

Wadden Sea should become a World Natural Heritage Site

Dutch-German nomination process successfully launched

The German and Dutch government have finished the nomination dossier for the Wadden Sea at UNESCO. Together with his colleague Gerda Verburg, Minister responsible for nature conservation for the Kingdom of The Netherlands, Minister Sigmar Gabriel is delighted that the joint nomination of the Wadden Sea as a World Natural Heritage Site has today been submitted on schedule to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris.

In spite of the discussions over recent weeks in Germany on the nomination of the German-Dutch Wadden Sea as an UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site and the withdrawal of Hamburg, the arguments in favour of the Wadden Sea carried conviction. Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein as well as the Federal governments of Germany and the Netherlands have decided to continue the Nomination process without Hamburg.

During two years of intensive work, a German-Dutch working group chaired by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU) drew up a comprehensive nomination dossier. The Common Wadden Sea Secretariat in Wilhelmshaven coordinated and accompanied the work. The nomination dossier documents the global importance of the Wadden Sea ecosystem and the unique character of the geomorphological and biological processes, as well as the biodiversity of the Wadden Sea. Both ministers continue to emphasise that the World Natural Heritage status has no further complications for the socio-economic activities in the Wadden Sea.

The nominated World Natural Heritage Site covers existing protected areas, in Germany the Lower Saxon Wadden Sea National Park and the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park; in the Netherlands it covers the area falling under the corresponding key planning decision (PKB).

The areas on the territory of Hamburg, which cover only about 1, 4 % of the Wadden Sea area, could be added to the nomination at a later date. Also for Denmark there is a possibility to add its Wadden Sea area in the project. Different from Hamburg, Denmark had made clear at an early stage that it does not join the nomination at this time, because first of all a Danish Wadden Sea National Park should be realised.

The nomination of the Wadden Sea as a future UNESCO World Heritage Site aims to raise regional and supra-regional awareness for the special features of the Wadden Sea. Existing protection efforts and the joint Wadden Sea cooperation would be awarded a particular distinction.

UNESCO and its advisory body IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) will now review the application. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee is expected to reach a decision on the Wadden Sea's inscription on the World Heritage List in

summer 2009.

Further Information:

- [Nomination dossier](#)

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