

3rd Session of the Meeting of Parties

Bristol, United Kingdom

26 – 28 July 2000

**Resolution No. 4
Disturbance**

The Meeting of 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";

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

RECOGNISING the national sensitivities in relation to military activities;

COMMENDING the development by the United Kingdom of Regulatory Guidelines on Seismic Surveys;

INVITES 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;

INVITES Parties and Range States to 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;

INVITES Parties and Range States to report before the Advisory Committee meeting in 2003, where possible, on approaches to reducing disturbance to small cetaceans by military activities;

INVITES Parties and Range States to 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;

INVITES Parties and Range States to support research into the effects of shipping and particularly high-speed ferries and into possible ways of mitigating any adverse effects;

INVITES Parties and Range States to support further research on behavioural changes in cetaceans caused by acoustic disturbance; this research should, if possible, encompass biologically significant effects;

INVITES the European Cetacean Society to elaborate a protocol for the removal of cetaceans' ears from carcasses to be investigated for possible damage to the auditory system as part of further research into possible effects of noise on the hearing of cetaceans;

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