

Agenda Item 7.3: Draft Resolutions for MOP 4

Draft Resolution No. 5: Disturbance

Submitted by: Secretariat



ASCOBANS

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

4th MEETING OF PARTIES

Draft Resolution No. 5

Disturbance

The Meeting of the Parties:

RECALLING that the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas stipulates that ASCOBANS work towards "the prevention of other significant disturbance, especially of an acoustic nature";

RECALLING Resolution No. 4 of the Third Meeting of the Parties;

REAFFIRMING that the difficulty of proving the detrimental effects of acoustic disturbance on cetaceans necessitates a precautionary approach in dealing with this issue;

NOTING the results of the ASCOBANS study on disturbance to cetaceans by shipping published in June 2003;

RECOGNISING the national sensitivities in relation to military activities;

COMMENDING the development by the United Kingdom of Regulatory Guidelines on Seismic Surveys and the adoption by Belgium of legislation providing for the establishment of guidelines such as those established by the United Kingdom;

REITERATES its invitation to Parties and Range States to

introduce guidelines on measures and procedures for seismic surveys that provide the opportunity to

- a) alter the timing of surveys or to minimise their duration;
- b) reduce noise levels as far as practicable;
- c) avoid starting surveys when cetaceans are known to be in the immediate vicinity;
- d) introduce further measures in areas of particular importance to cetaceans;
- e) develop a monitoring system that will enable adaptive management of seismic survey activities;

work with military authorities to introduce codes of conduct and similar measures - such as environmental impact assessments and standing orders - to reduce disturbance of small cetaceans;

support further research into the effects on small cetaceans of acoustic devices used to keep marine mammals away from nets or fish farms or other sites;

support research into the effects of shipping and particularly high-speed ferries and into possible ways of mitigating any adverse effects;

support further research on behavioural changes in cetaceans caused by acoustic disturbance; this research should, if possible, encompass biologically significant effects;

INVITES Parties and Range States to

report before the Advisory Committee meeting in 2005, where possible, on approaches to reducing disturbance to small cetaceans by military activities;

develop and introduce, where appropriate, guidelines and other measures to reduce other forms of disturbance to small cetaceans.