future guardians for the protection and the outlook of our Wadden Sea World Heritage.

By taking all this into account,

Welcome with great appreciation the participatory and integrative process of the development of an overarching and single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, which will, as coherent plan complementing to the existing Wadden Sea Plan 2010 and strategies, strengthen the effectiveness of coordinated national management within the property to tackle the existing challenges for safeguarding the Outstanding Universal Value and our ONE Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;

Responding to the pressure on the Wadden Sea system by human activities like the growth in marine traffic, the effects of energy transition in the North Sea, the continuous process towards sustainable fisheries, sustainable tourism, and the need for coastal flood defense and protection measures, by addressing these prominently in the implementation of the single integrated management plan.



DECISIONS

PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE

The Ministers

1. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to explore the potential benefits of adapting elements from the concept of “Rights of Nature” to our common Wadden Sea World Heritage Site in support of the Guiding Principle and thereby advancing our approach to protect the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) and adding value to the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation;
 2. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to prepare an application to UNESCO for minor boundary changes of the World Heritage Site, for instance to adjust to morphological changes and close existing exclaves within as far as possible;
 3. **Reaffirm** that the Wadden Sea ecosystem is closely interconnected and dependent in its ecological functions and integrity with the offshore zone, the adjacent coastal area and the coastal mainland;
 4. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to promote these interactions, especially in the field of migratory species protection such as marine mammals, fish, and birds, e.g., by supporting the creation of ecological corridors or safe passages;
 5. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to contribute to an operationalisation of the EU objectives in this regard as well as to the implementation of international conventions such as the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR Convention) and the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention), the RAMSAR Convention, the Ottawa Convention (Arctic Council), and the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Water Birds (AEWA) including its specific work on species and management plans;
 6. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to analyse and identify efficient ways to create added value through improved coordinated measures for a coherent transboundary Nature Network in the Wadden Sea Region f. e. by amending the Wadden Sea Plan 2010;
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7. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to facilitate exchange of national experiences and best practices in a joint process involving relevant parties by organising e.g. thematic workshops, in regard to the implementation of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 focussing on the trilateral Wadden Sea Conservation Area;
 8. **Recognise** that the long-term hydro-morphological development of the Wadden Sea plays a key role for the Wadden Sea ecosystem against the background of climate change, sea level rise, as well as adaptation measures and therefore **instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to engage in monitoring and research efforts for a deeper system understanding and in long-term forecasting that may stimulate increased nature conservation efforts which are needed to maintain natural functioning and resilience;
 9. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to identify habitat types and species with a significant percentage of unfavorable conservation status or showing negative trends and develop options for planning tools, good restoration and recovery methods, and practice through the exchange of knowledge and experience;
 10. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to develop projects reversing the negative trends respecting the Guiding Principle and the Outstanding Universal Value, thus contributing to the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
 11. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to promote the inclusion of cumulative aspects in decision making by taking into account the Guiding Principle and the Outstanding Universal Value;
 12. **Strengthen** joint efforts to protect populations of endangered species for whose survival the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation has a special responsibility, f.e. in offering key habitats on their migrations or these species occur almost exclusively here while realising that not all species benefit sufficiently by habitat protection alone;
 13. **Promote** and **support** exchange on animal species conservation issues related to spatial and temporal use, habitat quality, and food availability, especially for birds, but also for fish, seals, and harbor porpoises, also in the context of climate change impacts;
 14. **Adopt** the updated Seal Management Plan 2023-2027 for harbour and grey seal and **support** its implementation as a means for contributing to the protection of the species under the Convention on Migratory Species (Bonn Convention);
 15. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to foster the Trilateral SWIMWAY Vision focussing on the extended supra-regional interconnections relevant for fish species, through contributing to the further implementation of the Trilateral SWIMWAY Vision Action Programme (2018-2024) by supporting knowledge exchange, monitoring, and identifying fields for collaboration while supporting conservation action.
 16. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to further the practical implementation of the Trilateral Management and Action Plan Alien Species (MAPAS, 2018) with focus on the installation of the information and the exchange platform as well as early countermeasures and pilot projects, where appropriate, and further the development of knowledge on the relationship between climate change and alien species.

ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY OF HUMAN USES AND FOSTER TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE

The Ministers

17. **Encourage** and **call on** the fisheries sector to continue on their path to make the fishery more sustainable while respecting the nature conservation objectives in the Wadden Sea;
18. **Urge** the Wadden Sea Board to enter a dialogue process with competent authorities for fisheries, sector representatives, and environmental NGOs at trilateral level to advance the implementation of the trilaterally agreed Framework for Sustainable Fisheries (2014) for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site in a collaborative approach by stimulating and facilitating the exchange of information, knowledge, best practices, and management experiences about impacts of fisheries and by developing, where adequate, pilot studies and concrete measures.
19. **Acknowledge** the longlasting cooperation between the tourism sector and nature conservation towards sustainable tourism in the Wadden Sea region and **welcome** the Action Plan (2022) on implementing the Wadden Sea World Heritage Sustainable Tourism Strategy that consciously respect the sensitivity and limited carrying capacity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and which must take place in collaboration with the tourism sector in a way that strengthens the sector's ownership and enhances their responsibility; **instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review the Sustainable Tourism Strategy (2014) and adapt the Action Plan, if appropriate, in overseeing its further implementation;
20. **Recognise** the efforts of Wadden Sea port operators to make port operations more sustainable and to create further incentives like publicly visible awards based on a credible, commonly agreed external certification systems, as well as accommodate ships with climate-neutral types of propulsion referring to the ports' commitment to climate neutrality;
21. **Acknowledge** and **welcome** the "Sustainable shipping and ports initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea", signed by a broad range of stakeholders, encouraging their further collaborations and dialogue at trilateral level to further the sustainability of the Wadden Sea ports and the protection of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;
22. **Appeal** to port operators, water, and shipping authorities in their long-term planning for the further development of ports and fairways to take into account the natural limits, esp. the conditions induced by existing site-specific hydro-morphological situations and their natural dynamics in the Wadden Sea and **instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to follow this development, where possible, via knowledge exchange and/or specific projects;
23. **Urge** the Wadden Sea Board to involve the competent national authorities and, where applicable, to ensure the further implementation of the Operational Plans for the Wadden Sea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA, 2014);
24. **Urge** for an evaluation and review of existing safety measures to the PSSA Wadden Sea with the responsible shipping authorities and relevant stakeholders. Lessons learned from previous maritime emergencies have been and should be consistently drawn and implemented. If the evaluation points out, discuss other possible safety measures including Associated Protective Measures with added value;
25. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to facilitate exchange and collaboration with the energy sector, competent authorities, including also relevant stakeholders, regarding high voltage power grid connections from offshore wind farms with the intention to avoid, mitigate, and compensate for negative impacts on the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, with the intention to develop a coordinated spatial strategy beyond 2030, striving to support the long-term expansion targets for offshore wind energy, making it more nature friendly in line with conservation objectives;
26. **Urge** the Wadden Sea Board to explore the multi usage of space and how different interests, such as ecological, shipping, energy and economic interests can be combined and specifically to explore, in collaboration with the shipping authorities, the double usage of fairways for both shipping as well as for cables and pipelines with the purpose of mitigating negative ecological impact on some of the most vulnerable and unique elements of the World Heritage Site between islands and shore;
27. **Urge** the Wadden Sea Board to evaluate possible effects of emerging forms of energy production while applying the precautionary principle;
28. **Reconfirming** the existing trilateral agreement that prohibits the construction of wind turbines, oil and gas exploration, and exploitation and construction of new installations for oil and gas within the boundaries of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;
29. **Agree** to end all forms of exploitation of oil and gas fields as early as possible and not to grant any new upcoming permits and authorisations for oil and gas activities within the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;
30. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to exchange on future plans and best practice of transportation infrastructures for emerging forms of energy potentially affecting the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site to support the Wadden Sea countries in their planning processes;
31. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to enhance and facilitate regular professional exchange on coastal flood defence and protection with the responsible authorities, agencies, and research institutions in this field, i. a. to promote the integration of environmentally friendly and Nature-based Solutions, according to the IUCN definition, in coastal flood defence and protection in line with the further implementation of the trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2014);
32. **Consider** the national implementation and cross-border coordination of the EU Water Framework Directive (River Basin Management), the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and the OSPAR North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 (NEAES) as essential contributions to a good environmental status and effective protection of the Wadden Sea marine ecosystem and biodiversity against adverse effects, esp. by marine litter including microplastics, persistent pollutants, and underwater noise and **mandate** the Wadden Sea Board to encourage and support targeted flanking trilateral initiatives with added value;

33. **Welcome** and **appreciate** the “[Trilateral Vision on Dark Sky over the Wadden Sea](#)”, highly appreciating the broad stakeholder commitment, and **encourage** and **support** trilaterally coordinated project initiatives and measures to reduce light emissions with negative impacts on plant and animal life, especially on birds and insects;
34. **Welcome** the designation of dark sky parks as an instrument to raise public awareness on the issue of natural darkness and enabling the natural experience of a pristine night sky over the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;
35. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to stimulate the development and implementation of a strategy on reducing light pollution for the Wadden Sea;
36. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to take into account the connectivity and interdependence between the Wadden Sea, the coastal mainland, and the offshore zone when developing trilateral strategies or common approaches to monitoring and management issues, also taking into account the cumulative effects due to increasing pressures from more intensive use of adjacent areas, including the assumption of potentially increasing fishing pressure in parts of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site due the expansion of competing uses in the offshore zone;
37. **Encourage** the Wadden Sea Board to give due consideration to the concerns of the World Heritage Site and bring them into the respective planning procedures at trilateral and North Sea level.



MITIGATE AND ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The Ministers

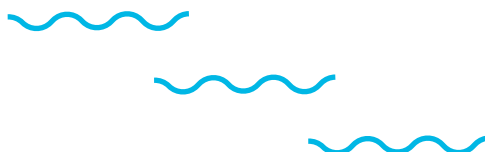
38. **Recognise** and **support** decisions and initiatives aimed at reducing the Wadden Sea Region's greenhouse gas emissions in order to contribute to the overall EU greenhouse gas reduction targets, in particular in the decarbonisation of the energy sector, the traffic sector, and the tourism sector, and also **strive** to take on a pioneering role in this respect as part of their own responsibility as site management operators;
39. **Mandate** the Wadden Sea Board to investigate the role of the ecosystem service value of carbon sequestration by typical Wadden Sea habitats like seagrass beds and salt marshes and their contribution to the EU greenhouse gas reduction targets whilst preserving the Outstanding Universal Value;
40. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to continue implementing the trilateral Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (2014), updating the priorities contained therein, where needed, under consideration of the EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 to tackle jointly the climate and biodiversity crisis.
41. Further **promote** investigations and **stimulate** appropriate initiatives how Nature-Based Solutions for climate change adaptation can integrate coastal protection and water management with nature conservation goals, while considering a broader geographical and socio-economic context; e.g. by stimulating new approaches and to analyse impacts of future variations in the fresh water influx to the Wadden Sea and develop options for mitigating negative ecological impacts;
42. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to investigate which human pressures on the Wadden Sea ecosystem should be reduced in order to boost adaptive capacity, improve resilience, reduce vulnerability to climate change, and thus safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value while taking into account potentially unavoidable ecosystem changes;
43. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to investigate options to enhance the level of science based, adequate adaptive management to systematically safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea, mapping best practices while applying and in regard to the precautionary principle, cumulative effects and the ecosystem approach.



MANAGE AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

The Ministers

44. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to support research-related issues in joint trilateral research calls based on the Trilateral Research Priorities as outlined by the Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research with a focus on impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value and its key values as well as their adaptive capacity in view of challenges such as climate change and increasing human uses that cause cumulative effects, taking into account the recommendations of the 15th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium;
45. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to continue supporting the work of the Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research and related scientific cooperation, stimulate trilateral science-policy interaction, emphasising an interdisciplinary approach, furthering the exchange between countries and organisations, and exploring the application of new methods and research techniques to optimise effective monitoring and assessment of the state of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;
46. **Recognise** that only through adequate monitoring, addressing the critical research questions and sharing knowledge the necessary foundations can be laid to meet the challenges, to identify the consequences, especially with regard to the specific values of the Outstanding Universal Value, and to take the necessary management measures;
47. **Request** the Wadden Sea Board to ensure adequate monitoring and assessment within the framework of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme (TMAP Strategy 2014) for all relevant ecosystem parameters and ecosystem stressors, integrating geographical information systems, new techniques, and recording methods;
48. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to investigate relevant socio-economic parameters to include and adjust the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme to recognise environmental challenges, esp. relating to the key topics as identified in the single integrated management planning process, thereby strengthening interdisciplinary approaches and enabling comprehensive analysis;
49. **Agree** to increase the value and the visibility of the Trilateral Monitoring and Assessment Programme to scientific and other users and to a wider range of stakeholders and the public, including the availability of data and presentation of information resulting from those data;
50. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to produce updates of the online Wadden Sea Quality Status Report that reflect important ecological and socio-economic topics, also in the light of climate change, and to deliver a comprehensive synthesis report in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference;
51. **Adopt** the single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site as developed in accordance with the request from the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC-14/38. Com/16) in conformity with the requirements of § 111 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention;
52. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to ensure and oversee the effective, coordinated implementation of the single integrated management plan for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and to report on the implementation status in time as part of the policy assessment reporting for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference;
53. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review and update the Wadden Sea Plan 2010, where necessary, in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference to strengthen its coordinating function as overarching trilateral framework for nature conservation with a particular focus on the implementation of the EU Directives on Habitats and Birds and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
54. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review the existing trilateral sectoral visions, strategies and action plans in general ten years after their adoption, decide on the updates, and amend, where necessary, sharpening the objectives and application orientation of the measures contained therein, e. g. according to the SMART principle (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-bound);
55. **Reconfirm** the 2010 Governance Arrangements and instruct the Wadden Sea Board to review and, if necessary, change the composition, membership and terms of reference of thematic committees and working groups of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation with the aim of strengthening and making the collaboration more effective, also with the strategic partners, competent authorities, and agencies;
56. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to revise the Trilateral Communication Strategy (2012) and to update it with the aim to adequately manage the Wadden Sea World Heritage brand for nature conservation and to further enhance the use of modern media.



INTENSIFY COLLABORATION AND STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT BY WORKING WITH PARTNERS

The Ministers

57. **Confirm** the role of the Wadden Sea Forum and the Wadden Sea Team of green Non-Governmental Organisations as key stakeholders for the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and Advisors to the Wadden Sea Board;
58. **Continue** to support the work of the Wadden Sea Forum as an independent trilateral stakeholder forum and as a dialogue platform for the involvement and engagement of stakeholders from the Wadden Sea Region to work on a sustainable and climate friendly development;
59. **Continue** to support the work of the Wadden Sea Team of green Non-Governmental Organisations on nature conservation and the integrity of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site based on their specific engagement;
60. **Continue** and **expand** the trilateral strategic multi-stakeholder Partnership in support of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site with the Partnership Hub (the management and organisational unit of the Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership), to facilitate and strengthen the sense of ownership and responsibility across societal and economic sectors and networks for the preservation of the Outstanding Universal Value and the enhancement of sustainability in the Wadden Sea Region;
61. **Welcome** and further **encourage** all strategic partners to engage and collaborate in transnational, cross-sectoral and knowledge-based initiatives, measures and projects within the Partnership Hub;
62. **Affirm** the intention of supporting engagement and collaboration of a range of partners, stakeholders, organisations, or companies to contribute to the protection and safeguarding of the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site and encourage transnational measures and projects whose purpose it is to complement activities of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation and as such **task** the Wadden Sea Board to oversee the further development of joint financial funding instruments;
63. **Welcome** and **support** the establishment of the Trilateral Wadden Sea World Heritage Partnership Centre in Wilhelmshaven to house the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat, the trilateral Partnership Hub, and the Wadden Sea Forum;
64. **Encourage** the stakeholders and competent authorities to continue working on cultural landscapes and history as related assets to nature conservation in the Wadden Sea Region;
65. **Continue** and **enhance** the education and outreach activities of the trilaterally agreed Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development and World Heritage Interpretation (2018) as a shared responsibility of the signatories by jointly implementing the Trilateral Education Work Programme and further supporting the International Wadden Sea School (IWSS);
66. **Continue** and **strengthen** the involvement of the younger generation through cross-border exchanges for pupils, students, and young professionals by i.a. developing the East Atlantic Flyway Youth Forum and initiating holding a second Youth Conference in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference and investigating the options and feasibility of a Trilateral Wadden Sea Volunteer Service.



CONTRIBUTE TO AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY ON A GLOBAL SCALE

The Ministers

67. **Acknowledge** the interdependence of breeding, resting, stop-over, and wintering sites of the migratory birds along the East-Atlantic Flyway that make up a key feature of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Wadden Sea, aiming to safeguard a climate resilient flyway;
68. **Commit** to further strengthen the ties between the various initiatives working along the East Atlantic Flyway by expanding cooperation within the Wadden Sea Flyway Initiative to further intensify the engagement of partners, with the aim of further enhancing monitoring, capacity building, and conservation efforts, both in the West African and the Arctic region;
69. **Continue** to act jointly in the network of marine World Heritage Sites worldwide in the framework of the UNESCO World Heritage Marine Programme and feel honoured to host the 5th World Heritage Marine Managers Conference in 2023 in the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site;
70. **Aim** to contribute to the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development in demonstrating the work of the Trilateral Wadden Sea Cooperation in connection with the Trilateral Programming Committee on Wadden Sea Research and use the opportunity for exchange with other World Heritage Sites, via e.g. enhanced alignment of science developments;
71. **Intend** to continue the work within the frame of the Memoranda of Understanding with our existing international partners while considering further collaboration and support of other marine World Heritage Sites with similar features such as the Yellow Sea and along the East-Atlantic Flyway as contribution to global partnerships.



TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA COOPERATION 2022-2026

The Ministers

72. **Thank** Germany for having assumed the presidency of the Cooperation in the period from 2018-2022 and for hosting the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference and the Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council;
73. **Welcome** the presidency of the Kingdom of Denmark for the period from 2022-2026;
74. **Instruct** the Wadden Sea Board to review, in time for the next Trilateral Governmental Conference, the progress made on the items described above;
75. **Intend** to hold the 16th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium prior to the 15th Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council at the invitation of the Netherlands;
76. **Intend** to hold the next Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea and the 15th Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Council meeting in 2026, at the invitation of the government of Denmark.



SIGNATURES

Esbjerg, Denmark, 15 May 2023

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK



Magnus Heunicke, Minister of Environment

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS



Christianne van der Wal, Minister for Nature and Nitrogen Policy

FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY



Steffi Lemke, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection

