

Resolution 2012-X
on the Importance of Continued Scientific Research with regard to the
impact of the degradation of the marine environment on the Health of
Cetaceans and related Human Health Effects
submitted by Germany, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark,
Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the
Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden,
Switzerland and the United Kingdom

RECALLING IWC Resolutions 1998-11, 1999-4 and 2000-6 expressing the Commission's concern about the negative effects of environmental degradation on cetaceans, in particular the existence of high levels of organic contaminants and heavy metals; and **NOTING** that, while the consumption of cetaceans products may have positive health effects, scientific evidence demonstrates that some communities may be faced with health problems arising from the high level of such contaminants that are present in those products in their diet; **ALSO RECALLING THAT** IWC Resolution 1998-11 invites Governments directly affected to submit, when possible, reliable information to the IWC relating to possible human health effects resulting from the consumption of cetacean products, and encourages the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other appropriate agencies to put this issue on their own agenda;

FURTHER RECALLING that IWC Resolution 2000-7 notes that the study of the effects of environmental changes on cetaceans is an integral part of their conservation and management;

NOTING to this effect that the need for rigorous scientific advice and risk assessments for cetaceans lies at the heart of the work undertaken by the Scientific Committee, inter alia, under the Pollution 2000+ research program, endorsed by the IWC at its 51st Annual Meeting;

NOTING that IWC Resolution 1999-4 requests the Scientific Committee to receive, review and collate data on contaminant burdens in cetaceans and forward these as appropriate to the WHO and competent national authorities, and to report on this matter to the Commission;

RECALLING that organic contaminants and heavy metals are seriously polluting the environment and its living resources including some species of whales in some areas, and may have a significant negative health effect on consumers of products from these marine mammals;

NOTING the recent assessments and recommendations of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme Working Group of the Arctic Council in its report "Arctic Pollution 2011" (Mercury in the Arctic);

and **NOTING** that IWC Resolution 1999-4 instructing the IWC Secretariat to correspond with the World Health Organization (WHO) has led to an exchange of information;

NOW THEREFORE THE COMMISSION

INSTRUCTS the Secretariat to forward this Resolution to the World Health Organisation (WHO) with a request for increased exchange of information between the IWC and the WHO;

ENCOURAGES the WHO to conduct reviews of recent scientific publications regarding contaminants in certain cetacean products and give updated advice for consumers;

WELCOMES the work accomplished so far under the Pollution 2000+ research programme;

REQUESTS the Scientific Committee to remain engaged in the evaluation of the available data on organic contaminants and heavy metals in some cetaceans as well as the effect of such contamination on the health of cetaceans and their reproduction; and **FURTHER REQUESTS** the Scientific Committee to report to the IWC on the progress accomplished thereon, if possible by the next meeting of the Commission (IWC 65);

In this vein, **INVITES** all Governments to continue supporting the Scientific Committee in its work; and **FURTHER CALLS UPON** all Governments to take all necessary steps to implement existing legislation and standards aiming at reducing the input of contaminants, including heavy metals, into marine ecosystems;

FURTHER URGES the Governments concerned to remain vigilant and responsibly inform consumers about positive and negative health effects, related to consumption of some cetacean products, and take such steps as necessary to counter negative effects based on rigorous scientific advice and clear risk assessments; and

UNDERTAKES to revisit the issue at a future meeting, in the light of the relevant developments and scientific information, and based on the report by the Scientific Committee.

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~~**RECALLING ALSO** that Resolution 2003-2 urges Governments to limit scientific research to non-lethal methods only;~~

NOTING the recent assessments and recommendations of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme Working Group of the Arctic Council in its report "Arctic Pollution 2011" (Mercury in the Arctic);

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