



Wadden Sea Forum

10th Meeting

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Attached is the draft WSF Statement to the EU Green Paper Maritime Policy. The draft is a compilation of contributions by the Working Groups ICZM, Tourism, Shipping, EII, as well as the trilateral CPSL group. For each section it has been indicated which groups have contributed. The individual contributions have been annexed. As agreed by WSF-9, the general introduction has been prepared by the secretariat. In some cases also introductory texts to some of the separate sections have been added by the secretariat.

PROPOSAL: The meeting is invited to discuss and adopt the statement for submission to the EU Commission

INTRODUCTION: THE WADDEN SEA AND THE WADDEN SEA FORUM

The Wadden Sea is a coastal sea bordering the North Sea coasts of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands. The Wadden Sea is Europe's largest coastal wetland and of exceptional ecological importance. In any one year, an average of 10 million birds visits the Wadden Sea. The three owner countries, working together in the so-called trilateral cooperation on the protection of the Wadden Sea, have managed and protected this valuable ecosystem since 1978. However, the Wadden Sea, including the adjacent coastal area, the so-called **Wadden Sea Region**, is also an area where people live, work and recreate. Therefore, the trilateral cooperation has established a Wadden Sea Forum (WSF), as an independent platform of stakeholders and requested them to elaborate scenarios for sustainable development of the region.

WSF started its work in 2002 with 41 members, representing the sectors fisheries, agriculture, industry and harbours, tourism, energy and nature protection, as well as local and regional governments. By the end of 2004 the number of organisations involved had increased to more than 300. WSF has been very successful in two respects. First, the WSF has opened up channels of communication and thus of mutual understanding and will turn out to be a valuable exercise for future co-operation and co-existence in the area. Second, WSF has identified various point of synergy between different sectors, such as energy and agriculture with regard to wind and biomass energy generation, tourism and nature protection who agreed on a better promotion of the natural values, as well as industry, agriculture and fisheries regarding a common Wadden Sea brand.

ICZM, Sustainable Development and Shipping safety are central themes addressed by WSF. The experiences with WSF make clear why it is so important that stakeholders are involved in ICZM. By formulating common long-term objectives for the region, the WSF members have developed a framework for spatial planning, investments and the adaptation of legal instruments, necessary for achieving sustainable development.

WSFs comments to the Green Paper, provided in the remainder of this document, are based upon WSFs vision, objectives and sectoral strategies for sustainable development for the Wadden Sea Region, laid down in the report "Breaking the Ice".

For additional information about WSF and its activities, see

www.waddensea-forum.org

WSFS COMMENTS TO THE GREEN PAPER

2.1 A COMPETITIVE MARITIME INDUSTRY (*WG EII*)

According to WSFs Vision, the Wadden Sea Region offers room for entrepreneurship, while economic activities make optimal (i.e. sustainable) use of the specific advantages of the Region, in particular the location by the sea.

However, for a competitive maritime industry, WSF considers an international level playing field of high importance (see further WSFs comments to section 2.7).

2.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF OUR MARINE RESOURCES.

2.5 DEVELOPING EUROPE'S MARITIME SKILLS AND EXPANDING SUSTAINABLE MARITIME EMPLOYMENT (*WG Shipping*)

The quality of marine and coastal seas is crucial for maintaining biodiversity, as well as for sustainable tourism, fisheries and other uses. As stated in the introduction, the Wadden Sea is Europe's largest marine wetland. At the same time, however, the Wadden Sea is situated along one of the busiest shipping lanes in Europe and, consequently, the risks of shipping casualties is relatively high. In the coming decades large offshore wind parks will be constructed which will increase the risk of casualties. Shipping safety is, therefore, of utmost importance for the future quality of the Wadden Sea and one of the central themes addressed by WSF. In all, 36 recommendations to the three governments have been formulated, asking for more cooperation to improve shipping safety and prevent pollution from shipping.

According to WSF, risk assessment to further safety at sea, needs to be done on the international level, using a regional seas approach (see further 5.1). The results need to be translated into regional management plans.

In order to increase shipping safety WSF, considers a more proper education, as well as better salaries/wages, urgently needed, so as to ensure higher quality and uniform standards. The European Commission should in this respect use its influence within the IMO (STCW).

2.4. INNOVATION, ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE (*WG EII*)

WSF considers energy saving in general, but also for the Wadden Sea Region, to be a very important measure for the sustainable use of available resources, for the reduction of greenhouse emissions and for avoiding polluting the environment.

According to WSF it is important to harmonise CO₂ reduction policies throughout the EU.

2.6 CLUSTERING (*WG EII*)

The WSF generally supports clustering. Clusters have synergistic advantages through shared facilities and services. Impacts could be minimized by less use of space, concentration of noise and light pollution and a better control of emissions and pollutants.

An important precondition for clustering is the infrastructure.

2.7. THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK. (*WG ICZM, WG EII, WG SHIPPING*)

The Wadden Sea Forum has identified several cases of substantial differences in the implementation of rules and regulations within the Wadden Sea Region (for example with regard to the EU EIA Directive and EU shipping safety regulations). Moreover, some rules and regulations could be superfluous, redundant and neither contribute to the protection of nature nor the improvement of social and economic conditions.

There is also a lack of coordination between those rules and that there are many different terms for the individual protected sites.

In order to facilitate sustainable development, rules and regulations should be harmonised and, where possible, simplified, while maintaining high level standards. The enforcement of existing rules should be better harmonised.

Coastal areas should be managed according to an integrated ecosystem-based approach. There is a need to approach the management of the coastal area in a more uniform and simple way that takes account and integrates economic, social and environmental dimensions.

Integrated management must also address the multifunctional use of marine areas by optimising the combination of uses.

The instrument of ICZM and the Regional Seas Approach are considered promising for achieving these objectives.

A European flag (EU register) should not be made available, as long as member states have sovereign rights; substandard ships should be refused by EU ports.

3.1 ATTRACTION OF COASTAL AREAS (*WG ICZM*)

The Wadden Sea Region has a strong identity, which is rooted in the cultural heritage, the typical Wadden Sea landscape features and the unique, from a world wide perspective, Wadden Sea nature area. The WSF has adopted a common vision for this Region, aiming at achieving a natural biodiversity, decreasing concentrations of polluting substances, dynamic urban centres and a vital rural community with a balanced population structure and good public facilities. Furthermore, the Wadden Sea Region offers room for entrepreneurship and economic activities

making sustainable use of the specific advantages of the Region, in particular the location by the sea, the nature potentials (agriculture, tourism) and the positive population development.

ICZM and stakeholder involvement are considered prerequisites for maintaining the quality of life in the Wadden Sea Region and for realising the common vision.

The availability of region-specific, region comparable statistical data is of high importance for monitoring sustainable development indicators. It should also be possible to distinguish between maritime and terrestrial components of statistical data.

In promoting a regional-seas perspective (see 5.4), the EU must also pay due attention to improving the regional data situation (availability, cross-border comparability).

3.2 ADAPTING TO COASTAL RISKS (*CPSL*)

In the Dutch-German-Danish Wadden Sea region, about 3.3 million people live in areas that are potentially endangered by coastal flooding and erosion. With the predicted acceleration in sea level rise, the hazards of flooding and erosion will increase. Adaptive strategies that aim at maintaining present safety standards under due consideration of the ecological values and resources of the Wadden Sea are a prerequisite for socio-economic progress in the region.

Acknowledging that the Wadden Sea is one coherent ecosystem, existing national strategies should be evaluated and trilaterally coordinated. In this regard, the EU-initiative for a flood directive is welcomed as a framework for future coordination.

3.3 DEVELOPING COASTAL TOURISM (*WG Tourism*)

According to WSF there are two major obstacles for the development of coastal tourism and recreation:

- Lack of co-operation, both within the tourist sector and between this sector and others, such as agriculture and fisheries;
- Competing claims for the usage of space in the coastal area: extension of port facilities, infrastructure, urbanisation, agriculture and tourism/recreation.

The challenge thus is twofold: In the first place there is a need for the development of a common approach to tourism/recreation in the Wadden Sea Region as a whole, which should also be considered to be a major pillar of the regional economy. Secondly, a balance should be found between the needs for adequate infrastructure and a healthy local economy on the one hand and the 'chicken with the golden eggs' (wide open spaces, quiet, natural values, the dynamics of winds and tides) on the other.

The first challenge can only be met by the tourist sector itself. The second one should be part of a trilateral ICZM-strategy that should be based on the whole Wadden Sea, stretching from Esbjerg to Den Helder. In this respect the Wadden Sea should be considered to be a regional sea.

The scope for EU-involvement in the development of coastal tourism is rather limited, except for the establishment of the necessary preconditions, in particular the promotion and facilitation of ICZM (see further 3.4).

3.4 MANAGING LAND-SEA INTERFACE (*WG ICZM, WG EII*)

The Wadden Sea Forum emphasises that there are many interactions between the Wadden Sea and the adjacent mainland and that a sustainable development strategy for the Wadden Sea Region must integrate policies for the Wadden Sea proper and the adjacent mainland. ICZM is a promising instrument for managing the land-sea interface.

WSF is not in favour of introducing an EU ICZM Directive. ICZM should be promoted by raising awareness among all parties about its advantages. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that activities and institutions promoting ICZM, such as the WSF, are being supported, either directly by the Commission and/or through the member states. Also stimulating ICZM courses in higher education is very relevant for the future of this management instrument.

WSF considers a harbour concept for big container vessels and feeder traffic in the WSR important for sustainable development. Sustainable port development must be an important element of ICZM.

For the sustainable development of ports a European vision is considered necessary. Such a vision should be based upon a regional seas approach.

4.1 DATA AT THE SERVICE OF MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES (*WG Shipping*)

A user-friendly Marine Observation and Data Network (e.g. further development of AIS) is needed to be used in the daily practical work.

Further developments of satellite techniques e.g. Galileo should be considered for tracking and safety measures in EU-waters.

4.2 SPATIAL PLANNING (*WG ICZM*)

The experiences with the Wadden Sea Forum have made clear how important it is to upgrade the classical instrument of spatial planning into integrated coastal zone planning, taking account of social, economic and ecological dimensions of development and involving all stakeholders. This can only be done by developing a long-term vision supported by all parties involved. Such an integrated long-term vision is a prerequisite for integrated coastal zone management because most developments in the coastal zone have planning dimensions of 10 years or more.

Furthermore, a long-term vision is the basis for long-term planning which in itself is a necessary condition for economic investments and nature management

Spatial planning must become a core element of ICZM. For the compatibility of marine and spatial planning, the use of common indicators is necessary. Activities for which both marine and terrestrial planning is needed, must be handled by one authority.

5.1 POLICY MAKING WITHIN THE EU.

5.4 GEOGRAPHICAL REALITIES (*WG ICZM; WG EII*)

There are substantial differences in the way EU states implement EU framework Directives. In cross-border ecosystems this leads to differences in conservation and environment management in different parts of the same ecosystem and, generally, in unequal playing fields for commercial sectors.

In order to take account of regional specificities of EU marine waters, the following should be taken into due consideration:

- **Cross-border ecosystems should be managed according to a Regional Seas Approach, applying the instruments proposed in the above comments; A Regional Seas approach involves a harmonised approach to management, while respecting the subsidiarity of littoral member states;**
- **Regional Seas should be designated on the basis of distinct ecosystem and geographical features, rather than administrative considerations** (Examples of cross-border regional seas are the Wadden Sea, the Skagerrak-Kattegat, the Gulf of Bothnia, the Irish Sea, the Adriatic Sea);
- **A central element of the further development of the EU maritime policy should be the promotion, support and specification of the Regional Seas Approach.**

5.2 THE OFFSHORE ACTIVITIES OF GOVERNMENTS (*WG SHIPPING*)

In the view of WSF an EU coastguard in the traditional way should not be set up. However, an EU-coastguard Centre at EMAS, receiving information from and sharing information with all regional/national coastguards, is considered a feasible improvement.

Regional/national coastguards should be installed e.g. in/for the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Channel.

Regional centres should have regional commanders and be responsible for the daily business in their region.

The EU-coastguard Centre should be an overall knowledge centre, supporting general tasks, such as daily warnings, information exchange and monitoring. The EU-coastguard Centre and the regional/national coastguards should not only safeguard shipping safety and security but also deal with human threats (e.g. prevention of terrorism).