

Agenda Item 5.2: Disturbance by seismic surveys

Location and extent of seismic activities in the ASCOBANS and neighbouring areas during 1997 and 1998 and mitigation measures (data submitted by Parties)

Submitted by: The Secretariat



ASCOBANS

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

Location and Extent of Seismic Activities in the ASCOBANS and Neighbouring Areas during 1997 and 1998 and Mitigation Measures (data submitted by Parties)

Note from the Secretariat

At its 6th Meeting in April 1999, the Advisory Committee asked Parties to submit available information on the location and extent of seismic activities in the ASCOBANS and neighbouring areas during 1997 and 1998, and to provide details of mitigation measures taken to reduce possible effects of such activities on small cetaceans (cf. AC6 Report, p. 3 point 3).

So far, only the German Government has responded to this request, informing the Secretariat that:

"As far as the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety of the Federal Republic of Germany is informed there were no seismic activities in German waters during 1997 and 1998.

Seismic investigations of the sea bed require prior approval by the Federal Agency for Sea Traffic and Hydrography and in some cases by the competent agencies of the coastal Federal States. The Federal Agency for Sea Traffic and Hydrography does not grant permissions for air gun operation."

This statement corresponds to the information given in the German Annual National Report of 4 August 1999 (cf. 3rd Annual Compilation of National Reports, p. 14).

Apart from Germany, one other Party, the United Kingdom, provided information pertaining to seismic surveys in the Annual National Report for 1999. According to this report:

"In March 1998 the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) published a revised version of "Guidelines for minimising acoustic disturbance to marine mammals, including small cetaceans". These guidelines are aimed at reducing the impacts of seismic surveys on marine mammals. The guidelines have been circulated to oil and gas companies and to other relevant organisations.

DETR has collected information on ferry routes and time-tables from ferry companies operating in UK waters. This information has been provided to the ASCOBANS Secretariat.

DETR and the Ministry of Defence are gathering information on the use of explosives in UK waters. Once collated, this information will be provided to the ASCOBANS Secretariat."

(cf. 3rd Annual Compilation of National Reports, p. 15).