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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Culture Sector
Division for Heritage

H. E. Mr Klavs Arnoldi Holm
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of
Denmark to OECD
Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom
of Denmark to UNESCO
UNESCO House

Ref.: CLT/HER/WHC/EUR/18/10611

3 April 2018

Subject: **State of conservation of the transboundary World Heritage property "Wadden Sea"**

Dear Ambassador,

I wish to inform you that the World Heritage Centre and IUCN have received third party information concerning the planned extension of a harbour nearby the World Heritage property "Wadden Sea".

We are enclosing this information (see Annex I) in accordance with Paragraph 174 of the *Operational Guidelines* to enable us to verify, with your authorities concerned, the content of the information that we received. Furthermore, IUCN has already provided comments and recommendations concerning the information received (see Annex II).

I would be thankful if your authorities could provide the World Heritage Centre with further clarifications regarding the information provided, such as a map of the planned construction and the impact the construction may have on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property.

Thanking you for your continuous collaboration and support in the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Mechtild Rössler
Director
World Heritage Centre

Enc.

cc.

Permanent Delegation of Germany to UNESCO
Permanent Delegation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to UNESCO
Danish National Commission for UNESCO
German Commission for UNESCO
Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO
National Focal Point for World Heritage
IUCN

Annex I

Information received by the World Heritage Centre on 19 March 2018 concerning the planned construction of a harbour nearby the transboundary World Heritage property “Wadden Sea”.



Fanø Kommune
Mayor's Office

de maa, #176, A



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UNESCO
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Dato: 16-03-2018
Sagsnr.: 563-2017-4967
Doknr.: 563-2018-11053
Sagsbeh.: Joan Pofler
Direkte tlf.: +45 76 660 653
Email: gp@fanoe.dk

Dear member of the committee,

As the mayor of the municipality of Fanø in Denmark, I address UNESCO with great concern for a natural property inscribed as part of the UNESCO World Heritage List; the Wadden Sea.

The criteria for the position on the World Heritage List stated by UNESCO include the following quotes: "The Wadden Sea includes some of the last remaining natural large-scale intertidal ecosystems where natural processes continue to function largely undisturbed. [...] The salt marshes host around 2,300 species of flora and fauna, and the marine and brackish areas a further 2,700 species, and 30 species of breeding birds [...making it] the essential stopover that enables the functioning of the East Atlantic and African-Eurasian migratory flyways. Biodiversity on a worldwide scale is reliant on the Wadden Sea." My colleagues in the City Counsel and I are concerned this might all be threatened because of a planned development of a nearby harbour.

Fanø is a small island situated in the Danish part of the Wadden Sea, and we take pride in the conservation and protection of this unique habitat surrounding us.

In spite of all obligations toward the national treasure, to UNESCO and to international partners to protect and maintain the unique value of the Wadden Sea, lately there are indications that other authorities in Denmark are not complying with these obligations.

Research experts have lately been targeting the Danish government with criticism concerning their lack of engagement and attention to the protection of the valuable assets on the Danish West Coast. For instance, the neighbouring countries in the Wadden Sea requested Denmark in 2009 to start monitoring the development of fish stocks in the Wadden Sea, like the other countries do. A task Denmark is still not engaging in.

The City Counsel of Fanø follows this development closely. But the reason I address the committee directly, is because of a more specific and current threat concerning a very large expansion of the harbour in the City of Esbjerg, a coastal city on the mainland just across from Fanø. The new expansion includes the construction of a peninsula in extension of the existing harbour and an artificial island, decreasing a narrow and therefore essential strait between the mainland and Fanø with about 40 percent (The extension is illustrated in figure 1 below).

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Mandag-fredag 10-12
Torsdag tillige 15-17

Telefontider
Mandag-onsdag 9-15
Torsdag 9-17
Fredag 9-12

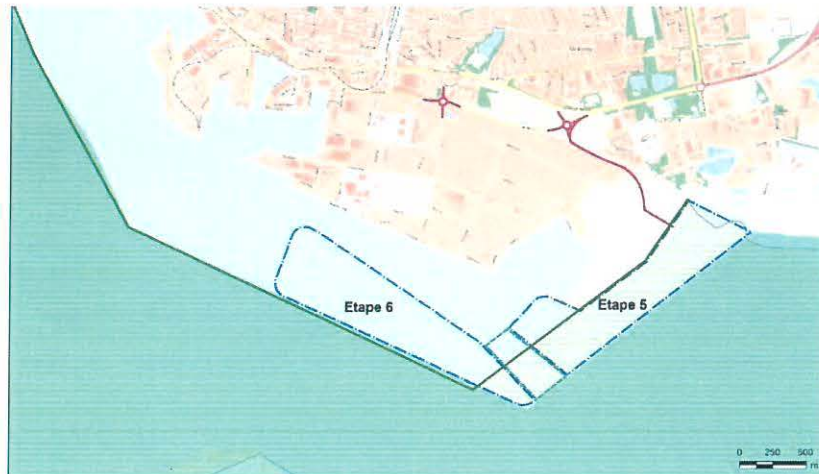


Figure 1

The extension is planned in two phases. Phase one includes establishing a peninsula of 555.000m² in extension of the existing harbour (shown in figure 1 as "etape 5"). The main part of the land where the expansion is planned to be built consists of the characteristic Wadden Sea mudflats that are dry on low tide and flooded on high tide. Phase two includes establishing an artificial island of 495.000m² (shown in figure 1 as "etape 6") in the Wadden Sea off shore of the harbour where the water depth varies between 1 - 5,5 metres.

The expansion of the harbour extends into an area which is subjected to comprehensive national protection, and borders Natura2000 designated habitat. The comprehensive alterations will inevitably influence this natural environment and the ecosystems of the vulnerable Wadden Sea.

The time schedule of the harbour expansion process is tight:

- Initial public phase, including public hearings, political processing and possible adjustments of the project: November 2017 – June 2018
- Assessment of implications in relation to Natura2000 and national nature protection: May – September 2018
- Environmental impact assessment process (EIA): May 2018 – January 2019
- Final public phase, including public hearings, final political processing and decisions, EIA permission and limit of objection period: February – December 2019

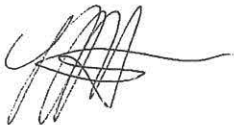
Simultaneously with the harbour's project process The Municipality of Esbjerg has applied the National Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for an adjustment of the Natura2000 designated habitat expanding the harbour area at the expense of Natura2000. The suggested adjustment will improve conditions for traffic with ships. It will also clear the way for the planned extension of the harbour and possibly an even further extension of the harbour south of "etape 6." The consequences being substantial industrial activities in the protected Wadden Sea. According to the time schedule the EPA expects to finish the processing of applications by April 2018 after which the Parliament and the EU have to approve of the new Natura2000 habitat borders before the end of 2018.

On Fanø we fully recognize the need for industrial development in Esbjerg, but we are very concerned for the consequences in the Wadden Sea. Referring to the commitment and obligation that has been made toward the institution of UNESCO to maintain and protect the Wadden Sea and avoid any impacts to the values and integrity of the habitat, I therefore encourage you to address the Danish authorities immediately to emphasize the obligation made toward UNESCO. I furthermore recommend, that you consider whether this comprehensive harbour extension compromises the future status as UNESCO world heritage for the Danish part of the Wadden Sea.

I hope you recognize our concern for the development and are willing help the Wadden Sea by making further inquiries of the situation and the current management of this northern part of the Wadden Sea.

I am happy to make myself available for any questions you might have.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sofie Valbjørn', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sofie Valbjørn
Mayor of the Municipality of Fanø, Denmark

Annex II

IUCN comments concerning the information received on 19 March 2018 on the extension of a harbour nearby the transboundary World Heritage property “Wadden Sea”:

“IUCN received the attached letter from the Mayor of Fanø in Denmark, concerning a proposed expansion of the port at Esbjerg, which is immediately adjacent to the property boundaries.

Following review of the letter, IUCN would like to recommend that the World Heritage Centre request comments from the State Party of Denmark regarding the proposed development. Considering the proximity of the development to the property and the potential short and long-term impacts of a port expansion on the property, IUCN recommends that the World Heritage Centre request the State Party to undertake an EIA with a specific chapter on OUV in line with IUCN’s World Heritage Advice Note on Environmental Assessment. Furthermore, IUCN wishes to recommend that the EIA is submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review by IUCN before any decisions are taken.”