

## Press release

Portugal, 13 December 2016

### Sailors for Sustainability six months into their search for sustainable solutions

Dutchmen Floris van Hees (38) and Ivar Smits (42) are Sailors for Sustainability. On 13 June 2016 they left Amsterdam aboard their classic sailing ship Lucipara<sup>2</sup> for a journey around the world in search of solutions to sustainability problems. They focus their search on various aspects that concern modern society and our planet, including transportation, energy, food, housing and ecosystems.

Their mission: to demonstrate that a sustainable future is possible. Positive examples from around the world are meant to inspire as many people as possible. When the solutions are applied on a large scale, they will accelerate the transition to a sustainable society.

#### German and Scandinavian inspiration

Six months after their departure van Hees and Smits have arrived in Portugal. They did not follow the usual route through the English Channel, but sailed north first. "We knew that great examples of sustainable solutions could be found in Northern Europe, so we decided to start our trip there", explains skipper Smits. "Only after spending the summer there we followed the geese south."

The detour did not disappoint. In Germany they visited Europe's largest Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm, where the farmer delivers directly to consumers. The sale of the organic harvest is guaranteed, providing the farmer with a steady source of income. In Copenhagen they saw the measures undertaken by the city to be CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral by 2025, including the construction of pedestrian and bicycle bridges, expansion of the metro network and the construction of wind turbines and a biomass power plant.

They also went to the Danish island of Samsø, which is completely self-sufficient with renewable energy. The residents are closely involved in the energy revolution on the island and co-own the wind turbines and biomass heating plants. The Norwegians are world champions in hydropower and electric transport. Across the largest fjord sails the Ampere, the world's first fully electric car ferry. Smits and van Hees sailed on it with a borrowed Tesla. Quite appropriate, as one in four new cars sold in Norway is electric.

#### Southbound

The discoveries did not end there. The Sailors for Sustainability also found inspiring examples in the United Kingdom and Spain. Scotland is a hotspot for the development of marine energy. Underwater installations generate renewable energy from waves or strong tidal currents. In Spain they visited the Mondragón company, a successful example of a large-scale cooperative. Employees are joint owners of the company they work for and have a say in policy and the remuneration structure. Honest work, job security and democracy in the workplace are central.

Co-skipper van Hees: "It is very inspiring to see how many sustainable solutions already work in practice and how enthusiastic people are about them. It is as if we are gathering pieces of a large sustainability-jigsaw puzzle. If the pieces are put together, a sustainable future becomes visible."

### **Publicity to inspire people**

The Sailors for Sustainability are blogging and vlogging about the solutions. They do this on their own website and social media in English, and through internal and external communication channels of corporate and media partners also in Dutch. This way, the Sailors hope to reach and inspire as many people as possible. Furthermore, sponsor contributions from partners help to fund the largely self-financed journey.

Smits summarizes their media objectives: "We would like to maximize our audience, so we can generate attention for sustainable solutions that not only work, but also need to be implemented elsewhere, urgently." They are open to more partnerships to achieve their goal.

### **Many years on the high seas**

Over the past six months the Sailors have collected fifteen sustainable solutions. Yet their journey has only just begun. Next year they will look for sustainable solutions in different countries around the Mediterranean, whereas in early 2018 the crossing to South America is scheduled. The route then takes them to the Pacific, New Zealand, Australia and Asia. The whole world trip is expected to take several years.

### **Following and partnering**

More information about their trip, the sustainable solutions and possibilities to partner with the Sailors for Sustainability can be found on their website <http://sailorsforsustainability.nl>. The sailors can also be found on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

(Click on the pictures for the high resolution version)

	 Floris van Hees (l.) and Ivar Smits (r.) on Lucipara <sup>2</sup>	 Floris van Hees (l.) at Germany's first packaging-free grocery store	 Renewable district heating plant on Samsø (DNK)
 New pedestrian and cycling bridge in Copenhagen (DNK)	 Ivar Smits (l.) and Floris van Hees (r.) in Norway	 Ivar Smits with a Tesla on electric car ferry Ampere (NOR)	 Ivar Smits steers Lucipara <sup>2</sup> out of Bergen's harbour (NOR)
 Lucipara <sup>2</sup>	 Ivar Smits on Lucipara <sup>2</sup> next to the replica of Kon-Tiki in Larvik (NOR)	 Lucipara <sup>2</sup> in the Lysefjord (NOR)	 Lucipara <sup>2</sup> in the Lysefjord (NOR)
 Permaculture is explained to Ivar Smits (r.) in Sweden	 Lucipara <sup>2</sup>	 Floris van Hees (r.) with "Earth Lawyer" Polly Higgins	 Dolphins next to the boat in the Bay of Biscay
 Ivar Smits at a tidal energy turbine in Orkney (Scotland)	 Lucipara <sup>2</sup> approaches Spain	 Ivar Smits (l.) and Floris van Hees (m.) at the Mondragón group (ESP)	 Sustainable homes in "ecovillage" Findhorn (Scotland)