

Agenda Item 5.4.2: Publicity/PR Issues: Secretariat

ASCOBANS Secretariat Report on PR Activities (1/2005)

Submitted by: Secretariat



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



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ASCOBANS AC 7 and AC 8 as well as MOP 3 acknowledged that more intensive PR work was needed to increase public awareness of the Agreement and the issues it deals with. Considerable efforts have been made in this field.

PR work was steadily stepped up during the third triennium. This was possible, among other reasons, due to the German voluntary contributions for the years 1999 – 2003, which were allocated to a large extent to outreach and promotional activities.

MOP 4 again stressed the importance of efficient and targeted PR work. The meeting also supported the Secretariat's suggestion that ASCOBANS information material should be made available in languages other than English. The United Kingdom has provided substantial financial support for the translation of ASCOBANS brochures and other material and to upgrade the website.

The following educational and promotional activities were undertaken by the ASCOBANS Secretariat since the 2nd biannual report, presented in December 2004:

- The ASCOBANS website is continuously being modified to increase its user-friendliness and to increase the number of documents that can be downloaded; further modifications, including translation of the website text into other languages than English are planned and should be implemented in the first quarter of 2005;
- Danish, Estonian, Finnish, German, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish and Swedish versions of "Fact Sheet No. 1", concerning the Jastarnia Plan, have meanwhile been produced and can be downloaded from the ASCOBANS website; a Russian version is planned. Further fact sheets are under preparation;
- Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, Lithuanian and Swedish versions of the popular ASCOBANS brochure are in print and will be available within a few weeks. A Spanish version is under preparation. Portuguese and Russian versions are planned. The brochure is already available in English, German, Polish and Latvian;
- Danish, Estonian, English, Finnish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Swedish versions of the ASCOBANS poster designed specifically for the Baltic Sea region are in print, a Russian version is planned;
- UNEP/ASCOBANS will co-fund the production of foreign language versions of the European information video on pingers currently being produced by the RSPCA;
- Preparations for the Third International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) are in full swing. A "Handbook for IDBHP Exhibitors" was produced by the Secretariat and distributed to relevant institutions throughout the Baltic Sea region. It is also downloadable from the ASCOBANS website.

- The “ASCOBANS Award” for outstanding educational and/or information initiatives related to cetacean conservation, will in future be awarded biennially and for the first time at the upcoming 12th Meeting of the Advisory Committee. This year’s winner is a scientific institution from the Baltic Sea region. The Secretariat is exploring the possibility of finding a corporate sponsor for a small financial prize.

In addition to these activities, the Secretariat continues to actively seek and maintain contacts with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations throughout the Agreement area. The Executive Secretary meets with Members of Parliament, representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions, the media and representatives of international organizations and the diplomatic corps in the host country. The ASCOBANS Secretariat also maintains a dialogue with the general public in the Bonn region.

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