48th Meeting of the Wadden Sea Board (WSB 48)

Adopted Summary Record

4 March 2026
Online

1. Opening of Meeting

The meeting was **opened** by the Chairperson, Anne-Marie Rasmussen, at 09.10 CET on 4 March 2026.

The Chairperson welcomed Mieke Langedijk, replacing Joost de Ruig as WSB Member, Heleen van Dijk and Preben Friis Hauge as nominated Stakeholder Advisors to the Board, and Karsten Schipperhijn as new Green NGO Advisor replacing Luuk-Jan Boon. The Chairperson further welcomed Anco Hoogerwerf of Provincie Groningen, standing in on behalf of Leo Wenneger.

Peter Paul Mertens informed that he would not be present for the entire meeting, in which time Alex van Westerlaak would stand in.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Document: WSB 48/2 WSB 48 adopted annotated agenda

Ilka Wagner proposed to move agenda point 6 in front of 5.

Table 1: List of documents submitted to WSB 48 not foreseen for discussion during the meeting.

Agenda Item	Document No.	Submitted by	Description	Proposal
4	WSB 48/4	CWSS	CWSS announcements	to note
5.2	WSB 48/5.2/3	CWSS	ISWSS Synthesis Executive Summary	to note

*The WSB **adopted** the agenda with the proposed change of agenda item order.*

3. Summary Records WSB 46 and 47

Documents: WSB 48/3/1 Final Draft Summary Record WSB 46, WSB 48/3/2 Final Draft Summary Record WSB 47 (sent via e-mail)

The WSB was invited to **adopt** the final draft Summary Records WSB 46 and 47 (**WSB 48/3/1-2)**. Wagner announced that change suggestions by Germany on the Summary Record WSB 47 would be submitted after the meeting.

*The WSB **adopted** the Summary Record WSB 46 as submitted. The adoption of Summary Record WSB 47 was postponed to WSB 49.*

4. Announcements

Document: WSB 48/4 Announcements by CWSS

CWSS

For CWSS announcements see document WSB48/4.

NETHERLANDS

LVVN

New Dutch government: The new Dutch government had been inaugurated on February 23rd. This was a minority government formed by 3 of the bigger parties. For the Netherlands, a minority government was something new, but there might be some things to learn from the Danish colleagues. The new minister of LVVN, Jaimi van Essen of the Democrats 66 social-liberal party, was 34 years old, and up until last week he had been a city alderman in the province of Overijssel.

Introduction Heleen van Wijk as national stakeholder representative: The Dutch stakeholders had nominated Heleen van Wijk as their national stakeholder representative, with Martin Cnossen as substitute. Van Wijk introduced herself.

Extra closed area for fisheries: An additional area of approximately 9,300 hectares in the Wadden Sea would be closed for seabed protection. The goal was to promote a robust ecological system and further development towards conservation objectives. The local fishermen were not dependent on this area, but it had a high ecological value for the broader ecosystem of the Wadden Sea. The measure would be supported by research focused on its effectiveness. This would allow for adjustments, tightening or relaxing of the rules where necessary. A research agenda was currently being developed by Wageningen Marine Research.

RWS

Joost de Ruig had left Rijkswaterstaat on 1 January 2026. His successor at RWS was Mieke Langedijk, who introduced herself.

Municipalities

As a result of the municipal elections of 18 March there would be a possibility that Stefan van Keijzerswaard would no longer serve as chairman of the VWG at the governmental conference. In such a case the VWG would ask another experienced alderman to attend the conference and WSB.

GERMANY

This year, the Lower Saxony Wadden Sea National Park celebrates its 40th anniversary. With the motto "The National Park Makes a Difference," its importance for nature conservation, safeguarding ecosystem functions and enhancing sustainable development is highlighted. A celebratory event with around 250 guests from politics, administration, science, and key stakeholders from the Wadden Sea region took place on February 6th. The anniversary will be accompanied by further events throughout the year. An anniversary brochure featuring selected examples from 40 years of the national park's history was published which is available digitally: www.nationalpark-wattenmeer.de/wirkt.

On February 27th, 2026, the Schleswig-Holstein Administrative Court ordered an immediate halt to oil production from Mittelplate platform in the Wadden Sea due to the lack of an Environmental Impact Assessment according to the Habitats Directive. The Deutsche Umwelthilfe (DUH) had previously filed a lawsuit. The Schleswig-Holstein Environmental Ministry and the responsible State Office for Mining, Energy and Geology are in close contact on this matter and will examine the decision and the next legal steps. [Note: On March 6th 2026 the Schleswig-Holstein Higher Administrative Court issued an interim ruling in summary proceedings and reinstated the subsidy until the appeal proceedings are concluded, see schleswig-holstein.de - Medieninformationen - Ölförderung auf „Mittelplate A“ einstweilen wieder erlaubt – OVG erlässt „Hängebeschluss“.]

DENMARK

SGAV

On 26 February, a general election was called in Denmark. As a consequence, the government has stepped down, and Denmark was in a caretaker period at that time without a formally appointed minister. This situation unfortunately meant that the delegation did not have the political mandate at present to conclude negotiations on the final text. We naturally expect that the government formation process would proceed swiftly and that a newly appointed minister would be in place by May. We kindly ask for your understanding in this matter.

Municipalities

The Danish Coastal Water Council for the Wadden Sea initiated an analysis of the coastal waters in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea and the North Sea, focusing on, especially phosphorus.

National Park

The board decided one and a half years ago to sell the Wadden Sea ship *Vadehavet*. The decision was based both on economic considerations and a wish to find other ways of communicating to more people. It has been important that this special boat should still sail in the Danish Wadden Sea. The National Park has now reached an agreement with an experienced sailing association on Fanø. Besides tourism tours the association will be obliged to maintain tours for researchers and special groups on behalf of the National Park.

ADVISORS

Hans-Ulrich Rösner reported that WWF had published a proposal for no-take-zones in the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park for a diverse and natural ecosystem to develop again underwater. According to the proposal, a good 50 percent of the national park areas currently fished would be reserved for nature, as required by the German "Bundesnaturschutzgesetz". The proposed areas were chosen in such a way that only 35 % of the shrimp fishing activity in the coastal waters of Lower Saxony would be affected, and at the same time particularly valuable natural areas would be protected. Press release with background information: https://www.wwf.de/2026/februar/watt-mutt-dat-mutt

*The WSB **noted** the information.*

6. Trilateral Governance (moved forward from its original place as per meeting agreement)

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Document: WSB 48/6 Draft Esbjerg Declaration (send via e-mail)

The WSB and Advisors discussed the updated draft Esbjerg Declaration (MCD-15) provided by the Drafting Group Ministerial Declaration (DG MD) after the consultation process.

Due to the general elections to be held on 24 March 2026, the Danish delegation declared a general reservation on the draft declaration until a new government would be formed. Upon request by van Westerlaak, Nielsen would share as soon as possible a preliminary timeline for when the reservations could be further discussed within the Danish ministry.

Any discussions on the Declaration, reservation lifted, and remaining reservations will be considered in an updated draft that will also be shared with the Drafting Group timely after the meeting.

TRILATERAL GOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE

Dissing apologised for the delay in the preparations of the Trilateral Governmental Conference (TGC), also due to the call for general elections, and asked for patience and understanding.

Nielsen added that invitations were to be sent out by mid-March. However, as protocol demands the minister to invite fellow ministers, mayors, and other high-ranked officials, an official invitation to those could only be sent out when the new minister would be in office. Those invitees would therefore for now receive a save-the-date instead, originally meant to be sent by the agency. To underscore the importance of the event, Knoke suggested for Rasmussen as WSB Chairperson to send out this save-the-date together with an explanation and more details on the event and its significance.

Nielsen expressed her thanks to CWSS for their support in the programme preparations and presented the draft programme, currently internally discussed by the Danish ministry. The draft programme would be circulated among the delegations shortly after the meeting. Klöpper added that all applicants of side events would receive a spot in the programme. Due to the very high number of excellent submissions and broad interest in the conference the lengths and format of some events had to be adjusted to ensure all speakers are accommodated.

Van Westerlaak requested the first Wadden Sea Board Meeting of the Dutch presidency on 29 May to be moved from 16:00 to 15:00 CET due to travel arrangements.

Knoke requested the Governmental Council Meeting to be placed more prominently in the programme.

5. Implementation Wilhelmshaven Declaration

5.1 PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE (PARAS 1-16)

Document: WSB 48/5.1 TG-WH Progress Report

In its progress report, the Task Group World Heritage (TG-WH) informed on the status of developing the joint Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the expert review of the draft Scoping Report.

The WSB and Advisors discussed the suggestion to create a SEA Advisory Council. Klöpper clarified that this council would not be a parallel body to the Wadden Sea Board but deal exclusively with SEA issues and hence reduce workload of WSB in this regard. The proposal was supported by Germany and the Netherlands. Wagner stressed that this would be an opportunity to get both experts and people from the competent authorities like the National Park authorities and possibly other ministries involved. Nielsen reported that the Danish delegation could not decide on this at this moment due to internal restructuring of their agency and would send in their decision in writing as soon as possible.

The WSB agreed to the appointment of Jeroen Bootsma as Chair of the Task Group World Heritage.

*The WSB **noted** the information and **agreed** to the appointment of Jeroen Bootsma as Chair of the Task Group World Heritage. The German and Dutch delegations **agreed** to tasking TG-WH with drafting the terms of reference for a SEA technical subgroup and a SEA Advisory Council; the Danish delegation will **respond in writing**.*

5.2 MANAGE AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY (PARAS 44-56)

Communications Guideline

Document: WSB 48/5.2/1 Communications Guideline

Together with the Brand Taskforce and ASHA Co., CWSS had compiled a communications guideline for the corresponding managers of the TWSC member organisations translating the brand platform into practical, step-by-step guidance for communications across the TWSC to support the consistent application of the shared brand.

Stück thanked everyone involved in the creation and encouraged all to use the guidelines. She further suggested an evaluation of its effectiveness in 2 years' time, conducted by CWSS.

*The WSB **adopted** the Communications Guideline and **tasked** CWSS with an evaluation on the implementation of the brand platform in 2 years' time.*

Update of TWSC & CWSS Logos

Document: WSB 48/5.2/2 Update of TWSC & CWSS Logos

In its document submission, CWSS had proposed a minor update to the CWSS and TWSC logos to better align with the Wadden Sea World Heritage logo, together with a guideline on where and when to use of the logos or logo combinations.

Mertens thanked for the initiative and suggested spending more time on the logo discussion and taking it to an appropriate working group, possibly involving communicators. Wagner supported extending the discussion beyond WSB 48 and favoured referring the proposal to the relevant group. The group should also have a general discussion on the TWSC logos, including the Wadden Sea World Heritage logo, and considering co-branding. Klöpper suggested to aim for the work to be concluded ahead of the TWSC's 50th anniversary (2028) and discuss the approach in more detail (e.g. which trilateral group to include) with the focal points.

*The WSB **agreed** that an examination of introducing adjusted or new logos would need sufficient time and could be performed in preparation of the 50th anniversary of TWSC in 2028.*

International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium - Executive Summary

Document: WSB 48/5.2/3 ISWSS Synthesis Executive Summary

The WSB and Advisors discussed the Executive Summary of the 16th International Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium. Vera Knoke expressed her thanks for the excellent symposium and asked who had written the summary and the recommendations. Klöpper replied that the Dutch Waddenacademie and the responsible officers at CWSS created the document Mertens raised the question of how to proceed with the given recommendations and proposed CWSS to reflect on how to approach this. Klöpper suggested that the recommendations would feed into the TWSC business plan.

*The WSB **noted** the information.*

7. Wadden Sea Board Advisors

Van Wijk reported on the development of a transboundary code of conduct for Wadden Sea sailors, planned to be presented in a side event at the TGC. Also applied to be presented at the TGC was a movie by the Dutch Association of Wadden Sea Municipalities (VWG) showing the progress made since the declaration of sustainable ports signed in 2022.

Friis-Hauge added that the municipalities and KIMO International also applied for a side event.

*The WSB **noted** the information.*

8. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

9. Next meetings

Considering Denmark's general elections, the WSB and Advisors agreed to change the in-person meeting on 15-16 April to an online meeting on 16 April 2026 (if considered necessary at all) and to aim for another WSB meeting in the beginning of May 2026. The National Focal Points would discuss the timeline at some point after the meeting.

10. Closing

The meeting was closed at 11:50 CET on 4 March 2026.

Annex 1: List of participants of the 48th WSB

CHAIRPERSON

Anne-Marie Vægter Rasmussen, Chief Advisor, Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Green Transition

DANISH DELEGATION

Christina Korsgaard Andersen Dissing, Head of Danish Delegation, Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Green Transition

Klaus Bertram Fries, Varde Municipality

Flemming Just, Wadden Sea National Park of Denmark

Carlo Sass Sørensen, Danish Ministry of Environment and Gender Equality, Danish Environmental Protection Agency and Coastal Authority

GERMAN DELEGATION

Ilka Wagner, Head of Delegation, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Vera Knoke, Head of Division Marine Protection and National Park, Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Energy Transition, Climate Protection, Environment and Nature

Janne Lieven, Director, Hamburg Wadden Sea National Park Authority, Hamburg Agency for Environment, Climate, Energy and Agriculture (BUKEA)

Alexandra Stück, Ministry for Environment, Energy and Climate Protection of Lower Saxony

DUTCH DELEGATION

Peter Paul Mertens, Head of Delegation, Acting Director of Fisheries and Large Waters, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature

Stefan van Keijzerswaard, Chair Vereniging van Waddenzeegemeenten (Gemeente Het Hogeland)

Mieke Langedijk, Rijkswaterstaat Noord Nederland

Anco Hoogerwerf (*On behalf of Leo Wenneger*), Provincie Groningen

ADVISORS

Marco Brodde, Wadden Sea Team, Danish Ornithological Society

Preben Friis-Hauge, Varde Kommune, KIMO

Hans-Ulrich Rösner, Wadden Sea Team, Wadden Sea Office, WWF Germany

Heleen van Wijk, Head of Sustainability and Corporate Circularity, Groningen Seaports

COMMON WADDEN SEA SECRETARIAT

Sascha Klöpper, Executive Secretary

Annika Bostelmann | Anja Domnik | Soledad Luna

SUPPORTING STAFF

Thomas Borchers, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

Carolin Galler, Lower Saxon Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Protection

Kasper Knak, Danish Ministry of Environment and Gender Equality, Danish Environmental Protection Agency and Coastal Authority

Heidi Nielsen, Agency for Green Transition and Aquatic Environment, Ministry of Green Transition

Margrita Sobottka, Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park Authority

Marina Sanns, Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park Authority

Stefanie Sudhaus, Marine Protection and National Park, Schleswig-Holstein Ministry of Energy Transition, Climate Protection, Environment and Nature

Alex van Westerlaak, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, Food Security and Nature

Annex 2: Adopted agenda of the 48th WSB

1. Opening of the Meeting
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Summary Record WSB 46 and 47
4. Announcements
6. Trilateral Governance (adjustment of agenda requested by Germany)
5. Implementation Wilhelmshaven Declaration
7. Wadden Sea Board Advisors
8. Any Other Business
9. Closing

Annex 3: Action items arising from the 48th WSB

Action #	Agenda item	Actions agreed upon	Person responsible	Deadline
I	3	Review the WSB 47 summary record under consideration of the changes submitted by the German delegation and formally adopt the document	Delegations	WSB 49
II	5.1	Feedback on ToRs proposal	Danish delegation	asap
III	5.2	Evaluation on brand platform implementation	CWSS	2028
IV	5.2	Nominate group for logo discussion	Focal points & CWSS	WSB 49
V	6.2	Send out invitations & save-the-dates to the TGC	Danish delegation	asap