

TRILATERAL WADDEN SEA FORUM**2nd Meeting****Tønder, Denmark, 24-25 April 2003**

FINAL MINUTES

0. Welcome

The chairman, Mr. Nijpels, opened the meeting on 24th April, at 13:30 hours. He stated that much had happened since the first WSF meeting in Leeuwarden on 31 August 2002. Very important of course was the granting of co-financing through the Interreg IIIB programme. Mr. Nijpels also referred to the start of the work of the Thematic Groups in February 2003. An important task of this WSF meeting would be to formalize the proposals of the TGs. The meeting would furthermore pay specific attention to a number of topical issues of common concern. Mr. Nijpels welcomed in particular Mr. Tim Badman from the Dorset Coastal Forum. He then passed the floor to Mr. Jens Andresen, vice-chairman of the Forum and chairman of the Environmental and Technical board of South Jutland county, who welcomed the participants to Tønder on behalf of the county of South Jutland.

Mr. Andresen underlined the importance of the Forum as a “bottom-up” process and regarded the creation of the Wadden Sea Forum as a first step in the realisation in all three Wadden Sea countries of constructive solutions to a sustainable future of the Wadden Sea region. Mr. Andresen provided some brief information about the Tønder marsh region which the members of the Forum would visit in the afternoon.

He finally expressed a special welcome to Mr. Tim Badman.

1. Adoption of the agenda and the programme

Documents: WSF2-1-1. Annotated draft agenda. WSF2-1-2 Draft program.

The agenda was **adopted** with the inclusion of the issue of traffic, as proposed by Mr. Bastian, under agenda item 8b. The agenda is in **Annex 1**. A list of participants in the meeting is in **Annex 2**. A list of documents is in **Annex 3**.

The meeting also **adopted** the program for the meeting.

2. Adoption of the Minutes of WSF1

The final draft minutes of the first WSF meeting (Leeuwarden, NL, 30 August 2002), distributed by e-mail of 27 September 2002 (Ref. Letter WSF02-12) were **adopted** by the meeting with the inclusion of some small editorial corrections.

3. Announcements

Documents: WSF2-3-1 Updated member list.

The secretary informed that the Dutch fisheries representative Mr. Nooitgedagt would withdraw from the WSF. Mr. Verbree had been nominated as his successor and this nomination was **adopted** by the meeting.

The meeting also **adopted** Mr. Werner Schuhbauer, chairman of the TG Energy, as representative of the Energy sector for the region Schleswig-Holstein/Hamburg.

4. Reports from the Thematic Groups (TGs)

a. Reporting and Terms of Reference (ToRs) TGs

Documents: WSF2-4a-1 Draft Terms of Reference TGs, WSF2-4a-2 Member list TGs

The chairpersons of the five Thematic Groups briefly reported about progress made in their groups. Mr. Verheij underlined that, in line with the decisions of the WSF1 meeting, the issue of coastal defence would be dealt with in the TG Policy/Management.

The minutes of the TGs can be found on the Wadden Sea Forum website www.waddensea-forum.org.

In the discussion following the presentation by the TG chairpersons, Mr. Bastian stated that, generally, there were quite a large number of issues to be addressed by the TGs. He stressed the need for setting priorities and to focus on those issues for which

- the WSF has possibilities to change things;
- improved cooperation can be achieved;
- joint actions and plans can be developed.

Also Mr. Klimant underlined the need for setting priorities and attempting to get concrete answers.

Mr. Rösner criticised that the TGs seem to have too many issues on their agenda and gave the impression that they were too much looking backward. He made a plea for focusing on perspectives and for dealing with a limited number of issues, in particular for which joint solutions for sectors would be possible.

Mr. Liebing stated that he had heard little about tourism and recreation although, as decided at WSF-1, these should be dealt with by all TGs.

In response to the above criticism Mr. Ahrens, chairman of the TG Industry/Harbour, stressed that first facts were needed after which specific themes could be selected.

Mr. Keurentjes, chairman of the TG agriculture, stated that his group already focused on what could be achieved. He also underlined the fact that the TGs had just started their work.

The latter was also stressed by Mr. Haerkens, who furthermore proposed that information could be circulated between the TGs.

Mr. Loos, in response to the remark by Mr. Liebing, assured that he, as a representative of the tourism sector, would make sure that tourism and recreation would be addressed in the groups in which he participated which were TG Industry/Harbour and TG Fisheries.

Mr. Verheij, chairman of the TG Policy/Management, stressed that the issues of tourism and recreation would certainly be dealt with in his group.

Mr. Holstein, in response to Mr. Rösner, stressed that most issues raised in the first meeting of the TG Fisheries, focused on the future.

After this general discussion, the meeting adopted the Terms of Reference of all five TGs, as in document WSF2-4a-1.

b. Scenario methodology and Work Schedule TGs

Documents: WSF2-4b-1 Work schedule; WSF2-4b-2 Slides Scenario Presentation.

Mr. De Jong gave a very brief introduction to the scenario planning methodology and the consequences for the work schedule of the TGs. A copy of the Power-Point slides of the presentation was handed out to the participants.

Following this presentation the draft Work Schedule for the TGs, as in document WSF2-4b-1, was **adopted** by the meeting.

c. Scope of the work of the TGs

Document: WSF2-4c-1 Proposal by the chair on the geographical scope of the TG and WSF work.

The chairman introduced document WSF2-4c-1 containing a working definition for the geographical scope of the WSF work.

Mr. Keurentjes stated that, although it refers to a working definition here, this may, in the future start to lead its own life and become a fixed delimitation.

Ms. Westinga pointed to the differences with the geographical scope of the Dutch SEOW project in which only the municipalities directly bordering the Wadden Sea are addressed.

The chairman replied that it was his intention to harmonize the two approaches.

The meeting adopted the geographical scope of the WSF project as in document WSF2-4c-1.

5. General studies

Document: WSF2-5-1 Progress Report by the secretariat with attached the ToRs

Mr. De Jong presented supplementary information on the initiation of general studies. The inventory of socio-economic data in the German Wadden Sea region, carried out by Planco, had started on 1st April 2003. For the Danish Wadden Sea Region the Danish consultant COWI had been selected. COWI would, in close contact with Planco, start its work on 5th May 2003.

He was positive about the possibilities for tuning the German and Danish studies with comparable work in The Netherlands in the framework of the SEOW project.

The external study "evaluation of international legal instruments" by the Oxford Brookes University has started on 1st April 2003.

6. Information strategy

With regard to the distribution of information to Forum members, the following strategy was **adopted** by the meeting:

If members would like to provide the WSF members with background documents, the secretariat will be informed and will announce such documents in a list, which is sent out together with the meeting documents. On the basis of this list, individual members can request documents from the secretariat, download them from the WSF site or pick them up during the meetings.

7. Communication strategy

Document: WSF2-7-1 Preliminary draft communication strategy.

The chairman explained the main aims of the communication strategy. In the first 8 months the emphasis of communication would be to make the Forum further known. In 2004 the emphasis would be on informing the general public about the products of the Forum, i.e. the sustainability strategies. Another aim in the second phase was to get feedback on the Forum proposals.

Mr. Klimant stressed that TG members also had a responsibility in communication matters and that it was not only a task of the secretariat.

Mr. Revier pointed to the communication strategies of the sectors themselves. He furthermore underlined the need for maximum transparency of the communication process. As a first step the WSF website should become well-known.

The meeting was urged to promote the WSF website.

The chairman **proposed** and the meeting **agreed** that the questions from document WSF2-7-1 would be circulated directly after the meeting in the form of an e-mail questionnaire. On the basis of the answers received, the secretariat would produce a new draft communication strategy.

8. Sustainable development

8a. Discussion in Thematic Groups

Document: WSF2-8a-1 Compilation TG discussion and proposal general study sustainability.

The chairpersons of the five Thematic Groups briefly reported about the discussion on sustainability development in their groups.

Passing a remark about the report by the TG Policy/Management, Mr. Ahrens stressed that the inclusion of the Wadden Sea coastal zone for sustainable development was too broad, and Mr. Verheij responded that the TG would stick to the agreement made under agenda item 4c regarding the geographical scope of the work of the TGs.

In view of the very general statement in the report of the TG Industry/Harbor Mr. Klimant proposed that all TGs should give three concrete examples on what was meant by sustainability in the different TGs.

Mr. Stamp mentioned that within the Agenda 21 discussion, concrete examples were already existing and he proposed to distribute the relevant working paper agriculture to the other TGs.

Mr. Revier stated that the "resilience" of the Wadden Sea ecosystem is out of place in the sustainability discussion.

After a short discussion about the five reports of the TGs, it was obvious that there were different opinions within the thematic groups about the management instruments with regard to sustainability. On the basis of the conclusions of the meeting of TG chairpersons and secretaries (Team meeting) that had been held on Thursday morning, the meeting agreed upon the following common elements of sustainable development:

1. Sustainable development acknowledges the principle that economic development, social development and environmental protection, which are inherently interdependent in the long run.
2. In the course of the Wadden Sea Forum project specific sustainability strategies, based upon the above general definition, will be developed for the Wadden Sea region with its own specific approach.
3. Related to this process and as a first step, sustainability scenarios will be developed within and for the different sectors.

Furthermore, the meeting agreed on the TOR of the general sustainability study, as in document WSF2-8a-1, to be carried out as soon as possible.

8b. Issues of common concern

Documents:

Document WSF2-8b-1. Shrimp fisheries and cartel formation.

Document WSF2-8b-2. Offshore windmill farms in the North Sea.

Document WSF2-8b-3. Shipping safety.

Document WSF2-8b-4. Common Agriculture Policy reform.

Shrimp fisheries.

This case was introduced by Mr. Loos. The Dutch cartel office NMA has recently imposed a fine of EURO13,8 million upon the shrimp fishermen because of forbidden price agreements. This system is, according to the sector, a sustainable system because it guarantees fishermen a good economic situation, while catches are 20 to 40% lower than in an unregulated system. He proposed that the WSF would send a letter to the European Commission urging the Commission to develop a clear set of rules making sustainable fisheries possible.

Mr. Holstein stated that the problem went beyond shrimp fishing, only. All Producers' Organisations had comparable problems.

Mr. Revier could in principle endorse Mr. Loos' proposal but, since there was not a common definition of sustainable fishing yet, proposed to use the wording "come to a system that is of benefit for the Wadden Sea ecosystem."

Mr. Andresen supported the proposal and stated that sustainable fishing is not possible without market regulation.

Mr. Tougaard proposed that the statement would be made for the Producers' Organisation and not for the traders.

Mr. Rösner stated that, in the future, the fishery sector should consider to base regulations also on an environmental argumentation. This would require agreements beyond the sector, which hopefully could be achieved via the Wadden Sea Forum. Considering that the market regulations so far had been one step towards sustainable fishing, but not yet having reached that goal, he also supported the letter.

The chairman concluded the discussion by stating that from legal point of view this was a complicated matter but that it was up to the responsible authorities to find a proper solution.

The meeting agreed on a text for a letter to the European Commission and the responsible national ministers as in **Annex 4**.

Offshore wind farms

According to Mr. Nielsen, plans are being developed in all three Wadden Sea countries or already in operation to install offshore wind turbines. In document WSF2-8b-2 the IRWC, together with the chairman of the TG Energy had made a summary of problems associated with the installation of offshore wind turbines.

Mr. Nielsen stated that more planning was necessary and that this process must be speeded up. He proposed that this message would be submitted by the Forum to the coming joint OSPAR/HELCOM meeting.

Mr. Rösner underlined the strength of a consensus statement by the Forum and supported a letter in which the need for a joint planning was expressed.

Mr. Bastian stated that offshore wind farms have an impact on nature, fisheries, shipping and tourism and that there is a necessity of trilateral planning. There should be a planning system prior to the start of the building/construction process .

The meeting agreed upon a text as in **Annex 5** to be submitted to the joint OSPAR/HELCOM meeting in Bremen in June 2003.

Shipping

The secretary introduced document WSF2-8b-3 listing several actions taken recently to improve shipping safety in the Wadden Sea and the adjacent North Sea.

Mr. Loos pointed to the problem in The Netherlands of lighthouses being decommissioned as an issue important for shipping safety.

According to Mr. Ahrens shipping safety should be discussed in the TG Industry/harbour and there was no need to take action now.

Mr. Revier emphasized that one shipping disaster in the Wadden Sea can ruin the results of sustainable development for years. He therefore saw sufficient reason for taking action now by calling upon trilateral ministers to address issues such as PSSA, safe havens, techniques for combating oil spills and liability. A document, prepared by The Wadden Sea Team and Seas At Risk was handed out.

After further discussion about the need for action by the WSF, the meeting agreed upon a text as in **Annex 6**, to be sent to the responsible ministers

Agriculture

Mr. Keurentjes introduced document WSF2-8b-4. The EU Commission has recently announced the so-called mid-term review of the EU agricultural policy. According to this review EU agricultural subsidies will no longer be connected with production volumes but with environmental, cultural and social aspects of agriculture. Mr. Keurentjes stressed that the new policies will be of overriding importance for the work of the TG Agriculture.

Traffic

Mr. Bastian informed the meeting that the issue of traffic had been discussed in the IRWC. He underlined the need for international coordination of future planning of infrastructure. Such a coordination is lacking and future traffic planning is only done at the national level. He proposed to install a WSF Thematic Group on traffic planning.

Mr. Ahrens stated that this issue should be discussed in the TG Industry/Harbour and that there was no need for a new group.

Mr. Keurentjes supported the proposal by Mr. Ahrens and suggested to discuss the issue in the TG Policy/Management as well.

Mr. Verheij pointed to the wide range of issues already on the agenda of the TG Policy/Management but supposed that traffic could be taken on board.

The meeting agreed that traffic planning would be addressed by the TGs Industry/Harbour and Policy/Management and Mr. Bastian promised that an IRWC document would be sent to both TGs.

9. Next meeting.

The chairman informed the meeting that Lower Saxony and Bremen had offered to host the WSF 3 meeting, 30th –31st October 2003. The meeting will probably be held in Bremen.

10. Press release

A draft press release, handed out during the meeting, was adopted by the meeting. The press release is in **Annex 7**.

11. Any other business

Mr. Loos raised the issue of light pollution, which is a growing problem. He informed the meeting that the Dutch oil and gas company NAM switches off unnecessary lights on their platforms in the Wadden Sea. He proposed to present a "Darkness Cleaning" plan to the Wadden Sea ministers. One element of such a plan could be an inventory of possibilities for reducing unnecessary light. It was **agreed** that this issue would be discussed in the TGs Fishery and Energy.

12. Closing

The chairman closed the meeting on 25th April, at 10:30 hours. He thanked Mr. Andresen for hosting the meeting and the participants and the secretariat for their constructive contribution, which had made the meeting a very successful one.

ANNEX 1. AGENDA

0. Welcome
1. Adoption of the agenda and the programme
2. Adoption of the minutes of WSF1
3. Announcements
4. Reports from the Thematic Groups (TGs)
 - a. Reporting and Terms of Reference (ToRs) TGs
 - b. Scenario methodology and work schedule TGs
 - c. Scope of the work of the TGs
5. General studies
6. Information strategy
7. Communication strategy
8. Sustainable development
 - 8a. Discussion in Thematic Groups
 - 8b. Issues of common concern
9. Next meeting.
10. Press release
11. Any other business
12. Closing

ANNEX 3. LIST OF DOCUMENTS

doc. no.	contents	delivered		
		by	date	How
agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda				
WSF2-1-1	Draft agenda WSF-2	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
WSF2-1-2	Draft program WSF-2	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
agenda item 2: Adoption of the minutes of WSF-1				
	Final draft minutes WSF-1	Secretariat	27/09/02	e-mail
agenda item 3: Announcements				
WSF2-3-1	Updated member list	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
agenda item 4: Report from the TGs				
agenda item 4a: Reporting and ToRs TGs				
WSF2-4a-1	Draft Terms of Reference TGs	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
WSF2-4a-2	Member list TGs	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
agenda item 4b: Scenario methodology and work schedule TGs				
WSF2-4b-1	Work schedule TGs	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
WSF2-4b-2	Presentation scenario methodology	Secretariat	24/04/03	hand out
agenda item 4c: Scope of the work TGs				
WSF2-4c-1	Geographical scope of the work	Chair	27/03/03	e-mail
agenda item 5: General studies				
WSF2-5-1	Progress general studies	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
agenda item 6: Information strategy				
agenda item 7: Communication strategy				
WSF2-7-1	Proposal communication strategy	Secretariat	04/04/03	e-mail

doc. no.	contents	delivered		
		by	date	How
agenda item 8: Sustainable development				
agenda item 8a: Discussion in TGs				
WSF2-8a-1	Results sustainability discussion in TGs	Secretariat	27/03/03	e-mail
agenda item 8b: Issues of common concern				
WSF2-8b-1	Shrimp fisheries and cartel formation	Dutch Producers Organisation	11/04/03	e-mail
WSF2-8b-2	Off-shore wind parks	IRWC	11/04/03	e-mail
WSF2-8b-3	Shipping Safety	Secretariat	11/04/03	e-mail
WSF2-8b-4	Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	NLTO	11/04/03	e-mail
agenda item 9: Next meeting				
agenda item 10: Press release				
WSF2-10-1	Draft press release	Secretariat	25/04/03	hand out

ANNEX 4. LETTER SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

To: European Commission; Dutch, Danish and German Fisheries Ministers

Sustainable fisheries in the Wadden Sea

Dear Madam, Sir,

The trilateral Wadden Sea Forum was installed in 2002 by the governments of the Wadden Sea states with the task of developing strategies for sustainable development in the Wadden Sea region. The Forum is an independent platform of representatives of various user and interest groups and regional and local authorities from the Wadden Sea region.

At its meeting of 24th –25th April in Tønder, Denmark, the Forum has discussed the case of cartel formation of the shrimp fisheries in the Wadden Sea in relation to sustainable development.

The reason for addressing the case was the fact that on 14 January 2003 the Dutch cartel authority (NMA) imposed substantial fines on shrimp traders united in the Vebega and to shrimp fishermen of four Dutch, three German and one Danish Producers Organisation (POs). The total fine amounts to Euro 13.8 million.

The POs are accused of having made trilateral agreements about the maximum quantity of shrimps to be fished and to be landed in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark.

The NMA also accused them of agreements that have been apparently made about the minimum number of shrimps per kilogram and about catch limitations in the form of fish prohibitions during weekends and state holidays.

The NMA considers these trilateral agreements as competition limiting and trade influencing.

According to the Producers Organisations, the trilateral agreements have in the past years guaranteed a reasonable income to the shrimp fishermen, while at the same time catches and fishing effort have been reduced, thereby also reducing bycatch. The market regulating role of POs was, in the view of the fisheries organisations, in line with the EU policy of stimulating sustainable fishing.

The agreements can thus be regarded as an important step for sustainable fishing making possible a fishing practice which has social, economic and ecological benefits.

This is supported by a recent analysis of the Dutch Agricultural-Economic Research Institute (LEI) in which it is concluded that a higher price will lead to a lower level of landings and thus to a reduced fishing effort; this will have a positive effect on the shrimp stocks as well as sub-adult stocks of some commercial fish species, such as whiting and cod. According to investigations in Germany, the reduced fishing pressure has also led to a lower mortality of juvenile plaice.

A lower fishing effort will, generally, result in a lower pressure on benthic communities.

In the LEI study it is furthermore concluded that a relatively low landing level will guarantee employment for the current group of fishermen.

The impact of the NMA judgement has been a severe drop in the price of landed shrimps and a considerable increase in fishing effort and landings in 2003.

According to the above mentioned LEI analysis the lower prices may negatively influence employment in the shrimp fishing sector and, consequently, have a negative impact on local communities.

The increased effort may increase the risk of negative impacts on fish stocks and the benthic community.

The Forum unanimously agreed that the above described development means a severe limitation of the possibilities for sustainable shrimp fisheries and other fisheries in the Wadden Sea.

The Forum therefore calls upon you to use your competencies to initiate the development, as soon as possible, of a regulatory framework, according to which fisheries in the Wadden Sea can be carried out in a sustainable way, respecting social, economic and ecological aspects.

Yours sincerely,

E.H.T.M Nijpels
Chairman of the Wadden Sea Forum

ANNEX 5. OFFSHORE WIND FARMS

To the meeting of the OSPAR/HELCOM Ministers
Bremen, June 2003

OFFSHORE WIND FARMS IN THE NORTH SEA

At its meeting on April 24th /25th 2003 the Wadden Sea Forum discussed offshore wind farms in the North Sea/Wadden Sea in view of the rapid and growing concern from many fields of interests.

The North Sea zone adjacent to the Wadden Sea – and the coastal areas in the Baltic Sea - seem to be the main development areas in Europe for constructing large offshore wind farms. In the German territorial waters alone more than 25 applications and licenses, encompassing more than 2,000 turbines and covering more than 1,000 km², have been or are going to be applied.

In the Wadden Sea Conservation Area the construction of wind turbines is prohibited.

Therefore it is of great concern for the various interest groups and for local and regional authorities within the Wadden Sea Region that international, common guidelines for:

- spatial planning,
 - investigations of the impact on the marine ecosystem,
 - the risks in relation to all shipping safety,
- of offshore wind farms are still not developed.

Several ministerial conferences in relation to the North Sea and Wadden Sea have already emphasised the importance for developing this common approach and decided accordingly.

Therefore the Wadden Sea Forum urges ministers (within the framework of OSPAR and HELCOM) to speed up this process in order to:

- develop indicative guidance before the end of 2003 on how to select areas suitable for offshore wind farms in the North Sea (and the Baltic Sea), taking into account:
 - the ecological importance and the impacts on the sites
 - connections to the national grids
 - fishing grounds
 - shipping safety and approaches to harbours
 - interference with oil and gas production
 - visual impacts and effects on tourism
 - production in relation to the capacity and existing technical regulations of the national grids
 - monitoring programmes and information
 - existing guidance provided through national planning processes.
- ensuring the involvement of local and regional interests by consulting these bodies in the final stage of the procedures.

Yours sincerely,

E.H.T.M Nijpels
Chairman of the Wadden Sea Forum

ANNEX 6. SHIPPING SAFETY

To: The Ministers responsible for shipping safety

Shipping safety in the Wadden Sea and the southern North Sea

Dear Madam, Sir,

The trilateral Wadden Sea Forum was established by the governments of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands with the task of developing scenarios for sustainable development for the Wadden Sea region.

At its meeting in Tønder, Denmark, 24th –25th April 2003, the Forum discussed the issue of shipping safety in the southern North Sea and the Wadden Sea in the light of the recent disaster with the tanker 'Prestige' and other accidents that happened in the last few months.

The Forum is very much concerned about the significant effects, socio-economic, as well as, environmental, that shipping disasters could have on the Wadden Sea area.

The three governments concerned, proposed the designation of large parts of the Wadden Sea as Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) to the IMO, a status which has been granted in October 2002. The PSSA designation offers a good basis for the further development of measures to enhance shipping safety.

The Forum acknowledges that, at present, many initiatives are being undertaken at the international level (e.g. OSPAR, HELCOM, IMO, EU) and it supports those initiatives.

Given the urgency of the situation, the Forum would like to stress the need for adequate measures and suggests that in your deliberations at the international level you might want to consider issues such as trilateral co-ordination and co-operation protocols both for information exchange and immediate action in case of an accident, the improvement of port-state control inspections, liability as agreed at the international level and safe havens for ships in danger.

The Forum expresses its wish that your efforts may meet with success as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

E.H.T.M Nijpels
Chairman of the Wadden Sea Forum

ANNEX 7. PRESS RELEASE

Trilateral Wadden Sea Forum: Appeal to the European Commission and the Wadden Sea fisheries ministers

“We urge the European Commission and the Wadden Sea fisheries ministers to start working immediately on a system of rules and regulations which will make it possible to carry out fisheries in the Wadden Sea in such a way that jobs are secured and the Wadden Sea ecosystem is not damaged” said Mr. Ed Nijpels, chairman of the trilateral Wadden Sea Forum at a meeting in Tonder, Denmark.

The 2nd meeting of the trilateral Wadden Sea Forum, which was held yesterday and today, agreed to send an urgent request to the European Commission and the fisheries ministers of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands to initiate the development of a regulatory framework, according to which fisheries in the Wadden Sea can be carried out in a sustainable way, respecting social, economic and ecological aspects. The background for this decision was the fine of 13.8 million EURO, recently imposed upon the shrimp fisheries sector in the Wadden Sea for having made agreements about fixed prices for landed shrimps.

According to the Forum, these agreements were positive for social, economic and ecological aspects of shrimp fisheries, because they did not only guarantee a reasonable income for the 500 shrimp fishermen in the Wadden Sea, but also had led to reduced pressure on the Wadden Sea ecosystem due to reduced fishing effort.

The Forum also discussed the construction of offshore wind farms in the North Sea. It was concluded that there is a lack of guidelines for the installation of such farms, especially with regard to spatial planning aspects, impacts on the ecosystem and risks to shipping safety. It was therefore agreed to submit an urgent request to the joint OSPAR/HELCOM meeting which will take place in Bremen this summer, to speed up the process of developing common guidelines.

Another topic of common concern discussed by the meeting was shipping safety. The meeting decided to appeal to the ministers responsible for shipping to bring to the attention of international fora the need for adequate measures, in particular trilateral co-ordination and cooperation with regard to issues relevant for shipping safety.

The trilateral Wadden Sea Forum, which is chaired by Mr. Ed Nijpels, Queen's Commissioner of the Dutch Province of Fryslân, was established in 2002 by the governments of Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands, with the tasks of developing strategies for sustainable development in the Wadden Sea region. The members of the Forum represent agriculture, industry and harbour, fisheries, tourism and recreation, energy, nature protection and local, regional and national authorities.

The second meeting of the Forum had a first, general discussion of what sustainable development means for the Wadden Sea region. There was agreement about the fact that sustainable development should take into consideration social, economic and ecological aspects. The specification of sustainable development in the Wadden Sea region will be developed during the course of this year by the five Thematic Working groups of the Forum by means of developing strategies for the different sectoral activities.

Background information about the Forum, including records of the first Forum meeting and the meetings of the Thematic Groups is on the Wadden Sea Forum website

www.waddensea-forum.org

Annexes: Letter fisheries
Letter offshore windmill farms
Letter shipping safety