

Agenda Item 8.1.2: Integration of the ASCOBANS Secretariat into the UNEP/CMS Agreements Unit

Considerations on the future status of the ASCOBANS Secretariat

Submitted by: Secretariat



ASCOBANS

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

Considerations on the Future Status of the ASCOBANS Secretariat

1. During its 4th meeting (Nairobi 1994) the Conference of Parties (CoP) to CMS invited the Parties to the Agreements concluded under the auspices of CMS to consider consolidating Secretariat functions for one or more Agreements in regional centres in order to facilitate links with the CMS Secretariat. In particular, the Parties to ASCOBANS and other European Agreements were invited to consolidate Secretariat functions in a special Agreements Unit to be co-located with the CMS Secretariat (CMS CoP 4, Resolution 4.4).

CMS CoP 5 (Geneva 1997) confirmed its invitation to the Parties to the European Agreements under the Convention to relocate their Secretariats with the CMS Secretariat. The Conference approved the establishment of an Agreements Unit within the CMS Secretariat and formulated “Terms of Reference for the Secretariat Arrangements (CMS CoP 5, Resolution 5.5).

Acknowledging CMS CoP 4 Resolution 4.4, the 1st Meeting of Parties (MoP) to EUROBATS (Bristol, 1995) decided to co-locate the Agreement Secretariat with the Convention Secretariat in Bonn. EUROBATS MoP 2 (Bonn, 1998), voted to extend the current status (co-located, but autonomous) until the end of 2000 and agreed that the 3rd MoP should adopt the full integration of the EUROBATS Secretariat into the CMS Secretariat from January 2001 (Resolution No. 1).

The 2nd Meeting of Parties to ASCOBANS (Bonn 1997), acknowledging both of the above-mentioned CMS Resolutions, decided to establish the ASCOBANS Secretariat in Bonn on an interim basis pending its full integration into the UNEP/CMS Secretariat from January 2001. The relocation of the ASCOBANS Secretariat to Germany took effect in June 1998 and the Secretariat is now co-located with the Secretariats of UNEP/CMS and EUROBATS in the United Nations Premises in Bonn. However, it is still a formally independent and fully autonomous institution.

Pending the establishment of the Agreements Unit in co-location with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat, the Secretariats of ASCOBANS and EUROBATS are presently provisionally administered by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

At the 1999 Meetings of the Advisory Committees to ASCOBANS and EUROBATS the Terms of Reference for the Agreements Unit as suggested in the Annex to CMS Resolution 5.5 were discussed. The Parties to the Agreements decided to establish a joint ASCOBANS/EUROBATS Working Group (AEWG). This AEWG met on 24 August 1999 in Bonn. The AEWG Interim Secretariat was also represented at this meeting. The AEWG considered the Terms of Reference for the Agreements Unit and suggested certain substantive amendments.

The CMS Secretariat forwarded the proposal for revised Terms of Reference to UNON for official comment. UNON indicated that, for its part, the amendments were acceptable, with two provisions concerning the use of a New York-based bank account and the recruitment of Secretariat officers. In addition, UNON made an amendment with respect to the primary screening of candidates for these posts.

CMS CoP 6 (Cape Town, November 1999) reviewed and endorsed the amended Terms of Reference, thereby repealing and substituting the Annex to Resolution 5.5.

In keeping with Article VI, paragraph 7 (6) of the Final Act of the Negotiating Meeting on the adoption of AEWA (The Hague, 1996), which stipulates that “at its first session, the Meeting of the Parties shall establish an Agreement Secretariat within the Convention Secretariat”, AEWA MoP 1 (Cape Town, November 1999) decided to establish a permanent AEWA Secretariat co-located with the UNEP/CMS Secretariat and to integrate this Secretariat into the proposed Agreements Unit under the above-mentioned Terms of Reference.

EUROBATS AC 5 (Zagreb, Croatia, 21 – 23 February 2000), voted in favour of recommending the adoption of a Draft Resolution on integration of the EUROBATS Secretariat into the CMS Agreements Unit to the upcoming 3rd MoP.

Pursuant to Article IV of the Final Act of the Negotiating Meeting on the Adoption of the ACCOBAMS (Monaco, November 1996), “subject to the approval of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, an Agreement Secretariat shall be established within the Secretariat of the Convention.”

2. A decision on the future status of the ASCOBANS Secretariat should finally be taken during MoP 3 in July of this year. With a view to preparing the upcoming MoP, the Secretariat has submitted a Draft Resolution on the Integration of the ASCOBANS Secretariat into the UNEP/CMS Agreements Unit (AC7/Ddoc. 27).