

Summary: Wadden Seaports Conference 2022

"Cooperation in partnership for the benefit of the Wadden Sea region"

...was the theme under which Dutch, Danish and German seaports and representatives from politics, government authorities, and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) came together for the **Wadden Seaports Conference** in Wilhelmshaven on the 28th November 2022. The Conference took place as a side event within the framework of the 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea (TGC) which was organized under the German leadership of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection.

After all the participants of the event were welcomed by a member of the Lodgehouse, where the Conference was held, **Dr Claudia Schilling**, the Senator for Science and Ports of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, addressed the audience and emphasised how important it is to share experience and to learn from each other. The good network of the Wadden Seaports and the exchange of Best-Practises were in focus of her speech. One Best-Practise of the Ports of Bremen and Bremerhaven was given by her: The Federal State of Bremen has drawn up regulations on its own initiative and published guidelines for the treatment of ship waste waters in the ports of Bremen and Bremerhaven.



The first half of the event kicked off with an introductory lecture by **Dr Jan Wedemeier** from the Hamburg Institute of International Economics entitled "What would the world be like without Ports?", which explained the important role of Ports as well as their functions and significance for the regional and national economy. It was also shown that Ports are aware of their responsibility and have been paving the way for sustainable Port development for many years, as well as launching ambitious strategies and measures. This is crucial to make the Ports future-proof and keep up their license to operate.

Furthermore, the Wadden Seaports Network that has existed since 2016 including the cooperation between the Wadden Seaports of the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany (Lower Saxony and Bremen) was presented by **Arjen Bosch**, who is a representative of the Dutch Ports. He gave an overview of the cooperation between the Wadden Seaports over the past years, the success of which is reflected for example in the signing of an Letter of Intent (LOI) between the Ports on 17th May 2018 at the second Trilateral Wadden Seaport Conference in Harlingen (Netherlands). The focus of the LOI "on trilateral maritime cooperation



to promote environmental efforts between the Dutch, German and Danish Wadden Sea-ports“ was to develop common strategies for a co-existence with nature, achieve closer cooperation and mutual learning, involve stakeholders, open up cooperation to all Wadden Seaports and to promote joint declarations, working groups as well as the exchange of Best-Practices. The latter then also described the further course of the Conference and five Theme Ambassadors presented Best-Practice examples from the individual Ports as follows:

1. **Jesper Jørgensen - Dredging**

At the Port of Esbjerg, dredging is carried out, pre-planned and subsequently evaluated with nature in mind. The dredging material obtained is handled conscientiously and so it is used for other projects in the port, left in the system as a fundamental part of the aquatic habitats or, even better, used to work with nature.



2. **Matthäus Wuczkowski - Light Emissions**

In the Lower Saxony Ports of NPorts, four principles for more sustainable lighting are implemented to reduce light emissions and the associated impact on nocturnal species, insects, migratory birds and CO₂-Emissions as well as to continuously ensure work and health safety. Lighting projects in Ports are always a balancing act between the expectations of the regulator and worker's associations and ecological arguments. Fact is: A Change of the national lighting norms will have a big potential to save energy and light emissions.



3. **Bart van der Kolk - Nature Conservation**

At Groningen Seaports, various measures and projects are taken and implemented to preserve nature, more precisely to strengthen the immune system of the Wadden Sea. Through projects such as the *Green deal Temporary nature 200 hectare* or the *Eems Dollard 2050*, as well as a general *code of conduct*, the stress factor on the Wadden Sea is to be reduced and invested in a better immune system.



4. **Arjen Bosch - Climate adaptation** In the course of climate adaptation, various projects are being carried out in the Ports of Delfzijl and Lauwersoog to be prepared for sea level rise and increasing wave power as well as the management of inland water and to ensure the availability of process water. In Harlingen, the diversion of the water outflow through sea locks is in the planning phase, and in Garmerwolde a water treatment plant is being cleaned of medicine residues.

5. Uwe von Bargaen - Ship Waste

With the BremSAEG (local ship waste law), bremenports is implementing the Directive (EU) 2019/883 and thus ensuring that ships declare their garbage quantities via the *Advanced Waste Notification*. Garbage disposal is mandatory and can only be waived on application if the storage capacity is sufficient until the next port or the ship is in liner service and can prove a disposal contract in another port. In addition, ships are inspected by the port authority and water police and undeclared waste is ordered to be landed. This is to reduce marine pollution from ships.



We can see that Ports are on the way to a more sustainable Port development and good approaches are on the table. Nevertheless, there is still a lot to do and under the question "How can ports and environmental organisations work together to make the energy transition a success?" a concrete topic was highlighted during a panel discussion. Part of the Panel were **Mathias Lüdicke (Niedersachsen Ports)** and **Jesper Bank (Ports of Esbjerg)** as port representatives and **Marco Glastra (Groninger Landschap)** and **Sönke Diesener (NABU e.V.)** as representatives from a NGO.



From the panel discussion we could take away that there are and probably always will be issues that are controversial between Ports and NGOs (e.g. deepening of fairways, sediment management, etc.). It is important to discuss these issues at an early stage in order to reconcile economic, ecological and social aspects and to find compromises and joint solutions that work for both parties. *We need good, open and transparent procedures.* Trust should not be taken for

granted and all parties involved need to work on it continuously. The representatives of the Ports emphasised that each port has its own function and specificity that must be taken into account. Ports are a reflection of society and are needed for the energy transition. The representatives of the NGOs stressed that better legislation is needed with regard to zero-emission shipping and that future issues must already be discussed. In addition, sufficient financial resources should be available to invest in the future of nature conservation and Port development.

As the second half of the event two workshops were held to discuss different perspectives and expectations, to explore a joint framework for action as well as to define common topics between ports and NGOs. In the first workshop entitled: ***"Which topics have the greatest common intersections for Ports and NGOs?"*** the participants identified the following issues, among others:

green shipping, lighting, clean/alternative fuels, energy transition, sediment management, digitalisation, shipping safety, nature development in port areas (holistic approach) and financing possibilities (EU/Federal funding, off-setting fund, etc.)

During the second workshop, the question ***"What does it need for a fruitful and trustful cooperation?"*** was asked. It can be noted that fewer concrete content-related topics were defined for the source of a successful cooperation between Ports and NGOs. It was much more about interpersonal aspects such as:

trust and respect, a joint vision of the future, true intentions, the change of perspectives, clear communication, the willingness to listen and learn, openness, passion, ambition, goals and or clear responsibilities.

In addition to these aspects, the early involvement of NGOs was also emphasised. Opportunities for personal exchange and the right contacts were seen as essential for a successful cooperation between Ports and NGOs.



In conclusion, we can say that the side event of the 14th TGC was a great success and we would like to thank all participants for their contribution to the Conference. Together with port representatives and NGOs from Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, we showed that environmental protection and the port industry can and must come together in a sustainable solution. The NGOs have become better acquainted with the Ports' perspective and possibilities for action, and the port representatives have gained a better impression of the NGOs' ideas and wishes, which has led to an improvement in mutual understanding. The Wadden Seaports Conference has therefore brought us a step closer to the goal of achieving a trusting dialogue and exploring the possibilities of long-term cooperation.

A first step was already taken with the signing of the Joint Document “Sustainable shipping and ports initiative for a well-protected Wadden Sea” (SustSPI) on 29th November.



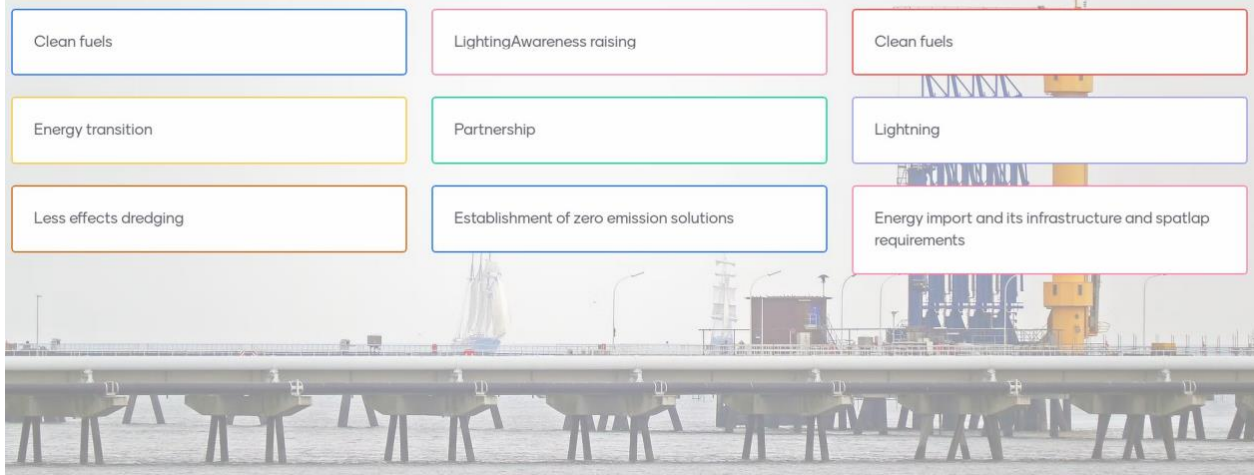
Source of Images: Andreas Burmann

What does it need for a fruitful and trustful cooperation?

 Mentimeter

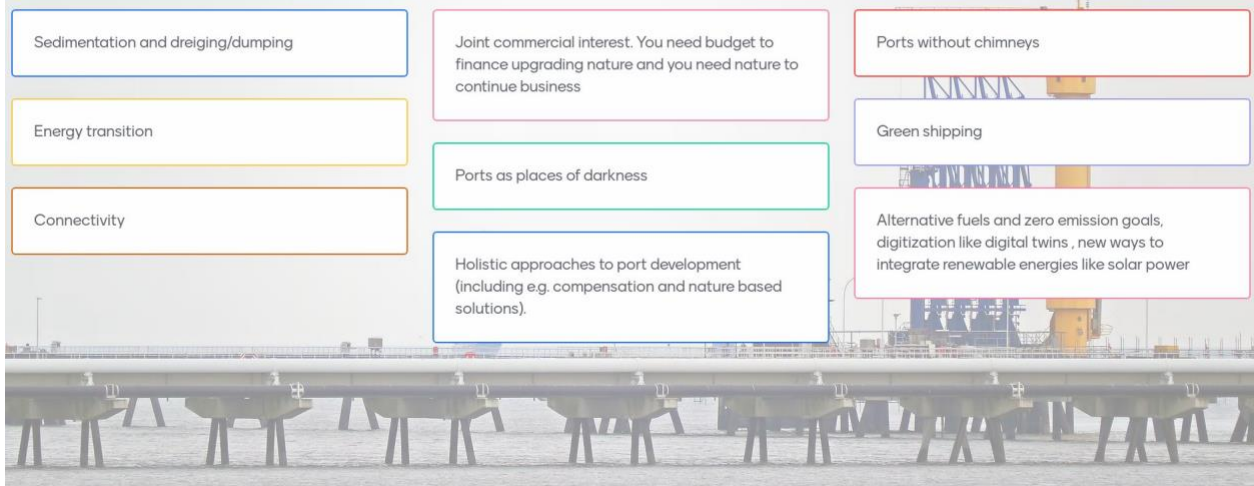
Which topics have the greatest common intersections for a good cooperation between ports/shipping and NGOs?

Mentimeter



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Mentimeter



Which topics have the greatest common intersections for a good cooperation between ports/shipping and NGOs?

Mentimeter

Management of sediments

State of the nature (Natura 2000)

Ports in the waddensea as energy hubs

Replacing fossil fuels where possible

Naturedevelopment in the port area

Reduce the ecological impact of dredging

Regulation

Dark Sky

Emmisions

Which topics have the greatest common intersections for a good cooperation between ports/shipping and NGOs?

Mentimeter

Lightning

EU/Federal Funding

Shipping safety

Reduce the impact of dredging

An off-setting fund for port development