

**4th MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS
Esbjerg, Denmark, 19 - 22 August 2003**

Resolution No. 10

Recovery Plan for Harbour Porpoise in the North Sea

Recalling that the 5th International Conference on the Protection of the North Sea (Bergen, Norway, 20-21 March 2002) called for a recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea to be developed and adopted (Paragraph 30, Bergen Declaration);

Recalling that the declaration of the Joint Ministerial Meeting of the Helsinki and OSPAR Commissions (Bremen, Germany, 25-26 June 2003, 'Bremen Declaration') adopted the common statement "Towards an Ecosystem Approach to the Management of Human Activities (Paragraph 13) which highlights the need to develop and promote the implementation of Recovery Plans for harbour porpoises in the North Sea;

Recalling the considerable experience ASCOBANS has gained with the development of the recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the Baltic ('Jastarnia Plan');

Noting the preparations ASCOBANS has already undertaken towards the development of a recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea at the 9th and 10th Meetings of the Advisory Committee in Hindås (Sweden) and Bonn (Germany) in 2002 and 2003;

Commending Germany for its initiative for the development of a recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea;

Noting the requirements of the EU treaty and its Common Fisheries Policy;

The Meeting of Parties to ASCOBANS

Endorses the development of a recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea with ASCOBANS taking a leading role;

Endorses a holistic and inclusive approach to the development of such a plan;

Supports the establishment of a preparatory scientific group for the recovery plan;

Supports the establishment of a steering group to guide the development of the recovery plan. This group should consider all parties' interests in the development of the plan;

Requests the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Advisory Committee, working through the Secretariat and in close consultation with Germany to establish the preparatory scientific group and steering group;

Supports the annexed timetable in that the work on the recovery plan should start immediately and possibly end in June 2005;

Endorses the holding of a workshop of all interested parties where the first draft of the recovery plan will be reviewed and discussed;

Requests that in developing the plan full account should be taken of the requirements of the EU treaty.

Outline Timetable for the Elaboration of a North Sea Harbour Porpoise Recovery Plan

2003 A Steering Group will be established.

A Scientific Group will be established.

The Committee of North Sea Senior Officials (CONSSO) will be consulted by the ASCOBANS secretariat. A suitable opportunity is likely to be the next meeting of the Heads of Delegations (HOD) in autumn (22 October 2003), where ASCOBANS holds observer status.

2004 ASCOBANS Advisory Committee will agree contents of the recovery plan at its 11th meeting.

A scientist will be employed by the Federal Research Centre for Fisheries (Hamburg, Germany). The elaboration and detailed description of all elements of the recovery plan will be part of his/her duties.

The work of the scientist will be guided by the Steering Group and will be in close cooperation with international specialists on the biology, demography and protection of small cetaceans, and in relevant human activities in the North Sea. Where necessary their institutions will be visited to facilitate exchange of ideas and information.

A stakeholder workshop will be held in Germany in late 2004/ early 2005 in order to discuss the first draft of a recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea.

2005 The draft recovery plan for harbour porpoise in the North Sea will be considered by the 12th Meeting of the ASCOBANS Advisory Committee.

Based on the comments obtained the recovery plan is to be finalized approximately by June 2005.