

Belgium strengthens its statement against whaling

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Today, Belgium becomes a member of the Southern Ocean Research Partnership of the International Whaling Commission. This partnership of 12 countries conducts non-lethal whale research and counterbalances the position of Japan who continues whaling for a so-called scientific research. With its membership, Belgium aims to give a strong signal in favour of the protection of cetaceans and marine ecosystems.

The support of our country to this partnership will be implemented through scientific research for the conservation and protection of whales and dolphins. There are several cetacean research programs in Belgium, conducted by the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and academic researchers, for which our country enjoys international recognition.

The International Whaling Commission tackles the protection of whales and the management of whaling activities. This year, the Commission celebrates its 70th anniversary, along with the 30th anniversary of the moratorium on commercial whaling. Belgium is a member of this organisation since 2004, and has always strongly supported conservation and protection of whales and dolphins.

The meetings of the International Whaling Commission in Portoroz (Slovenia) will continue until Friday 28th of October. By then, a decision is expected on the proposal of creating a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary, which has already been discussed for many years. New threats such as ship strikes and noise pollution are also examined and discussed by the commission.

For more information on cetaceans :

- <http://www.environment.belgium.be> > Seas, Oceans and Antarctica > Whales and Dolphins
- The flyer "Ships, whales and dolphins: toward a better cohabitation" and "Whales: avoiding collisions prevents damage to ships, and injuries to passengers, crew and whales"(see <http://www.environment.belgium.be> > Publications)

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