

Agenda Item 7

Cooperation with other Bodies

Reports by the Secretariat, Parties and
Partners

Document 7.1

**Report of the Secretariat on
Outreach and Education Activities**

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment
- Parties and other stakeholders are invited to coordinate the 2017 Christmas Card competition

Submitted by

Secretariat



**NOTE:
DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED
TO BRING THEIR OWN COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**

Secretariat's Note

The Rules of Procedure adopted at the 19th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

Report of the Secretariat on Outreach and Education Activities

1. In follow-up to Resolution 5.8 (2006) on Educational and Promotional Activities and Resolution 8.2 (2016) detailing the Work Plan for the period 2017-2020, the Secretariat has implemented various publicity and outreach activities since the Meeting of the ASCOBANS Parties in mid-2016. This report is in response to Work Plan Activity 46, which asks the Secretariat to report on outreach and communication issues to each meeting of the Advisory Committee.
2. The majority of outreach and education related activities are only possible thanks to voluntary contributions by Parties. In the reporting period, Germany provided funds for outreach-related activities, which are gratefully acknowledged.

Public Events

3. The exhibition “The last 300” is currently on display at the [Arche Wattenmeer](#) on Sylt, Germany’s most northerly North Sea island (total exhibition duration: 1.6.- 31.10.2017). The plight of harbour porpoises in the Baltic proper is the focus of the exhibition. The art and design works on display were originally submitted for the 2013 creativity competition “The Last 300” (www.schweinswal.eu) run by NGOs Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), NABU and OceanCare in partnership with ASCOBANS. Since the competition the pictures, sculptures, video and sound installations from 2013 have been exhibited publicly in various locations. Prior to Sylt, the German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund, Germany, was one of the hosts of “The last 300” exhibition.
4. At the opening event of the exhibition on 1 June 2017 Bettina Reinartz from the ASCOBANS Secretariat gave an opening address at the Arche Wattenmeer. Fabian Ritter (WDC) gave a key note presentation and Dagmar Struss (NABU) also gave an opening address. The “Nordsee Akademie”, a modern educational centre, in the very north of Germany will be the next host of “The last 300” exhibition.
5. 2017 is a double-anniversary year for ASCOBANS: the treaty itself celebrated 25 years since the agreement text first became available for signature on 17 March 1992 and on 21 May the ASCOBANS Secretariat joined the Baltic states in celebrating 15 years of the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP). As a result, most activities during the reporting period focussed on these anniversaries. On 29 October 2016 ASCOBANS joined the rest of the CMS Family on the occasion of the UN Day celebrations on the market square in the centre of Bonn. On the day ASCOBANS along with the other Bonn-based UN agencies presented its work to the citizens of its host town, with one of the popular highlights of this UN Day being a “Migratory Animal Photo Booth”.

ASCOBANS 25th Anniversary in 2017

6. In 2017 the ASCOBANS Secretariat celebrated 25 years since the Agreement was first open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 17 March 1992, where it remained open for signature until its entry into force on 29 March 1994.
7. The Secretariat issued a press release and Executive Secretary Bradnee Chambers congratulated Parties and ASCOBANS stakeholders on the occasion with a video message available on the [ASCOBANS homepage](#).
8. UN Environment Executive Director Erik Solheim issued the following message on the occasion, available on the [ASCOBANS website](#):

A Silver Lining for Whales & Dolphins

Whales, dolphins and porpoises are among the most fascinating and iconic creatures on our planet. They migrate even further every year than the millions of people travelling across continents to catch a glimpse of them. Their incredible intelligence and social behaviour still hold many secrets for the scientific community. Yet these mesmerizing mammals face growing threats from human activity, not only in the open seas and coastal areas, but in our homes and businesses.

Every year, our choices leave about 300,000 whales, dolphins and porpoises caught up in fishing nets. Thousands more suffer from the impact of energy, shipping, underwater munitions and pollution like noise, chemicals, plastic or other marine debris. For example, look at the recent images of a whale in Norway dying from a stomach full of plastic bags from Denmark and the UK.

That's why the last 25 years of work by the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas is so important. With such amazing species and migration patterns to protect, the Agreement's impact reaches far beyond the European waters at the heart of its effort. And the team is not alone. Growing global support is clear, from governments and individual citizens, to major oceans conferences and UN Environment's Clean Seas campaign.

The dedication of the Secretariat and Member States in caring for these creatures and the seas through which they travel, make UN Environment proud to support the work coordinated from Bonn. We wish them all the best on this special Silver Anniversary and look forward to redoubling our efforts to give whales, dolphins and porpoises the home they deserve.

9. To mark the occasion the Secretariat placed a number of special articles on the website highlighting the history of the Agreement and key issues. Further articles are envisaged; external submissions are welcome to celebrate the anniversary year.

- [The birth of the agreement](#)
- [Saving the Harbour Porpoise in the Baltic Sea](#)
- [Disentangling the Bycatch Problem](#)
- [The Outreach and Education Award](#)
- [The Secretariat's History](#)

10. Parallel to the above-mentioned article series, the Secretariat launched the "People behind ASCOBANS" series. Key people that made a notable contribution to ASCOBANS and its evolution were invited to submit personal accounts of their particular role in the process, including visions for the future. To date 16 articles have been submitted and have been published on the ASCOBANS webpage and Facebook page since early 2017 (in order of appearance):

- [Katarzyna Kamińska](#)
- [Christina Lockyer](#)
- [Penina Blankett](#)
- [Monika Lesz](#)
- [Karl-Hermann Kock](#)

- [Julia Carlström](#)
- [Mark Tasker](#)
- [Boris Culik](#)
- [Kai Mattsson](#)
- [Stefan Bräger](#)
- [Fabian Ritter](#)
- [Mark Peter Simmonds](#)
- [Maj F. Munk](#)
- [Ralf P. Sonntag](#)
- [Mats Amundin](#)
- [Heidi Frisch-Nwakanma](#)

The International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise

11. The 15th celebration of the IDBHP was held on and around 21 May in 2017. To mark the occasion the Secretariat issued a special anniversary edition of the [“Hello, little whale”](#) video by Laura Stattkus in all the languages of the Baltic Sea, as well as English. This ASCOBANS video campaign had more than 50,000 views on Facebook in total. In Lithuania and Poland alone the respective videos had more than 6,000 hits on the first day alone.
12. Children and youths from in and around Bonn volunteered as native speakers for the different language versions of the video, illustrating once again the diversity of Bonn as a duty station. Translations of the voice over were also provided on a *pro bono* basis through the local network. Bettina Reinartz coordinated the process and provided each volunteer with a little present from the ASCOBANS merchandise selection to thank them.
13. The Common Information Management Communication and Outreach Team of the UNEP/CMS and UNEP/AEWA Secretariats took care of cutting the different language versions of the video and overlaying the voice overs. Starting on the actual IDBHP on 21 May a different video was posted every day on the ASCOBANS Facebook page.
 - [English](#)
 - [Danish,](#)
 - [Swedish,](#)
 - [Russian,](#)
 - [Norwegian,](#)
 - [Finish,](#)
 - [Lithuanian,](#)
 - [Estonian](#)
 - [Polish](#)
14. The original video had been produced in German by Laura Stattkus for above-mentioned “The last 300” exhibition, where it continues to feature.

15. As every year, the Secretariat invited potentially interested institutions around the Baltic Sea to participate, offering to make available information and display materials to support the events. Like every year organizers were invited to register their events for the IDBHP and to send reports and pictures. The German Oceanographic Museum in Stralsund, for example, had special sessions on the day where visitors could meet cetacean scientists and hear about their recent findings.

Electronic Media

16. The Secretariat continued to improve the webpage, regularly uploading new content, adjusting the format depending on content needs and sharing news. Since MoP 8 in 2016 a total of 28 news articles and announcements were published on the ASCOBANS website. The joint CMS Family webpage makes it possible to issue the same news items across several pages, so on a number of occasions CMS news relevant for small cetaceans in the agreement area were also issued on the ASCOBANS page.
17. During the reporting period more than 50 articles on outreach activities and meetings were uploaded on the ASCOBANS Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ascobans). As mentioned above the 2017 “Hello, little whale” video campaign reached more than 50,000 views.
18. ASCOBANS stakeholders are invited to share educational websites featuring small cetaceans which could be highlighted under the ASCOBANS Kids page, as suggested by the 13th Meeting of the Jastarnia Group.
19. ASCOBANS continues to be featured on **Wikipedia** in five languages: [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Russian](#) and [Spanish](#). Some updates are required and will be undertaken as staff capacity allows. Other language versions may follow as the opportunity arises, primarily with the help of interns.
20. **Christmas Card:** Back in 2015 a design competition for the annual ASCOBANS Christmas Card was launched in Germany at the UN day. In 2016 Poland coordinated the competition. Other Parties and stakeholders are invited to coordinate the 2017 competition. The winner of the contest will be sent an ASCOBANS surprise bag and his/her name will feature on all the cards sent.

Publications and Information Material

21. As in the past, and in line with Parties’ instructions through the Work Plan, the Secretariat has continued to distribute information material, which is being used throughout the Agreement Area during ASCOBANS events and those by other institutions.
22. **Cotton Bags:** Always a popular item at meetings and public events, and one which helps reduce the threat of marine debris while raising awareness of the Agreement and its aims, the Secretariat regularly distributes cotton bags. Available bags feature the Agreement’s logo, the ASCOBANS Kids website and mascot.
23. **ASCOBANS Leaflets:** The Secretariat reprints leaflets as needed and as resources allow. All 15 language versions are also available as [PDFs for download](#) and can be reproduced by other organizations, as required. For selected priority projects the Secretariat is able to post limited amounts of leaflets and other outreach material.
24. **All About Dolphins:** This brochure, which had been produced for the Year of the Dolphin campaign in 2007/2008 and is designed for children, continues to be available as [PDFs for download](#) on the ASCOBANS website in nine languages.
25. **Postcards:** The Secretariat continues to maintain stocks of the four species postcards (harbour porpoise, common dolphin, striped dolphin and orca) and the IDBHP postcard.

26. **Marine Debris Leaflets:** In 2014, CMS and ASCOBANS co-produced a leaflet entitled “Oceans Full of Plastic: Marine Debris – A global problem”. The leaflet is aimed at the general public, including children, and contains helpful tips on how everyone can be part of the solution. 10,000 English-language copies were produced. Thanks to a donation by the Norwegian government to CMS, French, German and Spanish language versions have been produced. This leaflet is also available as [PDF for download](#).
27. **Other Material:** For the 2016 MoP and subsequent meetings 250 mousepads with the ASCOBANS logo and a Harbour Porpoise were produced. This and all other outreach materials continue being distributed, as appropriate, during outreach events.
28. **Anniversary Volume:** The current Chair of the Bycatch and North Sea Working Groups, Peter Evans, who has worked on ASCOBANS matters for many years, has submitted a draft manuscript of “Conservation of European Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises: Twenty-five years of the regional agreement ASCOBANS”. This book was commissioned for ASCOBANS and is meant to be sold through high street bookshops and aims to be the most authoritative review of northern European cetaceans and the threats they face, whilst also giving insights into how an international Agreement is created, functions and can meet obstacles to progress. The book will be available for the 25th anniversary of ASCOBANS coming into force (2019), if not before, depending on negotiations with individual publishers.

Exhibition Material

29. **ASCOBANS Exhibition and Threat banners:** The Whale Workshop (www.whaleworkshop.org) continues presenting inflatable, life-sized models of cetaceans and other marine life in the Agreement Area in all its shows.
30. **Information materials:** The German Oceanography Museum celebrated the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (see above). Their event took place in the OZEANEUM in Stralsund where an information stand was set up. Informative flyers and posters were available at an information stand highlighting the plight of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. A pull-up Banner (International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise) was sent to the Museum to be used for the day and also for forthcoming events.