

30th MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Bonn, Germany, 1–3 September 2026
Agenda Item 9

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

1. This report has been developed in response to Work Plan Activity 49 ([Resolution 10.2/Rev.1 ASCOBANS Work Plan 2025-2028](#)), which requests the Secretariat to report on communication and outreach matters at each meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Public events

2. The 23rd International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) took place on 17 May 2026. The IDBHP aims to promote public support through institutions staging various events and exhibitions around the Baltic Sea. Earlier in May, the Secretariat sent an email to the ASCOBANS mailing list about the event and encouraging to inform the Secretariat about organized events. One notification was received, from Maritime Consulting in Finland. Support by Parties is encouraged to ensure that the IDBHP is observed by at least one notable institution in every country around the Baltic Sea in future years.
3. The Secretariat also promoted IDBHP on its social media channels and [website](#). Social media posts were created by Coalition Clean Baltic, Dom Morświna¹, Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine e.V. (GRD)², Environmental Investigation Agency UK, HELCOM, Kullaberg Nature Reserve (Sweden), Lithuanian Maritime Museum, OceanCare International, Swedish Museum of Natural History, and WDC Deutschland.

Meetings and conferences

4. The Secretariat attended ACCOBAMS MOP9 in November 2025 in Limassol, Portugal; 8th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council in December 2025 in Bonn, Germany; CMS COP15 in March 2026 Campo Grande, Brazil; and the 9th Meeting of the OSPAR-NEAFC Collective Arrangement Meeting in May 2026 in London, UK. These are reported on in [ASCOBANS/AC30/Inf.8.1](#).
5. In April 2026, the Secretariat attended the 37th European Cetacean Society Conference in Dundee, Scotland, UK, and co-organised two workshops, which are reported on under agenda item 4.4:
 - a) [Towards Meaningful Conservation Action for Risso's Dolphins in the North Atlantic](#), and
 - b) [Building Knowledge, Building Action: Atlantic White-sided and White-beaked Dolphins](#).
6. In addition, the Secretariat attended a number of meetings online, such as the 17th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee in February 2026, EU Marine Expert Group Meeting (May 2026), and IWC Joint Conservation Committee and Scientific Committee Working Group meeting in May 2026. Online presentations about ASCOBANS were given at conference *Marine Mammal and Bird Bycatch in the Baltic Sea – Turning Knowledge into Action* in

¹ Porpoise House. Dom Morświna is part of the Professor Krzysztof Skóra Marine Station belonging to the Institute of Oceanography at the University of Gdańsk.

² Society for the Rescue of Dolphins.

November 2025, and at the webinar on *Protecting Small Cetaceans – Results from the ASCOBANS Workshops on MPA management* in December 2025.

Electronic media

Website

7. The new ASCOBANS website was launched 4 December 2025. This major technological upgrade after over a decade focused on creating a secure, practical, modern, and visually appealing platform that meets the needs of diverse stakeholders. Key improvements included:
 - a) A stronger emphasis on visual communication, with redesigned homepages, meeting pages, and news sections to enhance user engagement.
 - b) Improved interface for meeting pages and enhanced functionalities in document access and use.
 - c) Full mobile responsiveness, ensuring 100% compatibility across devices.
 - d) Ability to schedule content posting, supporting timely updates.
 - e) Enhanced search and filtering capabilities for easier access to information.
 - f) A streamlined navigation structure, improving overall user experience.
 - g) Higher interoperability with external platforms, including the rest of the CMS Family websites and InforMEA.
8. As part of a joint project and cost-sharing arrangement across the CMS Family, this major upgrade (including a modern interface, data migration, and backend architecture) resulted in substantial cost savings for ASCOBANS.
9. Parts of the upgrade are still ongoing, particularly regarding content curation and navigation, resulting in certain inconsistencies. These issues are being worked on by the Joint CMS/AEWA Information Management, Communication and Awareness-Raising Unit (IMCA), as capacity allows.

Social media

10. On its [Facebook page](#), ASCOBANS has 1,490 followers. The top three posts with most views in 2025 were about the 29th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. In 2026 to date, the posts with most views were about the 7th Meeting of the Common Dolphin Group, the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise, and the ECS-ASCOBANS workshop on Risso's dolphins.
11. The [ASCOBANS BlueSky page](#) was launched in March 2025. There are less than 100 followers on the page, and so the Advisory Committee, NGOs and other stakeholders are encouraged to follow the account. To date, the posts with most engagement were about CMS COP15, IDBHP, and the World Environment Day 2026.
12. The [ASCOBANS LinkedIn page](#) has been established, but it needs further work and an official launch. LinkedIn could be the most appropriate social media avenue for ASCOBANS in the future. For example, the following of the CMS LinkedIn account increased by 800% in two years, and is congregating a thriving community of professionals around conservation issues.

Season's Greetings -card

13. The 2025 Season's Greetings card competition was jointly organized by Coalition Clean Baltic and OceanCare International. The winning entry was posted on the [ASCOBANS website](#) and social media pages.
14. This year, Parties and stakeholders are again invited to consider coordinating the 2026 Season's Greetings card competition. The Secretariat invites expressions of interest to be made at AC30, or to be sent via email by 1 November 2026.

Information materials

15. As in the past, the Secretariat continues to distribute information material upon request. The material – such as brochures, postcards, leaflets – can be used throughout the Agreement Area during ASCOBANS events and those by other institutions. Most of these can be found in pdf-version on the ASCOBANS [website](#). The Secretariat did not receive any requests for materials during this reporting period.
16. Activity 43 in the ASCOBANS Work Plan 2025-2028 requests the Advisory Committee, including relevant working groups, to “assess the need for information material on conservation issues facing small cetaceans in the ASCOBANS Area, and develop material as necessary”. The Secretariat welcomes suggestions.

Action requested:

17. The Advisory Committee is requested to:
 - a) take note of this report and provide any advice; and
 - b) consider coordinating the 2026 Season’s Greetings -card competition.