

Agenda Item 5.4.2: Publicity/PR Issues: Secretariat

ASCOBANS Secretariat Report on PR Activities (1/2006)

Submitted by: Secretariat



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

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ASCOBANS AC 7 and AC 8 as well as MOP 3 acknowledged that more intensive PR work was needed to increase public awareness of the Agreement and the issues it deals with. Considerable efforts have been made in this field.

PR work was steadily stepped up during the third triennium. This was possible, among other reasons, due to the German voluntary contributions for the years 1999 – 2003, which were allocated to a large extent to outreach and promotional activities.

MOP 4 again stressed the importance of efficient and targeted PR work. The meeting also supported the Secretariat's suggestion that ASCOBANS information material should be made available in languages other than English. The United Kingdom has provided substantial financial support for the translation of ASCOBANS brochures and other material and to upgrade the website.

The following educational and promotional activities were undertaken by the ASCOBANS Secretariat since the 4th biannual report, which covered the period from May 2005 through December 2005:

- The ASCOBANS website is continuously being updated and modified to improve its user-friendliness and to increase the number of documents that can be downloaded. By AC 13, all non-restricted documents produced by all MOP and AC meetings should be available on the website. The Secretariat hopes that further modifications which are planned but could not be implemented in 2005 due to budgetary constraints, can be undertaken in 2006. This includes translation of the website text into languages other than English;
- Portuguese, Russian and Spanish versions of the ASCOBANS brochure and a Russian version of the ASCOBANS Baltic poster are under preparation and can hopefully be printed this year;
- The German, Polish and Swedish versions of the RSPCA's European information video on pingers, the production of which was co-funded by UNEP/ASCOBANS, are now available and awaiting distribution in the Baltic region;
- Preparations for the Fourth International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise (IDBHP) are ongoing. To date, museums, scientific institutions and NGOs in Finland, Sweden, Germany, Latvia and Poland have informed the Secretariat of their intention to stage events on this occasion. The Secretariat itself will organize several events in Bonn on 17 and 21 May 2006.

In addition to these activities, the Secretariat continues to actively seek and maintain contacts with relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions and organizations throughout the Agreement area. The Executive Secretary meets with Members of Parliament, representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions, the media and representatives of international organizations and the diplomatic corps in the host country. The ASCOBANS Secretariat also maintains a dialogue with the general public in the Bonn region.