



Principality of Monaco, September 15th 2006

PRESS RELEASE

ACCOBAMS presents *Operation MIMO*, a tribute to Prince Rainier III

A natural-size dolphin-shaped statue will be submerged by **H.S.H. Prince Albert II** in the
Principality of Monaco's Larvotto Natural Reserve

In the framework of its Tenth Anniversary, ACCOBAMS (Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area) launches Operation MIMO, event **under the presidency of H.S.H. Prince Albert II**.

17th September at 4pm, a natural-sized dolphin-shaped statue, MIMO, will be submerged in the Principality of Monaco's Larvotto Natural Reserve. **H.S.H. Prince Albert II will dive** together with a team of professional divers and several Monegasque personalities committed to the protection of Marine Biodiversity.

This event will make the site an ideal spot for sea enthusiasts to dive, celebrating ACCOBAMS' Tenth Anniversary at the same time. MIMO will be the new Ambassador of the species protected by the Agreement, particularly of the common dolphin, a species facing extinction.

It is no coincidence that the statue is dedicated to the memory of the late **Prince Rainier III** for the commitment he devoted to the birth of ACCOBAMS, the achievement of its goals and the establishment of the Secretariat in the Principality of Monaco.

Larvotto Natural Reserve, symbolising the Principality's devotion to the conservation of the marine environment, was chosen as the location for the statue

MIMO is 2.3 metres tall and weighs approximately 80 Kilograms: it will be secured to a 4-ton pedestal made of environment-friendly concrete, studied and developed on the Island of Embiez by GTM/Vinci. MIMO will be placed on a posidonia-free sandbank. Created by Mr Philippe Lopez, the statue was crafted using composite materials and covered by an ecological antifouling layer which will provide a better protection over time. It will be placed at a depth of 12 metres in order to be easily reachable even by diving schools.



Transportation and submersion will be assured by Mr Christophe Spiliotis' *Société des travaux sous-marins Prodiver*, a company specialised in underwater works. Spectators will follow the arrival of the statue and its submersion from the Promenade of the Grimaldi Forum, next to the Larvotto.

A cocktail dinner at the "Note Bleue" restaurant will follow the diving operations: representatives from the 20 Parties to ACCOBAMS, the heads of UNEP/CMS and the Monegasque Government are expected to attend the event. Films, a dance performance offered by *Centre Chorégraphique Céline Toquet*, a bingo game and live music will enhance the evening. T-shirts made by AMAPEI (a Monegasque association for people suffering from down syndrome) will be also sold to finance whale-watching trips for disabled people.

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