

Netherlands to host International Wadden Sea Conference

On 17 and 18 May 2018 the Netherlands will be hosting the 13th Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Conference. Delegations from the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark will meet in Leeuwarden to discuss the protection of the Wadden Sea Region. Presiding over the conference will be Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality Carola Schouten. The German delegation will be led by Minister of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety Svenja Schulze, the Danish by Minister for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Esben Lunde Larsen. After four years of chairing the Wadden Sea Conference, the Netherlands will this year be passing the baton to Germany on 18 May.

The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark have been pursuing successful joint efforts to safeguard the Wadden Sea Region for over forty years. Now inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the international Wadden Sea is a specific, characteristic and integral ecosystem that is home to countless fish species and other marine life, and a stopover for 12 million migratory birds. Issues on this year's conference agenda include birds (migration and nesting sites), marine plastic and ecological recovery. These topics and shared ambitions for the future will be summarised in the Leeuwarden Convention.

In addition to the German and Danish delegations, representatives from Mauritius and South Korea will also be attending the conference. These countries have similar wetland areas – the Parc National Banq d'Arguin in Mauritius and Getbol in South Korea – and work with the Netherlands on issues such as bird migration, sharing knowledge and fostering education. Getbol is currently on the World Heritage nominations list.

Programme for Thursday 17 May:

- 17.00 – 17.30 Reception at the Friesland provincial government building, Tweebaksmarkt 52, 8911 KZ Leeuwarden
- 17.45 – 18.30 Delegation meeting at De Harmonie (civic theatre), Ruiterskwartier 4, 8911 BP Leeuwarden

Programme for Friday 18 May at De Harmonie:

- 09.00 – 11.00 Trilateral Wadden Sea Governmental Conference
- 11.00 – 11.30 Wadden Market
- 11.30 – 12.30 Ministerial meeting (closed)
- 12.30 – 13.00 Lunch
- 13.00 – 13.45 Signing of Leeuwarden Convention
- 13.45 – 14.00 Press briefing

Sailing trip for journalists

During the Wadden Sea Conference, the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality will organise a short sailing trip on the Wadden Sea for members of the press. Interested journalists may register by sending an email to Rael Koole, r.koole@minez.nl. Please note that places are limited. The registration deadline is 8 May 2018.

Programme for Press Excursion on Thursday 17 May:

- 17.30 – 18.15 Bus transfer to Harlingen harbour
- 18.15 – 18.30 Board ship
- 18.30 – 20.30 Sailing trip on the Wadden Sea (sandwiches will be provided)
- 20.30 – 21.30 Return by bus to Leeuwarden

Journalists are responsible for arranging their own accommodation.