



The German Ambassador of The Netherlands
His Excellency Cyril Jean Nunn
Groot Hertoginnelaan 18-20
2517 EG 's Gravenhage

The Dutch Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany,
His Excellency Ronald van Roeden
Klosterstraße 50
10179 Berlin
Germany

Datum: Harlingen, June 22, 2022

Kenmerk: LJ/FP/22035

Dear Excellencies,

May we bring an issue to your attention which is close to the hearts and minds of many citizens and organizations in both Germany and The Netherlands?

Both the German and Dutch governments strive to reach the European and national goals in reducing CO2 emissions to the point of climate neutrality. Our countries both aim to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels and increase the amount of green electricity produced in wind farms on the North Sea. Off shore wind farms need to be connected to the on-shore grid.

This is where energy transition collides with the national obligation of both countries to preserve and protect natural values of the Wadden Sea as an UNESCO World Heritage, Natura 2000 area and National Park. The Dutch government intends to connect new off shore wind parks to the on-shore grid at Eemshaven. This means that more than one cable will be needed for a sustainable and reliable connection. To this end the Dutch government launched a preferred route for such a cable in 2021 which met near to unanimous resistance from local and regional authorities and other stakeholders like farmers as well as environmental NGO's.



Recognizing this as well as recognizing the need to connect more and more off shore wind farms in the (near) future the Dutch government withdrew its preferred route of 2021 and has recently started the preparations for making an inventory, short list and in the end best choice for a new route for this necessary cable-connection.

In the course of 2021 as well as from the very start of the recently started new preparations regional and local authorities as well as NGO's have had a clear preference for a route which avoids crossing the most sensitive areas of World Heritage Wadden Sea and thus takes natural values more in account.

This appeared to be the case in choosing a route that follows the existing shipping lane from North Sea to Eemshaven. From experience in connecting off shore wind farms to the on shore grid at another location in The Netherlands (Borssele) we know that it is both technically as well as logistically possible to choose a route that follows or crosses an busy international shipping lane used by two countries.

However, the German-Dutch Ems estuary is a special area at the border of our two countries. Not only is it a unique estuary connecting the Wadden Sea with the free flowing Ems, it can also be considered as a bit of a diplomatic 'Bermuda triangle' in the close relationship between our two countries.

In this light we recognize the Ems Treaty of 1978 which aimed to regulate the pivotal role of maritime traffic in connecting national harbors to the international open water. At the same time we recognize that the pivotal role of national harbors in connecting off shore wind farms in open water is in 2022 a clear joint interest of our countries for a quick and smooth energy transition. This particular joint interest of our countries was not foreseen in 1978 but is at the very heart of the public and political decisions in our times related to energy transition in and close relation? to the Wadden Sea.

We are convinced that a cable-corridor may very well follow an existing shipping lane as this is the best possible way to ensure that damage to the Outstanding Universal Values within the most sensitive areas of the Wadden Sea World Heritage can be avoided. However, at this moment existing international treaties, national laws and regulations appear to make it difficult to realize this preferred option.

Recognizing the preference of many organizations within both Germany and The Netherlands for a more modern multiple use of an existing shipping lane we would like to ask your expertise and good offices in helping us find a solution that will recognize the need for reliable connections between off shore wind farms and the national grid which at the same time avoids crossing the most sensible natural areas within Wadden Sea World Heritage.



We are willing and able to provide more information and background to our joint effort in seeking to protect and preserve the Dutch and German Wadden Sea in relation to both the energy transitions as well as this particular issue. In this respect we would like to also draw your attention to the recent UNESCO advice which highlights the accumulating use of the Wadden Sea by threats, like international mining companies seeking to extract more and more fossil oil and fossil gas from underneath the Wadden Sea. ¹

Needless to say we recognize that a joint reaction by two Ambassadors to the issues we raise in this letter might not be a matter of days. However, we would really appreciate a response prior to June 30 recognizing the attention that this issue is likely to get by your national delegations in their preparations for the upcoming 14th Trilateral Governmental Conference on the Protection of the Wadden Sea in Wilhelmshaven from 20 November to 1 December 2022.

With high regards,

Lutz Jacobi, director Waddenvereniging

also on behalf of:

Kirsten Schuijt, CEO Wereld Natuur Fonds Nederland

Christoph Heinrich, CEO, WWF Deutschland

Teo Wams, Director Nature Conservation, Vereniging Natuurmonumenten Nederland

Dr. Holger Buschmann, CEO NABU Germany, section Lower Saxony

Susanne Gerstner, CEO BUND Germany, section Lower Saxony

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European Commissioner for Climate Change, mr. Frans Timmermans

¹ This advice was recently sent to the Dutch Parliament and can be found at:
https://www.tweedekamer.nl/kamerstukken/brieven_regering/detail?id=2022Z10101&did=2022D20584