

MEETING DOCUMENT

Wadden Sea Board (WSB 39)

29 November 2022
Wilhelmshaven, Germany



Agenda Item:	5 Draft Wilhelmshaven Declaration
Subject:	(Draft) Statements by and the involvement of the Younger Generation
Document No.:	WSB 39/5.1/f
Date:	15 November 2022
Submitted by:	CWSS

The participants of the Trilateral Youth Conference continued the discussion on their messages between September and November to present them at the TGC (speech/presentation) and in its Side Event (stand/exhibition). The messages have as main points:

1. They highlight some topics of shared interested: conservation of the site, communication and education, transformation, sustainable economic practices, and youth involvement.
2. They want to enhance involvement through setting up a Trilateral Youth Network and are discussing their goals and possible structure.
3. They want the WSB support to realise youth engagement in the long-term. That meaning:
 - To be heard, taken seriously and respected.
 - To have financial aid, of which an important part is a second Trilateral Youth Conference. The event is an essential occasion for them to connect, maintain and expand the youth engagement in the trilateral level.
 - To have a contact person at CWSS to keep them informed, help in structuring the network and connect them to people and organisations.

Proposal: The meeting is invited to note the draft statements (still under construction by the youth) and decide upon the reservations in article 83

Youth Visions for the Wadden Sea Board (01 November 2022)

Introduction

the Trilateral Youth Conference 2022

During the first Trilateral Youth Conference a group of young adults from The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark got a chance to connect and exchange based on our involvement in the Wadden Sea. This document gives an insight in the outcome of the conference and the following process.

Common areas of interest

During the conference we talked and shared our thoughts, ideas, visions, and concerns. Out of these conversations we distilled some topics that we have shared passion and interest for. These topics are: conservation of the Wadden Sea, communication and education, transformation, sustainable economic practices, and youth involvement.

Regarding conservation of the Wadden Sea we talked about wanting to revisit the idea and implications of the part humanity plays in the region. We agreed that we want to work towards a future where humanity views itself as part of the ecosystem of the Wadden Sea and not as a superior actor.

On the topic of communication and education in the Wadden Sea we agreed that communication is key in fostering large-scale engagement in the conservation of the Wadden Sea as well as in facilitating participatory governance processes. And that education has a critical role to play towards engagement, nature stewardship and participatory governance.

When talking about transformation we shared our thoughts on seeing change and as an opportunity to grow our resilience and not consider it as a last resort. And that embracing this transformation also implies accepting changes in the Wadden Sea's ecosystem and working with these changes.

Looking at sustainable economic practices we talked about how we need to strengthen social structures in the region to promote circular economy, local production, sustainable fisheries, and sustainable tourism.

And finally, we all agreed on the importance of youth involvement. Sharing our thoughts on the significance of connecting and encouraging youth involvement in the three countries and on a trilateral level. Aiming towards representing youth perspectives and values in the management of the site and policymaking. Including but not limited to the earlier topics. Youth involvement, long term engagement and active participation therefore plays a central role in our vision.

Youth involvement

Why is youth involvement important?

We continued our conversation on youth involvement after the conference. We specifically talked about youth involvement in policymaking. How this is not only of importance to us, as youth, but also very valuable for you, as representatives of the three countries.

We see the main reason for representing youth perspectives and values in governance as the fact that we are the future, and the future is ours. This future is being shaped by current policymaking, without youth involved in the process. Even though youth can add so much to the process.

We offer a new perspective and new energy, which can be key in decision making. Especially in the Wadden Sea with its complexity of policy layers where it's easy to get stuck in the system once you've been involved in the area for a long time. Sometimes the solution is thinking outside the box, which comes natural to youth since we don't have a box yet.

But we won't pretend like it's young people who are going to solve all the problems. Most value of involving youth lies in the following intergenerational conversations that are a dynamic mix of new perspectives, energy and motivation paired with knowledge and experience.

Plans for a Trilateral Youth Network

We had enthusiastic talks about youth involvement during the Trilateral Youth Conference. Discussing how we want to enhance involvement through setting up a Trilateral Youth Network. After the conference we continued discussing these plans online. Through meetings we started drafting out our goals and structure for the network, focussing on connecting and involving young people in the Wadden Sea throughout the three countries and using this network to unite the voice of the Wadden Youth to represent this voice in policy making.

But we can't do this all by ourselves, we need the support of the Wadden Sea Board to realise this youth engagement in the long-term.

What do we want from the WSB?

What we want from the Wadden Sea Board is a listening ear and an open mind. We want youth perspectives to be heard, taken serious and respected.

We'll need financial aid for supporting youth involvement and the functioning of the youth network. An important part of this is that we need you to say yes to a second Trilateral Youth Conference. We want this because the first youth conference was an essential occasion to connect all the Wadden youth and kickstart our engagement at the trilateral level. We'll need a second conference to keep this trilateral youth involvement going and expanding.

For supporting the youth network we will also need a contact person at CWSS. This is important to keep us informed on the existing structures and help us find a way to fit in there, connecting us with people and organizations.

With the support of the Wadden Sea Board we can work to reach our goal of involving and connecting youth in the Wadden Sea throughout the three countries and represent the voice of the Wadden youth.