

**Speech drs. Ferd J. M. Crone, Mayor of Leeuwarden during the symposium
'Towards a trilateral research agenda' on 8 December 2010.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Precisely two years ago in this conference room, I had the honour of welcoming the Wadden Academy to their first symposium in Leeuwarden.

I was most pleased and rather curious to learn about what the academy entailed and what their ideas were.

The Wadden Academy was our “new kid on the block”.

Now, two years later, the kid has grown up and has been welcomed by everyone.

The Academy has established a broad network and support base within the Dutch and Frisian academic community as well as with the local and regional government.

Since the Wadden Sea spans three countries, I especially welcome cooperation with the German and Danish research institutions attending this symposium.

During its two years of existence, the Wadden Academy has produced a great number of publications, workshops and informative meetings relating to their broad field of study.

My primary conclusion is that the Wadden Academy does what it says and assists the Wadden Region in becoming an area for scientific research in the fields of geology, ecology, economics and climate research.

In particular, they have made significant contributions to our shared goals of seeking sustainable energy solutions!

This international and interdisciplinary symposium crosses borders between countries and disciplines.

You are presented with a very special opportunity for geoscientists, ecologists, historians, economists and climate researchers from different countries to gather together and to dialogue.

I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this special opportunity to explore cooperation for further research.

It is not my task to say WHAT you should do, nor to say HOW.

As Mayor of the city I can only invite you to make the most of this unique opportunity, to examine our common Wadden Region, and to determine what can be improved.

Leeuwarden is a gateway to the Wadden Sea Region.

The Wadden Area and Leeuwarden need a sound research agenda to coordinate ecological, geological and climate research with the social economic and historical research for our mutual benefit.

And with OUR, I mean the residents, the tourists and other visitors.

The uniqueness of our Wadden Area has brought it to Unesco World Heritage status. Unesco World Heritage status is good, and helps attracting tourists when distributing tourism brochures.

But it is even better when the World Heritage status protects the area's nature and beautiful landscape.

We must strive for the BEST for the Wadden Area – monitoring and formulating innovative concepts for a state-of-the-art ecology and sustainable economies.

We need all of you researchers to accomplish such a great task.

As stated in the Unesco-paper delivered on 4 December 2009 in Hamburg, we need a new boost of scientific cooperation and a shared infrastructure for science and monitoring.

I underlined the needs for a broad approach in themes and international aspects.

In closing, you are most welcome to our historic city of Leeuwarden.

May it lead towards establishing a strong, secure and innovating trilateral research agenda.

Thank you.