

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 30)

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Shipping in the southern North Sea, an area directly adjacent to the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site, is an important and increasing business, which demands better attention to minimize risks and to safeguard the environment. Improving shipping safety needs a coalition of actors from various fields to elaborate on successful, feasible and acceptable measures. A joint shipping group without a binding status and with participants from competent authorities, local and regional governments, relevant economic sectors and green NGOs should elaborate on initiatives and recommendations for a sustainable and safe shipping business in the southern North Sea.

Proposal: The meeting is invited to discuss the proposal about the implementation of a joint shipping group and to decide about support accordingly.

Proposal joint shipping group TWSC and WSF

Background

In October 2002, the Wadden Sea was designated as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), because of its outstanding universal value in combination with its vulnerability to international shipping activities. The adjacent North Sea is one of the world's busiest international shipping areas. The designation should assist the bordering countries in further protecting and using the area in a sustainable way.

Despite the considerable progress made in the improvement of shipping safety and the environmental protection measures to minimize maritime pollution, shipping will continue to be a potential source of risk for damaging the Wadden Sea and adjacent coastline. Recent incidents like accidents and near collisions and the loss of cargo as well as off-shore developments, increasing ship traffic and the responsibility for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site require new attention and awareness to the shipping sector.

Tønder Declaration

The concerns about safety was also an issue in the Tønder Declaration of 2014. It was stated that the implementation of the work on shipping safety by both the Task Group Shipping and the Shipping Group under the Wadden Sea Forum should continue ("continue the dialogue between the competent shipping and nature conservations authorities and stakeholders in order to achieve an even higher level of safety and cooperation").

Even though the WSB and the WSF supported the implementation of joint shipping group in order to implement the agreements of the Tønder Declaration, it came unfortunately not into force. On administrative level, a maritime advisory group (MARAD) was established to evaluate the implementation of the operational plans, which were part of the Tønder Declaration. In retrospect it could be concluded that with regard to shipping safety, no further progress was made on trilateral level.

Incidents

Recent incidents like accidents and near collisions and the loss of cargo as well as off-shore developments, increasing ship traffic and the responsibility for the Wadden Sea World Heritage Site require new attention and awareness to the shipping sector.

In 2016 the vessel "Thetis D" lost 16 container adjacent the East Frisian islands. Also in 2016 the container vessel "CSCL Indian Ocean" run aground in the river Elbe and was aground for 6 days. In 2017 the container vessel "Munkebo Maersk" lost 5 container and in the same year the "Glory Amsterdam" grounded north of the island Langeoog. Recently, the "MSC Zoe" lost 350 container north of the Dutch Wadden islands.

Actions and measures

These are some examples, which demonstrate the risks of ship accidents for the Wadden Sea. Besides a sound emergency management, preventive measures are necessary to improve shipping safety in the southern North Sea. As the Wadden Sea is a PSSA since 2002, additional protective measures as well as its feasibility should be discussed. In order to get an idea of what is meant, some examples of measures are named:

- Extension of PSSA
- Changes of shipping routes, additional traffic separation schemes
- Extended pilot requirements
- Under keel clearance restrictions
- Mandatory transmitters for containers
- Incentives for vessel certification (Blauer Engel)

Shipping Group

It would be important to involve a broad spectrum of actors in the discussion with the aim to improve shipping safety in the southern North Sea. Therefore, it is proposed to establish a shipping group with representatives of shipping authorities, ports, green NGOs, sector stakeholders and representatives of the society (municipalities, counties/provinces) to advise the Wadden Sea Board. The group should be independent and without formal/hierarchical regulations – the function is more on an advisory level, which makes collaboration among authorities and stakeholders better feasible. This group should be facilitated by the CWSS and WSF secretariat.

Tasks

The overall task of the Shipping Group is to elaborate on advice how shipping safety in the southern North Sea can be improved, considering the vulnerability of the Wadden Sea ecosystem, distinguished as World Heritage Site. The evaluation of 2017 on the operational plans as part of the Tønder Declaration can be used as a starting point. Examples of tasks in this shipping group could be

- Analysis of existing safety regimes like PSSA, ISM (International Safety Management Code)
- Analysis of existing directives
- Elaboration of possible measures to improve shipping safety
- Evaluate the feasibility of implementing additional measures and PSSA extension
- Raise awareness among responsible authorities and shipping stakeholders regarding the presence of the PSSA
- Exchange of knowledge about technical developments supporting safety
- Elaboration of recommendations to increase environmental standards
- Analyse the feasibility of proving incentives
- Broaden the network and cooperation to strengthen the power to get measures implemented on international and EU level.

These tasks will have to be prioritised and further elaborated during the first meetings of the shipping group.

Chairmanship

The chair will be designated by the shipping group.

Reporting

The shipping group will report regularly about developments and progress to the WSB and WSF by brief reports as well as orally through the secretaries.

Budget

The shipping group will have a budget for meetings and external expertise from the Trilateral Cooperation.