

**RESOLUTION 7.10****IMPROVING MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF CETACEAN POPULATION  
ABUNDANCE AND DISTRIBUTION IN THE ACCOBAMS AREA**

*The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area:*

*Recalling* Article II, paragraph 3, of the Agreement and its Annex 2 (Conservation Plan), paragraph 2,

*Recalling* Resolution 2.11 on the facilitation of scientific research campaigns and programmes,

*Recalling* Resolution 5.1 on the ACCOBAMS Strategy for the period 2014-2025, in particular its specific objective B.1 “Improve the knowledge about state of cetaceans”,

*Recalling* Resolution 6.13 on “Comprehensive cetacean population estimates and distribution in the ACCOBAMS Area (Monitoring of cetacean distribution, abundance and ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative)”, which has replaced the previous Resolutions 2.19, 3.15 and 5.9,

*Taking into consideration* Recommendation 12.2 of the 12<sup>th</sup> ACCOBAMS Scientific Committee Meeting on cetacean populations estimates,

*Welcoming strongly* the realization of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative in the Agreement Area and *commending* the Parties, the non-Party Range States, the Permanent Secretariat, the sub-regional Co-ordination Units, the Scientific Committee, all partner Organizations and all persons involved for the successful implementation of the survey campaigns in summer 2018 in the Mediterranean Sea and in summer 2019 in the Black Sea,

*Expressing* its gratitude to France, Italy, Monaco, Slovenia, Spain, the MAVA Foundation, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) for their voluntary contributions and financial support, and to other Parties that have provided in-kind contributions for the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative in the Mediterranean Sea,

*Acknowledging* the financial support provided by the European Commission for the project CeNoBS (Support MSFD implementation in the Black Sea through establishing a regional monitoring system of cetaceans (D1) and noise monitoring (D11) for achieving GES) that supports the implementation of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative in the Black Sea,

*Commending* in particular the efforts of the Parties that have facilitated the issuance of research permits within the Mediterranean and the Black Seas in the context of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative,

*Thanking* also the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (SPA/RAC), the International Union for Conservation of Nature - Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation (IUCN-Med), the French Agency for Biodiversity (AFB), the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) and the PELAGIS Observatory for their support within the Steering Committee of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative,

*Stressing* that initial data analyses of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative are presently underway and that the results will contribute to the achievements of the ACCOBAMS objectives and can also make a fundamental contribution to initiatives outside the ACCOBAMS, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

*Stressing* the need to explore new and alternative sources of data to assess cetaceans' distribution and abundance, in particular through the use of existing marine monitoring programmes and innovative technologies,

### ***I – Capitalizing on the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative***

1. *Stresses* that the data collected under the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative represent an unparalleled conservation resource in the Agreement area and thus every effort should be made to ensure that the data are used in the most efficient and robust way for conservation purposes;
2. To achieve this aim, *recommends that*:
  - a) in addition to the already agreed analyses of the cetacean data conducted in the context of the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative, the Parties, the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat promote further in-depth analyses, including analyses of data on anthropogenic activities (i.e. marine debris and acoustic mapping) and on non-cetacean species, in collaboration with other stakeholders, as relevant;
  - b) the Scientific Committee develops recommendations based on the results of the analyses to facilitate area- and threat-based conservation efforts to contribute to the achievements of the ACCOBAMS objectives and of other relevant initiatives;
  - c) once the cetacean data are analysed, the Scientific Committee focusses on developing a suitable monitoring programme for the ACCOBAMS region to enable abundance trends and potential distributional changes to be identified, consistently with the reporting cycles of EU-Habitat Directive, EU-MSFD and IMAP (Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme of the Mediterranean Sea and coast and related Assessment Criteria) of the Barcelona Convention;
  - d) such data are used for the assessment of conservation status for cetacean species in the region.

### ***II – Improving cetaceans' distribution and abundance monitoring efforts in the Agreement Area***

3. *Recommends* that Parties and Range States ensure that any proposed national programmes on the study of abundance and distribution of cetaceans are compatible with the ACCOBAMS Survey Initiative and the guidelines annexed to Resolution 6.13;
4. *Recommends* that Parties, Range States and ACCOBAMS Partners, where relevant, coordinate the implementation of national monitoring programmes, in particular by synchronizing their survey campaigns, and consider joint survey efforts, whenever possible, assisted by the Scientific Committee and the Permanent Secretariat;
5. *Requests* the Scientific Committee to develop guidelines / best practices on the implementation of multidisciplinary surveys and on the use of platforms of opportunities and innovative technologies to collect data to assess cetaceans' distribution and abundance;

6. *Encourages* the Scientific Committee, in addition to the ongoing efforts to estimate the population size of cetaceans in the Agreement area, to explore other direct and/or indirect methods which utilize historical time series data from any kind of source that can provide indications of trends in cetaceans abundance (such as data collected within the framework of fisheries hydro-acoustic surveys);
7. *Asks* the Scientific Committee to investigate the opportunity to establish a regional repository for data related to cetaceans' distribution and abundance;
8. *Decides* that the present Resolution complements Resolution 6.13 and constitutes an addition to it.