

Agenda Item 7

Relations with other Bodies

Document 7-01

**Reports of Representation of
ASCOBANS at Meetings**

Action Requested

- Take note of the reports
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



NOTE:
IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR
OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING

Secretariat's Note

This document contains reports on all meetings at which ASCOBANS was represented by members of the Advisory Committee or the Secretariat. A list of meetings for which representation was requested by AC17 is contained in the Report of the 17th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee, Annex 13.

Reports of Representation of ASCOBANS at Meetings

20-24 September 2010

IWC/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Ship Strikes

Attendance on behalf of CMS & ASCOBANS: Heidrun Frisch

The terms of reference for this workshop were to:

- exchange, evaluate and analyse data on temporal and geographical distribution of cetaceans, shipping and reported collision incidents, with a view to: identifying priorities for mitigation in terms of species, populations and areas; and identifying ways to improve data collection and assignment of cause of death;
- examine and evaluate existing mitigation approaches/regulations, identify and assess the likely efficacy of potential new ones and make recommendations for further work, including identifying mitigation measures for priority populations/areas as appropriate and methods to examine efficacy;
- develop scientific and conservation recommendations and a two-year work plan for consideration by the IWC, ACCOBAMS, IMO and others.

Over three and a half days, the workshop, which was attended by high profile experts on the subject, considered the state of knowledge on ship strikes and possible mitigation measures.

The workshop focused on two priority areas: the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands. The Canary Islands are included in the area of the Western African Aquatic Mammals MoU. Ship strikes are thought to be the most significant threat to a number of populations in this area. Many of the recommendations are specific to the situation found in these areas, but a number of useful lessons can be derived also for other regions in which CMS is active.

The official report of the workshop has been tabled as AC18/Doc.5-08.

21-23 & 27-28 September 2010

2010 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation

The Secretary General invited to the annual treaty event of the United Nations "2010 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation", which was held in the Treaty Signing area in the General Assembly Building in New York. The event coincided with the General Debate of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly, which opened on Tuesday, 21 September 2010.

This occasion provides a distinct opportunity for States to demonstrate their continuing commitment to the central role of the rule of law at the international and national levels. Heads of State and Governments were invited to make use of the event by signing and depositing instruments of ratification, acceptance or accession to those treaties deposited with the Secretary General to which the country was not party already.

In 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, the Secretary General highlighted this theme. A list of highlighted treaties was attached to the invitation, which included ASCOBANS.

The Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs will be publishing a booklet entitled *2010 Treaty Event: Towards Universal Participation and Implementation*, summarizing the objectives and key provisions of these treaties. Input to this booklet was provided by the CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat. More information can be accessed here: http://treaties.un.org/Pages/TreatyEvents.aspx?pathtreaty=Treaty/Focus/Page1_en.xml.

7 October 2010

EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region: “To preserve natural zones and biodiversity, including fisheries”

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Penina Blankett

The official kick-off meeting for the implementation of the projects in priority area 2 “to preserve natural zones and biodiversity, including fisheries” under the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, for which Germany is the lead coordinator, took place in Bonn on 7 October 2010. Participants included representatives of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), the European Commission, the Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), and representatives of administrations and environmental associations from the Baltic Sea states.

General information on the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

Priority area 2 contains *strategic actions and flagship projects*.

Strategic actions:

- Call for implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan a) with regard to biodiversity and nature conservation and b) by drawing up a roadmap to address the introduction of alien species via ships' ballast water
- *Reduction of the negative impacts of fishing on the Baltic Sea ecosystem through implementation of national measures that go beyond the standards of existing EU legislation and benefit in particular critically endangered species (e.g. harbour porpoise).*

Flagship projects:

- 2.1 Designation of further marine protected areas in the Baltic Sea and their management, taking into account maritime spatial planning and the Common Fisheries Policy (lead party: Germany)
- 2.2 Reduction of the introduction of new alien species by ships through ratification and enforcement of the international Ballast Water Management Convention, implementation of HELCOM/OSPAR recommendations on ballast water management (lead parties: Germany and Sweden) and the establishment of appropriate ballast water treatment facilities on ships and in ports;
- 2.3 Implementation of measures for the protection of migratory fish species (reproduction and migration) (lead parties: HELCOM and Germany)

In addition, potential financing options for flagship projects were addressed, such as the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013 (INTERREG), and further steps towards the implementation of the individual projects.

Results of the meeting:

There was a general consensus that HELCOM has the most important role as implementing organisation for the flagship projects and that it is necessary to closely link HELCOM's activities, in particular regarding the BSAP, with the implementation requirements of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

Participants agreed on an intensive exchange between priority area 2 and priority areas 4 “to become a model region for clean shipping” and 9 “to reinforce sustainability of agriculture, forestry and fisheries” in order to facilitate knowledge transfer and avoid a duplication of work.

Regarding *flagship project 2.1* it was noted that the development of a comprehensive and coherent network of protected areas has already been successfully advanced. There was agreement that in particular the *designation of offshore protected areas as well as the management of designated areas should be promoted*. In addition to an extension of the

network of protected areas, maritime spatial planning is an absolute necessity for balancing the diverging, sometimes contradictory interests of marine use and marine conservation and ensuring efficient spatial coordination. *A conceivable option would be a project which focuses on the designation of protected areas in the offshore areas of the exclusive economic zones, the establishment of a network between them and effective management.* To achieve this, an INTERREG project proposal could be submitted for the 4th call of the Baltic Sea Region Programme.

Regarding flagship project 2.2 it was agreed that this flagship project should either be completely moved to priority area 4 (maintaining Germany's lead party function), or subdivided into two segments: a) "technical

issues" (lead party Germany under priority area 4) and b) a "special" part on alien species (falling under the biodiversity chapter) which would remain in priority area 2 and be addressed in the framework of a newly established project managed by a newly determined lead country. *Later it was agreed between the priority area coordinators that flagship project 2.2 will be completely moved to priority area 4.*

Regarding flagship project 2.3 the EU responsibility for Common Fishery Policy (CFP) was pointed out by participants. In 2008 the responsible departments DG Environment and DG Mare published rules to ensure Europe's fisheries are sustainable and do not damage the marine environment. Participants agreed on an intensive cooperation on exchange, analyzing and identification of data as a first substantial contribution to flagship project 2.3.

21-22 October 2010

North Sea Regional Advisory Council: General Assembly and Executive Committee

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Russell Leaper

Russell Leaper attended the Executive Committee meeting of the North Sea Regional Advisory Council (NSRAC) in Aberdeen, Scotland on 22 October 2010. He attended as an observer on behalf of ASCOBANS as part of the contract as interim co-ordinator for the Conservation Plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea. The NSRAC was established in 2004 as part of an effort to provide greater stakeholder involvement in fisheries management at a regional level. Its main objective is to 'prepare and provide advice on the management of the fisheries of the North Sea on behalf of stakeholders in order to promote the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy'. To achieve this, the NSRAC has a two level structure with a larger General Assembly and a smaller Executive Committee. About two thirds of the members of NSRAC are from the fishing sector with the remainder being from other interest groups including conservation NGOs. The General Assembly and Executive Committee meet annually but the NSRAC also has a number of working groups which address issues in greater detail. The current working groups are; Spatial Planning (including Marine Protected Areas), Socio-economic, Nephrops, Kattegat and Skagerrak, Flatfish and Demersal.

The next meeting of the General Assembly/Executive Committee will be from 10-11 October 2011 in Boulogne-Sur-Mer. Informal discussions suggested that it might be possible for someone from ASCOBANS to give a presentation at this meeting (for example on the Conservation Plan for harbour porpoise). Such a presentation would need to be arranged with the chair (Niels Wichmann, Chief Executive of the Danish Fishermen's Federation) well in advance and would be most effective if there were simple clear requests relevant to the fisheries interest groups. A more detailed report and suggestions for greater involvement by ASCOBANS in the NSRAC is given in the co-ordinators report of the North Sea Conservation Plan.

22 October 2010

European Commission DG Environment Marine Strategy Framework Directive Working Group on Good Environmental Status

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Marije Siemensma

The meeting took place by invitation of DG Environment (Directorate D – Water, Chemicals & Biotechnology; ENV.D.2 – Marine) and had about 37 attendees from membership countries as well as from stakeholders. Marije Siemensma took part representing both ASCOBANS and the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC).

The agenda focused specifically on the activities for the WG GES 2010-2012 as this was the first WG GES meeting beyond the COM DEC. The agenda also dealt with the new technical subgroup on Noise and Litter, the update of the development of the Commission Staff Working Paper and the contribution of WG GES to MSCG, in relation to the initial assessment. After the adoption of the agenda the chair briefly updated on the activities agreed by the Marine Directors meeting May 2010, in relation to GES, and COM decision on GES criteria. Stakeholders briefly introduced themselves. Comment made is that there are some industries represented however the fisheries sector is underrepresented (except for a fisheries representative from Scotland). The chair/ DG ENV takes it as his/its responsibility to communicate the work done so far to the fisheries. Norway is observing, as they are currently updating their management plan of the North Sea. General comment: The marine environment is complex, which should be reflected in the MSFD.

Technical subgroup

Although the COM DEC is there, it is noted that there are emerging area's within the MSFD area, which need additional follow up, for which a technical subgroup is suggested. Draft ToR are proposed for this subgroup, which will be further discussed in the MSFD CG. The idea is that the subgroup meets twice a year, and further works based on correspondence and reports regularly to the WG GES. Stakeholders are explicitly invited to take an active approach in this subgroup.

Written comments on this subgroup can be written (Deadline 1 November).

For clarification; A Taskgroup; established for each of the 11 descriptors, nominated scientific experts providing scientific input to the commission. A subgroup to the group GES consists of the best possible experts (also scientific). It is for Member States to decide who of their country is in. Important message is not to duplicate work of already existing related fora (OSPAR WG on Litter for example).

Technical subgroup on Litter and Noise

The main area's for the moment considered are biodiversity (D1); Noise (D11) and Marine Litter (D10). One subgroup addressing both Noise and Litter is currently being established. A subgroup to deal with the complex descriptor on biodiversity is currently awaiting experience from the Noise and Litter subgroup. Formally the subgroup deals with both Litter and Noise, but in practice these are two Technical subgroups. Leo de Vrees (Leo.de-vrees@ec.europa.eu) is in charge with this subgroup.

Litter

France (Francois Galgani, Ifremer), Germany and JRC co-chair the group and planned a first meeting (4 November, back to back to the ICES litter workshop at the ICES premisses in Copenhagen. ToR will be drafted at this meeting and a draft working programme will be discussed. There have been 15 contributions to participate in this group. Aim is to develop a toolbox which is applicable to implement the MSFD regarding Litter. Recalling the in previous WG GES meetings expressed need for further investigation regarding a global applicable indicator (as fulmars are not in all regions a good indicator species) as well as the question how to deal with micro particles, indicated the justification for a subgroup on litter.

Noise and other forms of energy

The UK (Mark Tasker) and The Netherlands volunteered to co-chair this subgroup. The first meeting is likely to be held in February or March 2011. The Netherlands questions a large participation and prefers a small group (<12). Germany emphasizes that the noise group should try to define the levels causing impact on marine animals. And also, the ToR should be broadening the scope of the group, other indicators assessing the impacts should be reconsidered.

A brief summary on information on mechanisms for Coordination being established within regions has been provided. Within the HELCOM area Finland is working on the further development of targets and indicators for eutrophication; biodiversity (joint advisory group under HELCOM, Helcom Core Set Project). It has projects to revise existing monitoring programmes. It emphasizes the need for the use of projects (results) ongoing at the moment.

Denmark apart from the HELCOM area initiated a R+D project together with Norway, Sweden and Germany called Harmony (Development and demonstration of Marine Strategy Framework Directive tools for harmonization of the initial assessment) with a Focus on the greater North Sea. On 3-4 November a Harmony workshop takes place in Copenhagen.

At the OSPAR Ministerial meeting 23rd, 24rd September a new structure of OSPAR to meet the requirements of the MSFD has been established. There is a new strategy on biodiversity. The QSR2010 has been launched. (basis for MS of Initial assessment). There is a coordination group within OSPAR for MSFD. Key activities are part of delivery of an ecosystem approach and to coordinate the facilitation of the implementation of the MSFD. Several inter sessional correspondence groups exist within OSPAR (biodiversity; pressures from humane activities; eutrophication; hazardous substances). A COBAM (Coordinated OSPAR biodiversity assessment monitoring) workshop 23-24 November, for OSPAR contracting parties. This workshop aims to get measures to establish methods and targets for descriptors 1,4,6.

Under the Barcelona convention two meetings (April 2010, Rome & July 2010, Barcelona) on ecosystem approach to coordinate EU cooperation has been held. The MAP (Mediterranean Action Plan) will use the 11 descriptors as framework for the MAP. Formal assessment report submitted in November 2011, next contracting parties meeting.

Note: Several assessment reports are available (soon) e.g. Helcom, Oskar, Black sea (2011), MAP (2011).

Germany is currently working on a paper on MSFD terminology.

Member States exchanged views on possible options for Art. 9 and Art. 20 (Annex IV) and in particular targets. Main action points for Member states are the determination of GES (Art. 9) Establishment of environmental targets (Art. 10). There has been discussion on how to establish these environmental targets in relation to the MSFD. It is important to keep in mind that ambitions under other the Water Framework Directive or the Habitat Directive (for example, have favorable conservation status) not necessarily equal the goals for the MSFD (GES). For the next WG GES meeting some case-studies are worked out, coordinated by Uli Claussen (Ulrich.claussen@uba.de)

Member states discuss on main needs from Member States and willingness to lead identified activities. Question, how should the WG GES start to link with the work on monitoring? What is necessary first is to have a good common understanding of GES. However the question, can we monitor a certain target is relevant and needs to be considered together with understanding GES.

Concerning the linkages between the several working groups (GES; DIKE; ESA) the primary activity of the MSFD CG is to coordinate the work of the working groups.

Submitting written comments

Written comments can be send on the draft ToR for next future activities will be send to MD for approval, before they will be presented at the next MSFD CG (15 November, Brussels). Deadline Monday 1 November. Future meetings of the WG GES are likely to be in March 2011. In April it is likely to have the next meeting of the MSFD CG after the meeting 15 November 2010, in preparation of the Marine Directors Meeting in May 2011.

15 November 2010

European Commission DG Environment Marine Strategy Framework Directive Coordination Group

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Marije Siemensma

The meeting took place by invitation of DG Environment (Directorate D – Water, Chemicals & Biotechnology; ENV.D.2 – Marine) and had attendees from membership countries as well as from stakeholders. Marije Siemensma took part representing both ASCOBANS and the Coastal & Marine Union (EUCC).

The meeting focused primarily on the update on activities since the Marine Directors meeting, May 2010.

The third meeting of the MSFD coordination group started, after a brief introduction round, with an update on the WG GES starting with the COM decision and follow up. This was followed by a report from the WG GES meeting of 22 October and concluded with a discussion on the Technical Sub Groups Litter-Noise Terms of Reference.

JRC gave an overview based on their working document, the Review of Methodological Standards Related to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive Criteria on Good Environmental Status (appendix I). Some remarks:

For characteristics of litter in the marine and coastal environment monitoring standards are available but no methodological standards are available for status assessment or setting environmental targets.

For marine litter regarding the impact of litter on marine life (ingestion by marine animals) the OSPAR Fulmar EcoQuO for NE Atlantic is available for status assessment and monitoring.

For descriptor 11, there are no methodological standards.

There is the option to send written comments on the presentation and document (Appendix I) of JRC on available methodological standards, deadline for submission is 7/8 december 2010.

The WG ESA briefly reported from their meeting 21-22 October.

The WG DIKE concludes the update of activities since MDs in May 2010. The next meeting is expected in spring 2011.

The Initial assessment will be discussed in this group, the MSFD CG, as it touches on all three working groups. There will be a workshop on the Initial assessment (IA) likely in April with different experts of the WGs DIKE, ESA and GES all taking part in one meeting.

Interregional cooperation has been discussed and it is clear that there is a need of interregional coordination, but given its importance interregional cooperation needs to be high on the agenda in all working groups and it shouldn't be another new established platform purely on interregional cooperation.

CIS (Common Implementation Structure 2011-2012 and work programme)

DG RTD provides an overview of Research related to the Directive (see Appendix II) and summarizes the document, which provides a table of relevant past and ongoing research projects. Ongoing calls and relevant topics are mentioned as the 2011 "Ocean of tomorrow" call which as one topic relevant for the MSFD with a focus on the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The 2011 "Science in Society – Mobilisation & Mutual Learning" (SIS-MML) has a topic (challenge) on interactions between land and sea, which could address issues like marine litter or eutrophication.

Incoming calls (to be issued in July 2011) are briefly mentioned. Preparations are ongoing for the calls for proposals under the different thematic priorities. Serious consideration is being given to address, in a coordinated way, specific research needs in relation to the MSFD (noise and litter in particular).

Other developments related to research are: BONUS, SEASERA, JPI on "Healthy and Productive Seas and Oceans", EUROCEAN conference and Permanent scientific structure to support MSFD.

There is a growing recognition there is a need for a structured mechanism to review and synthesise on a regular basis existing scientific knowledge relevant to the MSFD, with a view to pass it in usable form to policy makers. No decision has been taken yet as to how this should be implemented.

A framework is necessary to ensure that EU marine research responds to the needs of the MSFD. There is a clear need to make full use of this framework. The chair remarks to bare in mind that research does not provides results before years of study. There is a recent brochure with recent marine research available at DG RTD.

One of conclusions of the marine week in Spain 2010 was that there is a need for a scientific marine research platform. This will be one of the key issues the coming months.

DG MARE presents about the relation between MSFD and developments under the Integrated Maritime Policy.

There is an initiative on maritime surveillance in order to structure this between communities (defense, fisheries, pollution, and several other points).

Iain Shepherd DG MARE presents about how the Marine Knowledge Initiative 2020 helps the MSFD and discusses how to integrate the different commissions (DG Environment, Research and MARE)

What has been done so far? A prototype of the EMODnet (http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/emodnet_en.html) has been set up to provide access to observations and highlight gaps. A first harmonized map of marine sediments of European seas has been produced, based on this map. Another group produced a map of physical habitats in the North Sea, Baltic and Western Mediterranean. There have been preparatory actions on chemistry to meet the requirements of MSFD (antifoulants, fertilizers, pesticides, heavy metals, hydro carbons etc.). It supposes to ease the burden of monitoring and reporting, with the involvement of a.o. marine conventions.

What are the next steps? There is a proposal to extent the development for a period 2011-2013, to complete coverage of parameters of European waters and to check with stakeholders to assess gaps and priorities (includes marine conventions).

IMODnet could be one of the networks to connect to other communities, as transport systems for example.

DG MARE Jan Ekkeboom briefly presents about maritime spatial planning. He mentions the ecosystem approach and the links with commercial exploitation of shell fish populations, the permanent alteration of hydrographical conditions, concentration of contaminants and biodiversity. Also integrated coastal zone management has many linkages with Marine

spatial planning. DG MARE prepares a short paper on this topic for the next Marine Directors meeting.

Before closing the meeting, the next meeting of the MSFD CG was mentioned, which is tentatively scheduled for May 2011.

8 November 2010

European Commission DG Environment Workshop “Marine Litter: Plastic Soup and More”

Attendance had been planned through Stefanie Werner (Germany). Unfortunately she was unable to participate in this meeting and the Agreement was thus not represented. The official report of the meeting, containing also some recommendations, is attached as Annex 1 to this document.

9-12 November 2010

ACCOBAMS 4th Meeting of the Contracting Parties

Attendance on behalf of CMS & ASCOBANS: Elizabeth Mrema

Parties to ACCOBAMS met for their 4th MOP in Monaco from 9-12 November 2010. The MOP was honoured by His Serene Highness Prince Albert II who officiated and opened the MOP as well as hosted a cocktail reception for the participants later in the day.

Progress on implementation of ACCOBAMS:

MOP reviewed the status and progress of the implementation of the Agreement as coordinated by its Secretariat and provided it with guidance for its further work. It also reviewed and approved priority activities for the next triennium with the corresponding budget, considered the request by Portugal and Spain to expand the Agreements geographical area to cover their maritime waters and reviewed and approved the Host Agreement with the Principality of Monaco, to mention but a few. Updated status on the process of the Future Shape of CMS and its Family was presented and noted with no comments made any participant. A new online national reporting format to ACCOBAMS was also adopted for use in the next reporting cycle. It is said to be a flexible tool which can be amended as appropriate to use the same or similar information to report on other related instruments and thus be able to streamline the parties' reporting obligations to a number of MEAs to which they are parties.

Proposal to expand ACCOBAMS geographical area:

Virtually all Parties, except France and Morocco, supported the joint proposal by Portugal and Spain to amend ACCOBAMS by extending its geographical scope to cover the maritime waters of the two countries. Unfortunately, the extended area overlaps with the ASCOBANS extended geographical area. Whilst Portugal and Spain are parties to ACCOBAMS, they are range states in ASCOBANS. France is a party to both Agreements. Both Spain and Portugal argued that they want to conserve both small and large cetaceans covered by ACCOBAMS to which they are already parties as opposed to ASCOBANS which only focuses on small cetaceans.

Both Spain and Portugal wondered how ASCOBANS parties could have extended the geographical areas to cover their jurisdictional waters while they were not parties to it. When the item was being discussed, both proponents in fact refuted that they had been consulted during the negotiations for the extension of ASCOBANS. Consultations were, however, later

confirmed to them with documentation from several ASCOBANS AC meeting reports which recorded an updated status of consultation then as well as some written communication. Both parties nonetheless confirmed not to have attended the last meeting which made and took the decision on extension. Their governments had not been informed formally about the extension. They, however, both confirmed that they had never considered joining ASCOBANS unless it had expanded its scope to cover also large cetaceans. That has always been their condition for accession.

France had reservations to the extension proposal and was thus unable to pronounce its formal position and in fact wanted to know how harmonious joint governance was going to be implemented in the overlapping waters. Earlier on during the discussion of the resolution, Morocco too had entered a "reservation" with regards to extending the area to the west (to the Morocco side) but later wanted the Meeting report to state that it had raised an "objection" to the extension proposal. Due to the fact that the extension proposal resolution had already been adopted, the representative agreed to retain the "it has expressed reservation" to the proposal.

Proponents supported by the Parties rejected the proposal to include some additional paragraphs in the resolution, especially in the Preamble, to take note of the request by the ASCOBANS parties through its AC to postpone the debate until CMS COP 10 to enable the COP to review the matter in accordance with the CMS COP 8 Report paragraph 28 as well as completion of the Future Shape of CMS Family process also at COP 10. Proposal was to include a paragraph to take note that the extended ACCOBAMS area overlaps the extended ASCOBANS area. On the latter, it was rejected that the proposed extension overlaps ACCOBAMS as they consider ASCOBANS extension as illegal and wondered how could have the ASCOBANS area be extended to countries not party to it. The reasoning that all or most of the CMS Family instruments cover/include range states where the specific specie(s) migrate including ACCOBAMS which still has about four range states yet to join it was not accepted. Parties thus agreed to have the former suggestion recorded in the Meeting report instead. What was agreed and included in the Preamble of the resolution is affirming the willingness of both ACCOBAMS parties and Secretariat to cooperate and in fact establish synergies in matters and activities of common interest with ASCOBANS. Both proponents especially Portugal supported the CMS proposed idea of assessing the feasibility of merging the two agreements in future, however, on condition that ASCOBANS expands its scope to also cover large cetaceans. This was also recorded in the Meeting report.

As a result of the decision taken to expand the Agreement area, its new approved title is, "Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and *neighbouring Atlantic area*" (instead of contiguous Atlantic area). Its acronym will however not change.

Assessing the deliberations of the entire MOP, I got the sense that ASCOBANS is not or hardly known by the Parties in the Mediterranean region save for the few Parties from Europe. Hardly, any mention of ASCOBANS by the Parties, except from a few partners like WDCS, throughout the MOP except during the debate on the proposed extension of the geographical areas and my interventions on some draft resolutions. It seems even for the common small cetaceans, there may be no or very few common activities/projects to jointly manage or conserve these species. Nothing was visible also in the Secretariat's report and documents on its activities in the last three years. This may be an area for further reflection to identify concrete avenues for cooperation among the two Secretariats.

Adoption of draft resolutions:

Several draft Resolutions had been proposed before the MOP for consideration and adoption few of which lend them well for cooperation with ASCOBANS. Opportunity was thus taken to introduce a number of paragraphs in those Resolutions either taking note of similar or related activities undertaken by or under ASCOBANS and/or CMS and encouraging the two Secretariats to work together and collaborate in the implementation of

related on-going or new activities/projects. Such proposals were made and accepted in resolutions related to the following topics:

- a. Conservation of the Mediterranean short-beaked common dolphin
- b. Climate change
- c. Fisheries interactions with cetaceans
- d. Guidelines to address the impact of anthropogenic noise on cetaceans in the ACCOBAMS area
- e. Population structure studies
- f. Ship strikes on large cetaceans in the Mediterranean Sea, and but not least,
- g. ACCOBAMS Strategy for the period 2013-2023

The official report of the meeting can be accessed here:

<http://www.accobams.org/images/stories/MOP/MOP4/mop4%20final%20report.pdf>.

23-24 November 2010

CMS 37th Meeting of the Standing Committee

Attendance on behalf of CMS & ASCOBANS: Elizabeth Mrema, Borja Heredia, Heidrun Frisch

The following is an extract of relevant passages of the draft Report of the Meeting (http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/37th_stc_meeting/report_e.pdf):

Agenda Item 6: Future Shape of CMS Process

6.a. Second Step of the inter-sessional process regarding the future shape of CMS (Res 9.13 and addendum)

22. The Chair asked Mr. Olivier Biber (Switzerland) as chair of the Inter-sessional Working Group to present a report. Mr. Biber outlined the aims of the three phases of the process which would culminate in the presentation of three options for COP10 to consider. The consultants, ERIC, had in agreement with the Working Group Chair produced a detailed list of activities and had grouped them in four broad options. Mr. Biber regretted that the questionnaire drafted by the UK and France had not elicited a greater response from Parties. The Standing Committee's guidance would be sought on how to proceed, but Mr. Biber strongly advised that the Working Group hold another meeting early in 2011. It was important for as many Parties to CMS, and Parties and Signatories to CMS instruments as possible to provide input.

23. Mr. Biber concluded his remarks by thanking ERIC for their hard work, the assistance of the Secretariat's support team, the commitment of the other members of the Working Group and the donor countries who had enabled the process to proceed.

24. The two representatives of the consultants, ERIC, Professor Robert Lee and Ms Lori Frater made a presentation describing what had been achieved under Phases I and II and explained that the final aim was to table three options for COP10 to consider. In Phase II a range of activities had been identified and grouped under four headings; these four headings would not necessarily form the basis of the three options to be put to the COP, as many of the individual activities could sit well in different approaches. The activities have been subjected to a scoring process which took account of their financial, legal and institutional impact and their benefits for conservation, integration and synergies. Professor Lee said that some activities received a low or even negative score because the reviews had taken a short-term view, and benefits outweighing short-term costs would not become evident for

some years. This accounted for the paradox that activities that should lead to economies of scale seemed to increase costs. The consultants would need to do further modelling to ascertain when the financial benefits would be seen.

25. Ms Lim (Philippines) welcomed the report and the information it provided but felt that none of the options as presented was entirely acceptable. Some of the activities attributed to one option would fit just as well in others. She agreed that it would be desirable for the Working Group to meet again, but it would need a clear mandate and would need to take account of the outcomes of the CBD COP in Nagoya. Ms Céspedes (Chile) agreed with Ms Lim and pointed that the financial situation was far from favourable and the Convention should not plan ahead assuming a significant increase in resources. It should not embark on an expansion programme by concluding further MOUs. Mr. Lok (Netherlands) said that he found the document difficult to navigate and understand. He also agreed that the final selection of activities should not necessarily be based on the four options presented. To follow the mandate of COP9, he suggested that three distinct options each with a clear direction (he suggested centralization, regionalization and an enhanced status quo which would deal with the most obvious and easily rectified problems). He agreed that the Standing Committee needed to give the Working Group clear instructions on how to proceed and asked whether any assistance was required.

26. Mr. Biber (Switzerland) encouraged Parties to make their comments through the regional representatives on the Working Group and the Standing Committee. He hoped he could rely on the Working Group to ensure full attendance at the next meeting and on the continued assistance of the Secretariat's support team.

27. Several regional representatives offered further support and others reiterated the point that the activities should be regrouped within different options, while Mr. Øystein Størkersen (Norway) advised against radical changes when there were so many other undercurrents and outside factors at play. He stressed the need for CMS to work with other organizations on common issues. Mr. Trevor Salmon (United Kingdom) warned against expanding the number of people involved in the process at this late stage when minds should begin to focus.

28. Mr. Biber (Switzerland) welcomed the offers of help and in turn suggested that as a priority the revised papers should be translated into the other two working languages. The final document could be reduced in size to 10-15 pages. Professor Lee (ERIC) agreed to reconfigure the activities within new options. He indicated that Phases I and II had brought considerable amount of information to light and now it was a question of presenting it in the most appropriate manner. Recognizing the difficult financial situation, he suggested a focused approach concentrating on the changes which brought most benefit for least cost.

29. Mr. Duer (UNEP) congratulated ERIC and the Working Group on having done a difficult task well. The aim of the exercise was to improve the service provided by the Secretariat for the Parties to ensure the best results for migratory species. He stressed that many reforms were being undertaken through other UN-wide processes and he urged Parties to be patient. The Chemicals MEAs had worked for a considerable period on improving synergies and now their efforts were bearing fruit. Greater efficiency was allowing resources to be redirected to implementation away from administration.

30. Ms Nickel (Germany) offered support with translations costs and said that Germany could provide a venue if there were no rooms available in the UN Campus.

Actions and Decisions

- The consultation with Parties on the draft Phase II report would conclude at the end of 2010.
- The Working Group would convene in early February 2011 for its third meeting (tentative dates 3-4 February).

- Germany offered to provide support for the next Working Group meeting.
- ERIC would revise the draft in the light of comments (e.g. regrouping the activities) and would compile a table of actions and a graph with the axes centralize/decentralize and high cost/low cost to help present the activities.
- The Phase III proposals would be drafted in March and April for submission to members of the Standing Committee in May.

Agenda Item 8: Report on the key inter-sessional activities since December 2009 of the CMS Agreements

ASCOBANS

91. Ms Frisch (Secretariat) referred to Document CMS/StC37/Inf.12.2. The 17th Meeting of the Advisory Committee had been held in October 2010 and a number of conservation and research projects had been undertaken or approved, including the development of a joint online database with HELCOM, risk assessments for ship-strikes and inventories of cetaceans in Russia's Baltic waters. A consultant would be appointed in 2011 to coordinate the North Sea Plan for Harbour porpoises, funded by a German voluntary contribution. A Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) Plan for the Agreement had also been adopted. Several thematic working groups had been established, dealing with issues such as bycatch and underwater noise, which afforded opportunity for collaboration between CMS, ASCOBANS and others. ASCOBANS was also planning to hold a joint workshop with ACCOBAMS on pollutants and their effects on cetaceans during the European Cetacean Society's Annual Meeting in March 2011. ASCOBANS Parties were actively involved in the CMS Future Shape process and would examine the ramifications of the decision of the ACCOBAMS MOP to extend their Agreement Area into waters already covered by ASCOBANS.

ACCOBAMS

92. Ms Mrema (Executive Secretary) presented the apologies of Ms Marie-Christine Grillo-Compulsione, the Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS. Ms Mrema gave an account of the ACCOBAMS MOP held earlier in the month, where Parties had agreed to extend the Agreement Area to include all the waters of continental Portugal and Spain, thereby creating an overlap with ASCOBANS in the Atlantic. In terms of species coverage, ASCOBANS dealt only with small cetaceans, whereas ACCOBAMS dealt with all cetacean species occurring in its area. France was a range state and Party to both Agreements, while Spain and Portugal were range states to both but Parties only to ACCOBAMS. The desire of Spain and Portugal to be Party to a single Agreement covering all cetaceans was understandable, but the ASCOBANS Parties at their Advisory Committee in October had questioned the timing of the proposal in light of the Future Shape process and had asked in vain that consideration of the extension be deferred. France and Morocco had also both indicated that they had some misgivings. The amendment still had to be ratified by ACCOBAMS Parties and would only take effect when 16 of them had done so. The overlap had some consequences of a legal nature affecting issues of governance. ACCOBAMS Parties had however called for greater collaboration with ASCOBANS and the possibility of merging the two instruments was raised.

93. In response to a question from the floor as to the position of ASCOBANS on covering large cetaceans and the possible ramifications of such an extension, Ms Frisch (Secretariat) foresaw no problems for ASCOBANS with regard to its relations with the International Whaling Commission (IWC), if the Agreement were to extend its coverage to all cetaceans. ACCOBAMS collaborated perfectly well with the IWC. While ASCOBANS was not actively considering an extension to its species range at

present, it did have an informal working group examining issues relating to large cetaceans.

29 November - 1 December 2010

IWC Workshop on Small Cetaceans and Climate Change

Attendance on behalf of CMS & ASCOBANS: Heidrun Frisch

The ongoing rapid change in global climate has major implications for many species of small cetaceans. The IWC Scientific Committee Workshop had the aim of identifying species, areas and research situations that could be informative for improving understanding of how populations are likely to respond, focusing on three aspects:

1. restricted habitats – estuaries, reefs, environmental discontinuities, rivers and shallow waters;
2. range changes – i.e. evidence of changes in distributions, reasons and consequences; and
3. the Arctic Region.

The discussions and recommendations of the workshop remain provisional until the IWC Scientific Committee (May/June 2011) and Commission Meeting (July 2011) have reviewed the report, even though it and the papers made available to the participants can be accessed freely on the IWC website: http://www.iwcoffice.org/sci_com/workshops/SMandCCworkshop.htm. However, without prejudice to the adoption of recommendations, the following aspects might be particularly relevant to cetacean-related work under CMS and ASCOBANS:

- 1) Besides primary (direct) impacts of climate change (e.g. waters warming beyond the thermal tolerance of a species) and secondary (indirect) impacts (e.g. shifts in prey distribution or abundance), of in some cases even greater importance might be the tertiary effects. This term describes the consequences of climate-driven changes in human behaviour, which in turn affect our species. A paper attempting to provide an overview of likely tertiary effects on cetaceans is Alter et al. 2010 (http://www.iwcoffice.org/documents/sci_com/workshops/SMandCC/SC-N10-CCForInfo10.pdf).
- 2) A summary of climate change-related concerns with respect to cetaceans (Simmonds & Elliot 2009) can be accessed here: http://www.iwcoffice.org/documents/sci_com/workshops/SMandCC/SC-N10-CCForInfo1.pdf
- 3) A section in the report on health impacts of climate change might be interesting for the CMS Scientific Council Working Group on Diseases and should be brought to their attention as soon as released. The specialists discussed changes in pathogen exposure, body condition and exposure to toxicants and how these relate to climate change-driven phenomena. The need to undertake solid long-term monitoring projects of populations was stressed, as only such datasets allow separating climate-driven changes from other factors.
- 4) The Baltic harbour porpoise population is already critically endangered. While bycatch is the greatest threat, temperature-related changes to the Baltic Sea ecosystem could affect its suitability as habitat for harbour porpoises and thus pose an additional threat. This could also include increased input of pollutants and nutrients into the sea through an increase in precipitation. ASCOBANS might wish to look at this. HELCOM undertook an assessment of likely climate change effects on the Baltic Sea in 2007 (<http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/Publications/Proceedings/bsep111.pdf>). It would also be

crucial to look at publications attempting to predict effects of climate change on fish abundance and distribution in the Baltic Sea area.

The workshop made a great number of recommendations relating to research and conservation measures in relation to climate change impacts on small (and in a few cases also large) cetaceans (see http://www.iwcoffice.org/documents/sci_com/workshops/SMandCC/Workshop_report_final.pdf).

For the first two days of the workshop, I served as rapporteur and afterwards also helped the co-chair and the IWC Secretary, who acted as rapporteur for the remainder of the meeting, in preparing the draft report for adoption.

1-4 February 2011

ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Marije Siemensma

The Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea met in Copenhagen, Denmark from 1 to 4 February 2011 to deal with the following six terms of reference:

- ToR A Collate data from national reports under EC 812/2004, reporting on bycatch and scientific projects
- ToR B Other recent estimates of bycatch (Birds, Mammals, Turtles and Fish) in the ICES area and other EU waters.
- ToR C Review of ongoing mitigation trials and future mitigation trials.
- ToR D Development of bycatch monitoring database
- ToR E Continue to collaborate with PGCCDBS on integrating protected species bycatch data
- ToR F Continue to develop, improve and coordinate methods for bycatch monitoring and assessment.

Fifteen experts from ten ICES member states (Norway, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Italy, United Kingdom, Denmark, Spain, Sweden and United States) met for four days chaired by Simon Northridge (SMRUU) on the premises of ICES.

The head of ICES advisory services (Poul Degnbol) informed members of WGBYC that it has the liberty to investigate the broader implications of bycatch in European Union (EU) and ICES waters. A broader goal of WGBC is to provide an overview of current levels of fishery removal and likely impacts on specific populations of cetaceans, birds etc.

The official report of the meeting is currently under preparation and will be published soon when it will become available on the ICES website.

21-24 February 2011

ICES Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Stefan Bräger

The Working Group on Marine Mammal Ecology of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea met in Berlin, Germany from 21 to 24 February 2011 to deal with the following six terms of reference:

- a) Review and report on any new information on population sizes, population/stock structure and management frameworks for marine mammals
- b) Outline and review the effects of tidal farms (construction and operation) on marine mammals and provide recommendations on research needs, monitoring and mitigation schemes
- c) Outline marine planning practices that could take account of the presence of cetaceans, and what information ICES might be able to feed into that process
- d) Catalogue the Marine Protected Areas for marine mammals in the ICES area and evaluate the efficacy of MPAs for cetaceans
- e) Finalize production of the Cooperative Research Report on the framework for surveillance and monitoring of marine mammals applicable to the ICES area
- f) Update on development of database for seals, status of intersessional work

Thirteen experts from seven ICES member states (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States) met for four days on the premises of the Federal Environmental Agency (UBA, local host: Stefanie Werner) under the guidance of Sinéad Murphy (chair).

The official report of the meeting is currently under preparation and will be published soon when it will become available on the ICES web site.

19-23 March 2011

25th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society

Attendance on behalf of CMS & ASCOBANS: Heidrun Frisch

ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop: Pollution and Marine Mammals

This workshop was organized by Peter Evans (ECS/Sea Watch Foundation) and Mark Simmonds (WDCS) in follow-up of AC17 Action Point 18.

The report of the workshop, including the recommendations to ASCOBANS Parties, has been made available to the Advisory Committee as AC18/Doc.5-03.

The workshop was very well attended and a number of highly interesting presentations were made under two main themes:

1. Insights from long-term datasets (PCBs and OC pesticides)
2. Pollution trends & effects

The workshop then discussed what recommendations should be forwarded to ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, which were grouped in the following categories:

- 1) Research on understudied contaminants
- 2) Research on effects of contaminants on the individual animals

- 3) Research on effects of contaminants at population level
- 4) Priority areas
- 5) Priority species
- 6) Biomarkers and gene expression analysis

More details can be found in the report prepared by Peter Evans (AC18/Doc.5-03). Extensive proceedings will be prepared also.

Workshop: Interest and Feasibility of a Web-Accessed Database for Marine Mammals Strandings and Necropsy Data in the ASCOBANS Region

Another workshop of direct importance was held by Rob Deaville, Paul Jepson and Thierry Jauniaux, at which the feasibility and cost of a common web-accessed database for strandings and necropsy data, potentially accessible at different levels of data protection. There are different marine mammals stranding networks in the ASCOBANS region that record strandings and conduct necropsy and tissue sampling of stranded and bycaught animals. The aims of such stranding networks are to determine causes of death, monitor exposure to pathogens and pollutants, help to monitor changes in distribution and abundance and to collect tissue samples for archive. Such data help to highlight major threats to conservation status of marine mammals. Although data which are collected during the course of such investigations are routinely recorded and in some cases made available through scientific reports, public release of information or websites, no centralised European point of access currently exists for the recording and display of data on both strandings and any necropsies that have been carried out. Creation of a database or common web-access portal in the ASCOBANS region and possibly beyond would be of potential benefit for scientists, policy makers and NGOs, as well as the wider public.

Such a pan-European strandings database has been a longstanding goal of ASCOBANS and a web-accessed database has been recommended by a number of scientific fora. At the workshop, strandings and necropsy data held by the different networks were discussed, with a view to establishing potential common areas and methods of data output.

The workshop was attended by 53 participants from 11 countries. Nine stranding networks were represented. Interest in the creation of a common database of web-portal was great and three working groups were set up for further advancement of the idea, dealing with aspects like national coordination, determination of the required data input and technical matters.

ECS Conference (22-24 March 2010)

The Conference was divided in several thematic sessions, such as Ecology, Behaviour, Acoustics, Conservation and Population Studies. The presentations most relevant for CMS and ASCOBANS were attended and the poster displays examined. There was also opportunity to talk with a large number of researchers and conservationists to network and ensure support for the work of the Convention and Agreement, e.g.:

Simon Berrow (Irish Whale and Dolphin Group): The ECS Conference in 2012 will be held in Galway, Ireland. This creates a good opportunity to a) promote ASCOBANS e.g. by organizing a workshop on a topic of interest in Ireland, e.g. the requirements under the Habitats Directive (see proposal published as AC18/Doc.5-05 - http://www.ascobans.info/pdf/ac18/AC18_5-05_ProposalHabitatsDirectiveWorkshop.pdf), which could also be jointly done with ACCOBAMS; and b) to renew efforts to get Ireland to accede to ASCOBANS.

Nick Tregenza (Chelonia Ltd. UK): Concern was voiced about the promotion of a very loud type of pinger (DDD?) in the UK and some other countries. While having the advantage of requiring the purchase of fewer devices for each net, the ambient noise increase and habitat

exclusion effects of this type of pinger mean that it should only be used with extreme caution.

Ursula Tscherter (ORES): ASCOBANS has for many years wanted to purchase a life-sized 3D-model of a harbour porpoise, but due to the high costs combined with relative rarity of events at which these can be used and difficulties in storage, such a purchase was never undertaken. Ursula Tscherter makes life-size cetaceans (two dimensional but otherwise true to nature) which can be used very well in outreach events etc. They are made of cloth, can be folded easily and don't weigh much and are therefore a cheap and simple alternative to 3D models. Following the conference, the Secretariat ordered harbour porpoises in three different sizes: ca. 2 metre (top of the size range, occurs off Galicia), 1.7 metre (average size in Europe) and a calf of ca. 90cm. Other species might be ordered at a later stage as resources allow.

22-23 March 2011

DEFRA Animal Welfare and Ethics Workshop

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: DEFRA

The UK co-hosted a Whale Welfare and Ethics Workshop, 22-23 March, 2011 at the Eden project, Cornwall.

The primary objective of this workshop was to collate knowledge on the current status of global animal welfare science and management policies, and provide an opportunity to allow expert discussion and analysis.

The workshop included presentations by international experts on subjects such as: the science of animal welfare; cultural approaches; animal behaviour; killing methods; animal welfare legislation and policies; development and codes of conduct for whale watching; theoretical and applied animal ethics; unintentional human-whale interactions (i.e. entanglement / ship strikes); and wild animal welfare. The topics and issues relating to whaling were considered in the wider landscape, using examples of best practice and case studies from other areas of animal welfare.

Amongst the Workshop conclusions were; that ethics and animal welfare science should be taken into account in decisions relating to the conservation of cetaceans and the management of whaling.

The workshop further produced a series of recommendations for consideration during human-cetacean interactions including; the Use of cetaceans in scientific research; Killing and euthanasia of cetaceans and Whale watching.

The recommendations ranged from; improvements in the collection and free availability of data; that management decisions should take account of good practices and international and regional agreements which strive to optimise the humane treatment of animals; that Human activities resulting in poor welfare, including acute and chronic entanglements, prolonged kills and vessel strikes, are a major concern; Scientific research on cetaceans should be subject to independent ethical review/harm-benefit analysis; Killing and euthanasia methods, weaponry and equipment should be aimed at minimizing fear, distress and pain and the need to promote capacity building among countries to develop responsible whale watching.

The UK believes the final report of the workshop will conclude that in the light of the welfare and conservation challenges faced by whales in the 21st century, the International Whaling Commission should continue to strengthen its conservation agenda.

20-31 March 2011

7th Meeting of the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee

Attendance on behalf of CMS & ASCOBANS: Heidrun Frisch

The ACCOBAMS Secretariat specifically requested that ASCOBANS be represented at this meeting and if possible present recent work undertaken that is relevant for the implementation of their Resolutions 4.10 on Ship Strikes, 4.11 on Population Structure Studies and 4.18 on Marine Noise.

Interest in collaboration was high and several areas were identified. In particular:

- Possible joint work on population structure studies – the SC proposed a joint workshop, which the ACCOBAMS representative might suggest to AC18.
- ASCOBANS was officially included in the ACCOBAMS Working Group on Noise (see ToR and composition below). Its work is very similar to that of the ASCOBANS Working Group (in fact the ASCOBANS ToR were the starting point for the development of theirs). Also, in the margins of the meeting I participated in an informal meeting with Karsten Brensing (chair of the ASCOBANS WG) and Yanis Souami (chair of the ACCOBAMS WG) to discuss collaboration. The summary of the action points agreed at this meeting, which I wrote as note-taker for the two chairs and also passed to Marie-Christine for her information and comments, are detailed in the report of the ASCOBANS Working Group on Noise (AC18/Doc.4-08).
- ACCOBAMS SC7 proposed to create a joint working group with ASCOBANS on the Agreements' contribution to the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive. SC7 reviewed the relevance of EU criteria and methodological standards to ACCOBAMS and decided that further work was needed. Following the meeting I contacted the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee Task Manager on Research, Vincent Ridoux, to request a short description of the tasks and goals of this working group in order to give the AC the information necessary for a decision. This will be published along with the result of the preliminary ACCOBAMS analysis (Annex 9 of the official report) as soon as it is received as AC18/Doc.7-03.

The following is an extract of relevant passages of the official Report of the Meeting (<http://www.accobams.org/images/stories/SC/SC7/sc7%20report.pdf>):

5.1.2. Population Structure (RMTM 2)

29. The Chair introduced the agenda item and presented the document SC7_Inf20 prepared by Stefania Gaspari & Ada Natoli. He recalled that the Population Structure Working Group was created in 2008 on the request of the ACCOBAMS Parties and in accordance with the Working Programme adopted in 2007 to create a Genetic Working Group. Considering the very high budget required for this project, there was no progress since the last Meeting of the Scientific Committee.

30. Heidrun Frisch, the UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS representative, presented the work done under ASCOBANS on methodology for discriminating population structure and proposed management units for harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin and short-beaked common dolphin in the common ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS area (SC7_Inf06). These management units had been identified following a workshop in 2007, based on the integration of different lines of evidence. The proceedings of the workshop detailed the data considered and also highlighted priorities for future research to allow further refinement of these proposed management units.

31. Léa David, representative of the Pelagos Sanctuary French part, informed the Meeting that France funded a study concerning the genetics of fin whales in its Pelagos area. 150 biopsies had been collected from 2006 to 2010 and analyses were still ongoing, showing for the moment a three group structure. The results, in terms of microsatellites loci for each

sample, would be available for future research and gathering of data on that subject (with the citation of the authors). She added that genetic analyses of the skin were expensive, but considering that some times the number of samples is less than the robot analyser capacity, scientists should consider offering the remaining capacity to samples coming from other research teams (ex: from countries where resources are not available for such analyses). She added that the genetic studies based on the same analysed elements (microsatellites for example) could share the microsatellites result for each sample rather than the tissue. This could help to reduce costs for a wider study.

32. Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara suggested that the plans may now be slightly changed, in view of the evolving of the situation concerning the many studies of cetacean population structure that have been started independently on a local basis by many research groups, and are ongoing within the ACCOBAMS area. A joint workshop ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS could be organised at the occasion of the next Meeting of the ECS. He suggested that Stefania Gaspari and Ada Natoli be involved in the workshop whose objective is to provide an overview of the existing studies and gap analysis concerning population structure in the ACCOBAMS area. He suggested that Terms of Reference for the workshop should include the production of a gap analysis and the outline of a work programme to support population structure studies in the ACCOBAMS area for the subsequent quinquennium.

33. The Scientific Committee agreed that Stefania Gaspari and Ada Natoli be involved in the organisation of the joint workshop.

5.1.5. Anthropogenic Noise (RMTM 11)

67. Yanis Souami introduced the document SC7_Doc18 concerning the Terms of Reference and composition of the working group on noise. He reminded the participants that during the last Meeting of the Parties, the Resolution 4.17 was adopted with the task for the working group to go ahead with this issue. Due to their complexity, in terms of important financial, technologic and human supports, guidelines seem unworkable for the Parties. The role of the working group is to simplify and clarify guidelines to facilitate their implementation by the Parties and shipping operators. The next step of the working group would be to define concrete action to be lead in the next few months.

68. After adding new Members, such as the relevant Task Manager (Draško Holcer), the working group, as presented in Annex 8, was approved by the Scientific Committee.

69. In presenting SC7_Doc28 provided by Gianni Pavan and others, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara brought to the attention of the Meeting an incident in which an atypical mass stranding of Cuvier's beaked whales occurred last February along the eastern coast in Sicily, in concomitance with a major NATO naval exercise in the area. He remarked that although it was impossible to establish a certain causal link between military activities and the strandings, such link was extremely likely, and in any case it was a fact that the exercises had happened in an area which was known to contain Ziphius habitat.

70. Considering the prescriptions contained in Resolution 4.17, in particular operant paragraph 4 (*"Encourages Parties to address fully the issue of anthropogenic noise in the marine environment, ... particularly as regards the need for thorough environmental impact assessments being undertaken before granting approval to proposed noise-producing activities"*) and *"to avoid or minimize producing noise in ... particular in areas containing critical habitat of cetaceans likely to be affected by man-made sound"*), 5 (*"Strongly requests Parties to emphasize the need for a precautionary approach and to envisage the appropriate mitigation measures, including a provision for expert review by specialists and a provision for the action to be taken if unusual events"*), and 7 (*"Directs the Secretariat to work with Parties to collect information on noise levels and noise sources in the ACCOBAMS area, and directs the Scientific Committee to evaluate such information, in order to detect the most affected sites within the region and determine if cetacean critical habitats are involved, and to report its findings to the next Meeting of Parties"*), the Meeting recommended that this event be

brought with high urgency by the Secretariat to the Bureau so that it could react in the most appropriate manner.

71. The Executive Secretary informed the Meeting that, as soon as the Secretariat learned about the atypical Cuvier's beaked whales mass stranding near Fontane Bianche, an official letter was sent to the Italian Focal Point to obtain more information concerning activities in that marine area that could be connected with such strandings. The Secretariat will inform the Scientific Committee as soon as it will receive a response.

The Scientific Committee suggested that the contacts with the NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC) should be strengthened.

73. Chedly Rais informed the Meeting that the Off Shore Protocol of the Barcelona Convention (adopted on 14th October 1994) entered into force on 24th March 2011 and it provides for the mitigation of impacts of many human activities undertaken in the Mediterranean Sea area under the jurisdiction of countries. The issue of noise being of particular relevance to this new Protocol, he suggested that the working group liaises and collaborates with the Secretariat of the Protocol in Athens. He added that the issue of noise is also among the priorities of the CBD as defined at its 10th COP (Nagoya, 2010) and that the report of the COP recommended that the CBD collaborates on the issue of marine noise with relevant organisations, including ACCOBAMS.

ANNEX 8: Terms of Reference and composition of the working group on noise

1- Terms of reference for the ACCOBAMS intersessional noise working group

This will be an intersessional correspondence group that will work using email unless other opportunities arise or there is a need for an in-person meeting.

The Noise Working Group will report back to each Meeting of the Scientific Committee on its activities under Res. 4.17 and these terms of reference, and on any potential activities that it may undertake or would propose for approval by the Scientific Committee or other bodies of ACCOBAMS.

The Working Group will focus on how to concretely implement and adapt the guidelines for each noise-producing activity in the ACCOBAMS area. To this end, the Working Group will engage in the following actions:

1. The Working Group will examine the conclusions on noise and disturbance of other international bodies (e.g., ASCOBANS, HELCOM, IWC, and OSPAR) and under the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, and will help progress as appropriate any promising joint initiatives with these bodies.
2. The Working Group will design, and will help implement as appropriate, pilot projects to test and improve the noise guidelines of Res. 4.17 for their application in the field.
3. The Working Group will improve and revise the noise guidelines for their concrete implementation in the field, considering the specificity of each noise-producing activity.
4. The Working Group will explore ways it can assist Parties and operators in Meeting the requirements of the noise guidelines, such as by providing Parties with information about mitigation technologies and management measures and their effectiveness and cost.

2- Composition of the ACCOBAMS intersessional noise working group

The Working group is composed as follow:

Experts:

- Yanis SOUAMI (Coordinator)
- Natacha AGUILAR
- Michel ANDRE
- Martine BIGAN

- Marta GARCIA PEREZ
- Draško HOLCER (Task Manager on Pressure issues)
- Elie JARMACHE
- Gianni PAVAN
- Ana TEJEDOR
- Peter TYACK

Organisations:

- ASCOBANS (Heidrun FRISCH and Karsten BRENSING as coordinator of ASCOBANS Working group on Noise)
- IFAW (Tim LEWIS)
- NRDC (Jasny MICHAEL)
- Ocean Care (Sigrid LÜBER)
- OSPAR Convention (David JOHNSON)
- Pelagos (Patrick VAN KLAVEREN)
- WDCS (Karsten BRENSING and Mark SIMMONDS)

5.1.6. Ship Strikes (RMTM 12)

74. Léa David presented the model developed by écoOcean Institut in the area of the Pelagos Sanctuary, which dealt with identification of high risk areas of collision between large commercial vessels and large cetaceans. This model was proposed to be implemented in another highly "at risk" area: Gibraltar. A proposal was presented to the Scientific Committee for support. The project also proposed to model the noise generated by maritime traffic in this area and also to study the collision between medium cetacean species with all types of vessels excluding large commercial vessels.

75. The Scientific Committee agreed with this proposal and supported it.

76. As customarily dealt during previous Scientific Committee Meetings, fin whales have been considered under the same agenda item of ship strikes. Simone Panigada presented the outcome of a recent workshop on 'fin whales research and conservation in the Mediterranean Sea', held in Cadiz, on March 20th 2011, during the European Cetacean Society annual Conference. The workshop has been organized by Pauline Gauffier, Manolo Castellote, Simone Panigada and Renaud de Stephanis. The workshop participants agreed that currently there is some lack of coordination between scientific groups operating at the Mediterranean level and auspicated some degree of coordination structure, with regional coordinators and a general facilitator, with management-politics-science competences. The participants to the workshop agreed on a list of priority actions to be pursued in the short time, including among others:

- a. to update actions listed in the "ACCOBAMS fin whale workshop" held in 2005,
- b. to draft concise research actions to fill the gaps, and
- c. to prepare a list of experts active at the Mediterranean level.

The report will be circulated to the ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee Members with a list of priority actions and relevant budget for consideration by the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat. The need for a conservation plan was also discussed and the final decision was to wait for the report and the list of action to be evaluated before deciding about the need of a plan, even though some level of conservation concern for Mediterranean fin whales exists.

77. Simone Panigada also presented SC7_Doc20, on a "Work Programme for the joint two years IWC/ACCOBAMS work plan", dealing with an extract from the joint workshop's report, held in France in September 2010. The document is composed by a list of recommendations on research, conservation and reporting, with a focus on the ACCOBAMS area and finishes with a two-year work-plan. The report will have to be approved by the International Whaling Commission during its Annual Meeting in Jersey from July 11th-14th 2011, and currently it

does not represent the views of the IWC. The Scientific Committee approved the content of the document and the joint workshop report.

78. Heidrun Frisch (UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS) drew the Committee's attention to document SC7_Inf7, which contained the final report of an ASCOBANS study trialling the identification of risk areas for ship strikes with two different types of shipping data. The Automatic Identification System (AIS) was operating with shore-based receivers and therefore did not cover areas further offshore. Only large vessels were normally equipped with AIS. In contrast, the World Meteorological Organization's VOS Monitoring System was satellite-based and therefore had global coverage. However, as a voluntary scheme, an unknown number of vessels was not covered, including some ferry routes. Both types of data did not cover military vessels, most fishing boats and pleasure craft. Nevertheless, both data sets highlighted the same areas as having high shipping densities. When overlaid with cetacean distribution and density data, risk areas identified also included some in the common ACCOBAMS / ASCOBANS area, namely the Bay of Biscay and the waters off the North Iberian Peninsula.

79. The Executive Secretary stressed the importance for ACCOBAMS to pursue and strengthen the collaboration with IWC and ASCOBANS.

5.1.10. Chemical pollution (RMTM 16)

99. Cristina Fossi introduced the document SC7_Doc24 regarding a concrete proposal concerning some areas important in relation to cetacean habitat and pollution. She described two draft projects on emerging issues concerning: 1) the study of the possible connection between Persistent Organic Pollutant (POP) levels and fin whale *Morbillivirus* infection, exploring the case study of the fin whale stranded along the Tuscany coast in 2011; 2) the study, for the first time in cetaceans, of the potential impact and effect of microplastics in the Mediterranean key species fin whale. She stressed that impacts of microplastics on organisms and the environment remained largely unknown. More than 180 species have been documented to absorb plastic debris including planktophagous species. Moreover, contaminants such as phthalates and PAHs are principal constituents of microplastic. The fin whale, feeding largely on the planktonic euphasiacean *Meganichthyphanes norvegica* could potentially undergo to the risk of ingestion and degradation of microplastics.

100. The Executive Secretary explained that she was contacted by Professor Zitouni Boutiba concerning the impact of organochlorine compounds contamination on cetaceans along Algerian coasts.

101. Professor Boutiba presented document (SC7_Doc23) in which he stressed that marine organisms, in particular cetaceans, have been under high anthropogenic pressure characterised by an elevated urban concentration along the shoreline and a constantly increasing chemical pollution which impacts were closely correlated to the pollution levels of the environment they live in. Harmful contamination effects on the marine system have been studied in order to explain the correlation between the presence of chemical, metallic and organic compounds and the various impacts observed in cetaceans. The results have shown that organochlorine compounds, in particular polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), were often associated with a weakness of the immune system, a dysfunction of the reproductive system, and an ease to develop virus, bacterial and parasitical infections. Recent studies have successfully shown the usefulness of combining biomarker techniques and the analyses of chemicals remnants for evaluating the toxic risks brought upon marine mammals following exposition to a polluted environment. Professor Boutiba suggested to establish a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the contamination, provoked by these halogenous hydrocarbons and the responses generated by some biochemical makers: Monooxygenase with dual function (MFO), endured by cetaceans in Algerian waters.

102. The Executive Secretary commended the dynamism of the team of Professor Boutiba and its interest in developing activities on cetacean conservation.

103. The Meeting recommended that the projects presented by Cristina Fossi and Zitouni Boutiba be drafted by the proponents according to the ACCOBAMS forms. The Scientific Committee suggested collaboration between both research teams.

104. Heidrun Frisch (UNEP/CMS/ASCOBANS) reported on a joint ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Pollution and Marine Mammals which had been convened by Peter Evans (Sea Watch Foundation) and Mark Simmonds (WDCS), held on 20th March 2011, during the ECS annual Conference. Participants looked at a variety of pollutants and their effects on marine mammals. It was clear that chronic health concerns from pollution were not a thing of the past. Accordingly, participants formulated a number of recommendations which would be forwarded to ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS, which concerned research needs on understudied contaminants, including newly emerging ones; effects of pollutants on individual animals; population level effects; priority areas, which include the Mediterranean and Black Seas; priority species; as well as biomarkers and gene expression analyses. The report of the workshop would become available shortly and the publication of more extensive proceedings was planned.

6.2. Contribution to the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

115. The Chair presented results of expert appraisal regarding the relevance to ACCOBAMS of EU criteria and methodological standards. Six experts/participants to the Meeting contributed to this exercise: Dani Kerem, Sergey Krivokhizhin, Giuseppe Notarbartolo di Sciara, Ayaka Amaha Öztürk, Philippe Robert and Alexei Birkun. The results of their work are included in the Annex 9 to this report.

116. The Meeting suggested to create a common ASCOBANS / ACCOBAMS working group on this issue, with Vincent Ridoux in his position of Task Manager on Research. This working group will go deeper on this issue to collect more material for the next ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee.

117. The Representative of ASCOBANS welcomed the idea to have a common working group, and informed the Meeting that she will suggest the idea to the next ASCOBANS Advisory Meeting.

11-15 April 2011

OSPAR Biodiversity Committee

Attendance on behalf of ASCOBANS: Jan Haelters

An oral report of key points of interest to ASCOBANS will be given during the 18th Meeting of the Advisory Committee.

Report of the Workshop “Marine Litter: Plastic Soup and More”, held on 8th November 2010 in Berlaymont, Brussels

The chairman of the day, Mr **Guus Borhardt**, opened the workshop and briefly explained the three sessions. The workshop was attended by around 90 representatives from Member States, European Commission, institutes, stakeholders such as the plastic industry and NGO's. He gave the floor to Commissioner Janez Potočnik, Member of the European Commission responsible for the environment, to make his opening remarks.

Mr. **Janez Potočnik** elaborated on the problem of marine litter in the oceans and at our coasts and mentioned the actions the EC is doing at this stage. He emphasised the need to focus on the solutions to reduce marine litter, on land, on sea and in the minds of the public at large. He commits himself to use what comes out of today and to add it to the weight of opinion, idea and action that will hopefully finally dam the tide of litter. See for his speech:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/626&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

Michael Kyramarios of the Belgium Ministry of Environment and as representative of the Belgium Presidency welcomed the initiative to have this workshop. He stressed the importance of discussing the issues related to Plastic soup at this workshop. He memorized the importance of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive which has a descriptor on marine litter with the objective that litter should do no harm to the environment. In the recent decision on criteria and methodological standards 4 indicators have been identified on litter at the coast, in the water column, ingested by animals and micro-plastics. He also memorized the work done on marine litter within the Regional Seas Conventions, especially OSPAR and their guidelines for monitoring litter. He stressed the importance to find a realistic balance between how to conciliate the plastic soup heritage and the economical, societal and (regulatory) environmental willingness.

The first part of the workshop, chaired by **Georg Hanke** of the Joint Research Centre dealt with the monitoring of litter and the pressure it exercises on the marine environment.

Charles Moore, founder of the Algalita Marine Research Foundation in the USA and the discoverer of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, illustrated with many pictures the pressure of marine litter in the oceans, the estimated quantities involved and the impacts it has. It is not only a problem in the Pacific. In fact, all seas have this type of garbage patch. A large portion of common fish species ingest small particles of plastic. When measured with fine mesh one finds in the middle of the Pacific 26 to 46 times more plastic (by weight) than plankton. Plastic can now be found in every layer of the marine food web. According to him, we have to change the pyramid to first prevention, than control and lastly cleaning up. He ends with the question: How big is your plastic footprint?

Francois Galgani of French IFREMER illustrated the distribution of litter in European waters and coasts. According to the expert group he led, harm to the environment should also be looked at from a social and economic point of view. The minimum we should aim at is to make sure there is no new litter coming in, as what is already there will not disappear.

Soledad Blanco, Director of DG ENV (Directorate for Sustainable Resource Management, Industry and Air Policy), summarized the results of a study to be published before the end of 2010 on waste in the environment. Most plastics are used for packaging which also generates the most waste. Already there are quite a number of Directives in place with regard to waste.

Some of them need to be strengthened. Challenges are development of sustainable packaging, guidelines for handling agricultural waste, use of bio-plastics and increase recycle targets and the reduction of waste through exchange of best practices and eco-design.

John Mouat of KIMO International, an organization of coastal municipalities in Europe, informed the workshop on the plastic breakfast the Ministers had in September at the OSPAR Ministerial meeting on the protection of the marine environment in the North East Atlantic after the cutting open of a stomach of a Nordic Fulmar which proofed the appearance of plastic particles at sea, mistakenly seen as food. He also presented estimates on the costs involved for different sectors such as fisheries and coastal municipalities due to marine debris.

The discussion focussed on the use of biodegradable plastic which only seem to work in controlled circumstances. Research is conducted on the potential toxicity of micro plastics to marine life since it has a capability to attract PCB and other persistent pollutants in the sea water. There was a common understanding that further research is urgently needed, as it the need to monitor better and more standardised/professional the amount of litter and its impacts. For the deep seas, we will probably depend on voluntary monitoring to establish a kind of baseline.

The afternoon session started with the topic on education and awareness. **David Osborn**, Coordinator of the UNEP Global Programme of Action for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities informed the participants on UNEP's activities, such as the development of guidelines for monitoring of coastal litter, its review of regional activities all over the world, the development of market based instruments to be used and the Clean up the world actions. Littering is also a cultural problem, whereby attitude, behaviour and waste management play an important role. We should learn from other behavioural changes and combine awareness with pricing, legislative actions and development of alternatives.

Maud Fontenoy has rowed over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and made a circum navigation sailing against currents and winds. She now has an environmental and educational oriented Foundation and is spokeswoman of the oceans for UNESCO and World Ocean Network. She compares the oceans with our 'bank', our capital for the future which we need to provide us with food, energy but also the regulation of the climate. She is worried that the change of behaviour is taking place too slowly and in the mean time the waste accumulates in the oceans. Her Foundation provides materials for schools. She wants to educate children to the idea that "saving the oceans is saving human beings".

Chris Carroll of Seas At Risk, a federation of national and international environmental organisations concerned with the protection and restoration to health of the marine environment of the European seas and the wider North East Atlantic. He identified different levels for raising awareness: the individual level, the media, the industry and governments. He listed the activities related to beach clean up in a number of EU coastal states. He called for urgent action at a European level and he pressed the Commission for stronger measures to discourage dumping of ship waste at sea. With the current review of the Port Reception Facilities Directive expected to pick up speed next year, the EU is presented with a golden opportunity to target litter originating from ships and remove the economic disincentives to discharging waste at reception facilities.

Alexandre Dangis of the European Plastics Converters which represents 50.000 companies recalled some data that only 9 Member States collect 50 % or more of their waste and that 2/3 of the waste are exported abroad, mainly China. He urged the EC to show leadership in increasing the recovery rate and re-use of waste. The industry is actively involved in increasing the knowledge on the effect of micro-plastics in mussels & lugworms through the University of Ghent. They also have a programme called Operation Clean Sweep and have submitted a LIFE+ project in September called Waste Free Oceans. EuPC intends to roll out in the 4 regional seas of Europe tests to collect and recycling floating marine debris.

The debate, lead by **Haitze Siemers** of DG Mare, was on the pros and cons of export of waste to China where it is recycled, but at least is not turned into marine litter. Also it was discussed how to reach the proper target group. A USA study showed that youth between 16 and 24 litter most. There is a lot of information available but it is not always easy to address the right groups. Integration into other campaigns such as on environmental day or litter in your city could increase the effectiveness. Also industry needs to reconsider design since it does not focus enough on designs which use less. Other suggestions made were: Turning waste into a commodity with a value so the market can play its role; and introduce a label which expresses the amount of plastic used in that product. There is also recognized that there are large differences between MS in recycling rate and legislation (on deposit schemes, free plastic bags).

The third and last part of the workshop dealt with strategies and policy solutions, chaired by **Claude Rouam** of DG ENV, Marine Unit.

Hanane Taidi of Plastics Europe stated that end of life plastic in the environment is the result of irresponsible waste management. She showed figures and experiences from Nordic Europe, expressing that responsible behaviour is possible, provided existing regulations such as the Waste Framework Directive or the Landfill Directive are properly enforced and implemented. She explained the proposed plastics industry approach to contribute to shaping a solution via a 9 working programme action plan and another ambitious proposal sent to Life+.

Member of European Parliament **Keith Taylor** from the Greens stressed the need to use the reform of the Port Reception Facility Directive in 2011, especially with regard to the no special fee part (all to be included in the harbour fee). The EC should take the lead at OSPAR and EU level in developing ambitious targets, to make a difference, and making use of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. He strongly believes that voluntary conduct by industry is not sufficient and binding legislation is required to deliver the reduction targets. We should reduce the plastic footprint and stop using the oceans as a waste place.

Dick de Bruijn of the Netherlands Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment called for more measures to prevent litter and to clean up, to close the plastic cycle and to do more research on the contaminants related to micro-plastics. He gave examples of successful approaches such as the plastic hero campaign to introduce separated collection of plastics from households, fishing for litter by Netherlands fisherman and stakeholder meetings also with industry which need to be scaled up to the international level. He proposed to have regular meetings such as this meeting where all players sit together and discuss issues and to start an additional working group on policy development, next to the Marine Strategy Framework technical group, to be coordinated by the EC. In addition, he stressed the need to assist developing countries in sound waste management. The EU should play an active role in the upcoming 5th International Marine Debris conference in March 2011.

Member of Parliament **Antonyia Parvanova** of ALDE group also requested the EC to take the lead as a global player. She also stressed the health issue related to micro-plastics. More research is needed and also DG SANCO should be involved. She memorized the meeting she organized last June on policy options. She is proposing to have a pilot project on the plastic cycle in relation to marine litter.

Finally, **Sarah Morrison** of the USA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration explained the aim of the Global Strategy for Marine Debris with its four themes: research on impacts; decrease of solid waste; prevention of water-based waste; reduce the amount in the water. This Global Strategy should be the outcome of the 5th International Marine Debris conference in Hawaii (20 – 25 March 2011). The previous 4 meetings since 2000 have delivered a large number of recommendations which are still valid but need to be transformed in actions now. She calls upon the EU to take its responsibility as a global leader, also in this issue.

In the final discussion, it was stressed to make use of all available legislation such as on waste, health, port reception facilities, dumping from ships, marine strategy, etc. whereby a cross cutting approach is required. It is also important to realize that actions can be local where there is more commitment and by the public, stakeholders and even producers but within an international context or plan.

Anna Rosbach, Member of Parliament of the EFD group concluded, according to her, extraordinary and interesting day by stating that she liked the idea of the plastic footprint and would encourage seeing waste as a resource with value. She noticed the need for better coordination, exchange of knowledge and the involvement of science, industry and institutions. We have to wake up, it is our last call. And she strongly believes that: Yes, we can but we really have to want it.

Mr. Gustaaf Borchardt, chairman of the day, summarized the day by stating that marine litter has an economic, environmental, emotional, scientific and an international component. There is need to address both sources: from the land and from the sea. Partnerships with stakeholders need to be established whereby short term and long term objectives have to be set. Innovations in the design, exchange of good practices and pilot projects will learn us more. And there should be a balance between the development of binding and non-binding measures. The upcoming review of the Port Reception Facility Directive is a good opportunity to look at possible amendments to strengthen this binding measure. Cooperation and agreements with the plastic industry is essential to set reduction targets whereby also used can be made of market based instruments. An annual high level rendezvous could facilitate this.

There is still a gap in knowledge which needs to be filled. Therefore we need more and better, standardized monitoring of marine litter with the EEA and within the regional seas convention areas. Further research is needed on toxicity and impacts of litter, especially micro-plastics. We have to create more awareness, dedicated to the different target groups: school youth, consumers, municipalities, port authorities. The concept of 'plastic footprint' or eco-labels on plastic products could assist this difficult and challenging task. And finally, there is the international agenda at the regional seas level, in coordination with UNEP, in addressing IMP/MARPOL and in cooperation with the USA towards a global approach.

He thanked all participants and presenters for contributing to this important meeting, especially those who came from far and complimented the organizing team for this well-organized meeting.

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS MADE DURING THE WORKSHOP AND BY QUESTIONNAIRE ON WHAT TO DO TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF MARINE LITTER:

Production

- Redesign (life cycle)/innovation
- Degradable plastics?
- Reduce the use of plastics
- Reduce use of packaging material

Prevention

- No waste of industrial pellets
- Catch debris in storm water run-off and waste water treatment plants
- Refuse: No free plastic bags; no mass balloon releases
- Higher recycle/reuse rates/collection incentives

Education/awareness on plastic footprint and litter of

- Schools/involvement in surveys
- Producers
- Coastal users
- 'Litterers'
- Sea users
- Authorities

Science/research

- Standardized (professional) monitoring
- Impacts/toxicity, especially micro-plastics
- Socio-economic aspects of litter
- Pathways and distribution of litter

Policies

- Setting targets for litter in environment
- Setting targets for recycle/re-use of plastics
- Reduce packaging/harmonize directive
- No plastics allowed in land fills
- Legislation/enforcement (UN, regional, national)
- Port reception facilities extension
- MARPOL V strengthening and enforcement

Remediation

- Fishing for litter/ ghost nets
- Beach clean-up

Report by Leo de Vrees, policy officer DG ENV, Marine unit

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