

## Resolution No. 4

### Impacts of Chemical Pollution on Small Cetaceans

*Aware* that pollution by persistent and often bio-accumulating heavy metals, including mercury, and butyltins, as well as by persistent chemicals such as PCBs, DDT and others, constitutes a serious threat to marine mammals;

*Acknowledging* the international efforts to combat Persistent Organic Pollutants in particular by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants and the POP-Protocol of the UN-ECE Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and *welcoming* the efforts of the European Union to guarantee by the REACH-Regulation a higher security of chemicals for health and environment;

*Aware* of the ongoing negotiations on a legally-binding instrument regarding mercury;

*Recalling* Resolution No. 4 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties (1997) on Management and Further Research Needs to Address Effects of Pollutants on Cetacean Health, as well as Resolution No. 7 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (2006) on Research on Habitat Quality, Health and Status of Small Cetaceans in the Agreement Area;

*Further recalling* CMS Resolution 7.4 (2002) on Oil Pollution and Migratory Species;

*Aware* that the Conservation and Management Plan of the Agreement places great emphasis on “the prevention of the release of substances which are a potential threat to the health of the animals” and on conducting research on the effects of pollution;

*Recalling* that OSPAR, HELCOM and the European Union are working towards reduction of emissions and sources of chemical pollutants;

*Recognizing* the important role of *inter alia* the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) concluded under the International Maritime Organization, and the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter and the London Protocol (1996);

*Acknowledging* the work of the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission on the issue of chemical pollutants and cetaceans, particularly recalling Resolution 2012-1 on the importance of continued scientific research with regard to the impact of the degradation of the marine environment on the health of cetaceans and related human health effects;

*Concerned* that chemical pollution continues to be a significant threat to small cetaceans;

*Grateful* for the annual literature review provided to the Advisory Committee by the Pollution Working Group;

*Noting* the recommendations of the 2011 ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Chemical Pollution and Marine Mammals;

*Noting with gratitude* the work undertaken by the Sea Watch Foundation and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society in organizing the above-mentioned workshop, and in compiling its proceedings;

*The Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS*

1. *Calls upon* Parties to continue to support ongoing research programmes related to effects of chemical contaminants on small cetaceans;
2. *Encourages* Parties to facilitate research on the priority areas identified by the 2011 ECS/ASCOBANS/ACCOBAMS Workshop on Chemical Pollution and Marine Mammals including:
  - (a) Lesser-studied contaminants or those of particular concern;
  - (b) Effects at individual level;
  - (c) Effects at population level;
  - (d) Geographic areas where pollutant levels have generally been higher than elsewhere, including comparisons of high and low exposure area studies, which may involve collaborative studies between countries;
  - (e) Priority species such as the harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin and killer whale;
  - (f) Methods of detecting toxic effects that do not require pathological examination, including use of biomarkers such as gene expression;
3. *Urges* Parties to implement fully the provisions and decisions of organizations and treaties addressing the introduction of chemical waste into the marine environment, including OSPAR, HELCOM, the European Union and the IMO;
4. *Invites* Parties to inform the Advisory Committee about relevant activities in order to facilitate cooperation and exchange information and best practice;
5. *Strongly encourages* the creation of a web-accessed database for marine mammal strandings and necropsy data in the ASCOBANS region, as foreseen in the Agreement's Conservation and Management Plan; and *calls upon* Parties to provide funding for the creation and long-term support of such a database;
6. *Reaffirms* Resolution No. 4 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Parties (1997) on Management and Further Research Needs to Address Effects of Pollutants on Cetacean Health, as well as Resolution No. 7 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (2006) on Research on Habitat Quality, Health and Status of Small Cetaceans in the Agreement Area.