



CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES

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EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Nairobi, 20-25 November 2005
Agenda items 14 (b)

REVIEW OF ARTICLE IV AGREEMENTS ALREADY CONCLUDED

1. The Secretariat is circulating herewith, for the information of participants in the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species, the report provided by the Secretariat of the Agreement on the Conservation of **Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)**, to accompany document UNEP/CMS/Conf.8.10.
2. The report is provided unedited in the format and language that it was submitted.

EXAMEN DES ACCORDS DE L'ARTICLE IV DEJA CONCLUS

1. Le Secrétariat diffuse ci-joint, pour l'information des participants à la 8ème session de la Conférence des Parties à la Convention sur les espèces migratrices, le rapport développé fourni par le Secrétariat de l'Accord sur la conservation des petits cétacés de la mer Baltique et de la mer du Nord (ASCOBANS) pour accompagner le document UNEP/CMS/Conf. 8.10.
2. Le rapport est fourni sans avoir été mis au point, dans le format et la langue dans lesquels il a été soumis.

REVISIÓN DE ACUERDOS ARTÍCULO IV YA CONCLUIDOS

1. La Secretaría adjunta, para información de los participantes a la Octava Conferencia de las Partes de la Convención sobre Especies Migratorias, el informe completo presentado por la Secretaría del Acuerdo sobre la conservación de los pequeños cetáceos del Mar Báltico y el Mar del Norte (ASCOBANS), en complemento en el documento UNEP/CMS/Conf. 8.10.
2. El informe se presenta sin modificaciones editoriales, bajo la forma y en el idioma originales.

Report by the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas (ASCOBANS)

In the past year, ASCOBANS has made considerable progress in implementing the work plan adopted by MOP 4, held in Esbjerg, Denmark, in August 2004.

A workshop on the projected recovery plan for North Sea harbour porpoises took place in Hamburg, Germany in December 2004. The workshop was open to scientists, administrators, environmental groups, fishermen and other stakeholders and discussed the further development of the recovery plan. A first draft of this plan was presented to the 11th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC 11), Jastrzębia Góra, Poland, April 2004. The workshop led to a further draft which was discussed by AC 12.

In March 2005, the ASCOBANS Jastarnia Group met for the first time in Bonn, Germany. The meeting was organized by the ASCOBANS Secretariat and hosted by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. The Jastarnia Group was established to progress the Agreement's Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan). At its very successful first meeting, the Group took stock of progress achieved in implementing the Plan and made numerous recommendations for the future. Most of these recommendations were endorsed by the 12th Meeting of the AC.

ASCOBANS has continuously been involved in the preparations for SCANS-II. On 11 April 2005, the Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) of the University of St Andrews in cooperation with the ASCOBANS Secretariat organized a SCANS-II workshop on European cetacean monitoring and management in Brest, France. The workshop provided an opportunity for managers to contribute to the achievement of the monitoring and management objectives of SCANS-II and aimed at making related recommendations.

AC 12 was held in Brest, France from 12 – 14 April 2005. It addressed a wide range of issues related to the Agreement's triennium workplan. Among the topics it dealt with were the implementation of the Jastarnia Plan, in particular in light of the outcome of the first Jastarnia Group meeting, the North Sea Recovery Plan, progress on SCANS-II and the implications of the extension of the Agreement. Also on the occasion of AC 12, the ASCOBANS award, a biennial award to be presented to an individual or institution in recognition of the best cetacean conservation-related PR/educational initiative, was presented for the first time. The jury unanimously decided in favour of the University of Gdańsk's Hel Marine Station, in recognition of their relentless and very successful efforts to promote awareness of the situation of harbour porpoises in the Baltic Sea.

In addition to bycatch, ASCOBANS continues to address other threats facing cetaceans in the Agreement Area, including acoustic disturbance and marine pollution. In close cooperation with other international organizations, ASCOBANS is working to reduce the level of hazardous substances in the marine environment. The Agreement Secretariat continues to monitor information on high-speed ferries, which may have adverse effects on whales and dolphins. Annual compilations of information submitted by ASCOBANS Parties concerning high-speed ferries are produced by the Secretariat.

As always, ASCOBANS makes its contribution to much needed research on cetaceans in the Agreement area. A number of research activities are being undertaken within the framework of, in cooperation with or with the support of ASCOBANS. ASCOBANS also continues to build, maintain and enhance links with other relevant international organizations.

The Agreement currently has nine Parties, following the accession of Lithuania on 27 July 2005. The accession of France is expected shortly.