

# 15<sup>th</sup> Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea

## Joint Statement by Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands

Esbjerg, 28 May 2026

As an important part of the Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea, held in Esbjerg on 28<sup>th</sup> of May 2026, Director General of the Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, LARS GREGERSEN, hosted the Joint Assembly of National Delegations; The Mayors of Esbjerg, JESPER FROST RASMUSSEN, Tønder, JØRGEN POPP PETERSEN, and Varde, SARAH ANDERSEN, and the Vice Mayor of Fanø, SOFIE EXNER KOCH, also participated. From the Netherlands, Director of Fisheries and Large Bodies of Waters at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature, PETER PAUL MERTENS, participated; King's Commissioner of Fryslân, ARNO BROK, Regional Ministers of Groningen, LEO WENNEGER, and of Fryslân, MATTHIJS DE VRIES, Mayor of Vlieland, MICHEL SCHRIER, and Alderman of the Wadden Sea Coastal Municipalities, STEFAN VAN KEIJZERSWAARD, also participated. From Germany, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, BETTINA HAGEDORN, participated; The Schleswig-Holstein Minister for Energy Transition, Climate Protection, Environment and Nature, TOBIAS GOLDSCHMIDT, the Lower Saxon State Secretary for Environment, Energy and Climate Protection, ANKA DOBSLAW, and the Hamburg Senator for Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture, KATHARINA FEGBANK, also participated.

It was foreseen to agree on the Esbjerg Declaration, which builds upon previous decisions and declarations, in the Trilateral Governmental Council. Due to the current parliamentary situation, Denmark was not able to invite to the Council meeting and sign the Esbjerg Declaration.

The Danish representative assured that Denmark remains firmly committed to the Trilateral Cooperation on the Protection of the Wadden Sea. It was therefore decided that the signing of the Esbjerg Declaration is to be done at the earliest possible date after a new government is in place in Denmark.

The representatives from the Netherlands and Germany joined Denmark in their commitment to the Trilateral Cooperation.

**Therefore, we, the national representatives of the three Wadden Sea states,** further aim to safeguard the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of our Wadden Sea World Heritage Site based on the Guiding Principle of the Trilateral Cooperation. We are therefore committed to preserving, strengthening, and developing the natural values, diversity, coherence, and dynamics of the Wadden Sea also recognising the challenges from its multifunctional use.

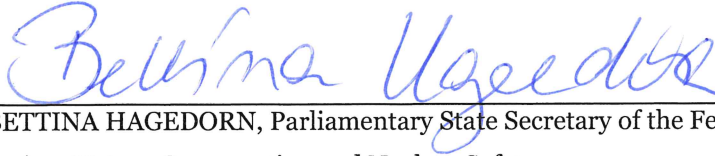
We envision a future in which:

- The Wadden Sea World Heritage status is further consolidated through coordinated and effective protection regimes and management and exchange of best practices;
- Conservation efforts enable the Wadden Sea ecosystem to fully unfold its natural potential to adapt to climate change effects in order to ensure a resilient environment;
- Scientific research, monitoring, assessment, and data provision support continuous improvement in conservation efforts;
- Human uses and nature conservation are linked in a way that preserves and strengthens the Wadden Sea's natural values and processes;
- Local communities, stakeholders and regional advisory boards, NGOs, and especially the younger generations are actively engaged in and supportive of conservation and management and contribute to the Wadden Sea Partnership.

We therefore anticipate the timely signing of the Esbjerg Declaration in order to move a step closer to this vision through concrete, strategic targets.

The Delegations thanked the Danish Presidency for chairing the Trilateral Cooperation in the foregoing period, with special thanks to the Danish Chair of the Wadden Sea Board, ANNE-MARIE VÆGTER RASMUSSEN, and welcomed the Dutch Presidency in taking over this role and agreed to install the new Dutch Chair of the Wadden Sea Board, LUZETTE KROON.

**For the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany:**



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BETTINA HAGEDORN, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

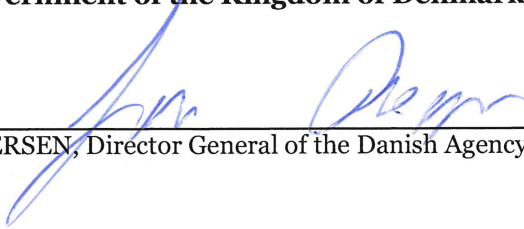
**For the Government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands:**



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PETER PAUL MERTENS, Director of Fisheries and Large Bodies of Waters at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature

**For the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark:**



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LARS GREGERSEN, Director General of the Danish Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment