



# Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals

Secretariat provided by the United Nations Environment Programme



## Joint statement by the Founding Partners on the application of Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine (GRD) to join YoD as official supporter

The Founding Partners of YoD considered the initial application from the Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine (GRD – Society for Dolphin Conservation, Germany) very carefully. Our starting point is to accept applications from any body or individual prepared to work constructively with partners in the interests of wild dolphin conservation

Initially, it was clear that two YoD partners, the widely-respected global voluntary body Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS - also a CMS Partner) and the ACCOBAMS inter-governmental Agreement Secretariat had concerns about accepting GRD because of their experience with this body in the past. They therefore formally advised against accepting GRD into the YoD Partnership. GRD's application was therefore privately and politely declined. In order to avoid unnecessary argument, and to avoid antagonizing the applicant unnecessarily, no detailed justifications accompanied the formal note of refusal.

It subsequently became apparent through their actions that GRD wished mainly to focus not on supporting YoD but on attacking one of the YOD Partners which has commercial interests in offering excursions to dolphinarium in holiday destinations, as some tourists visit these facilities when taking overseas holidays. The Partners believe that GRD were well aware of the interests of the various Partners when they applied to be supporters, but chose not to reveal this until their original application was rejected. Since then GRD have launched a highly aggressive media campaign, which we believe is intended to undermine YoD Partners and, subsequently, the Year of the Dolphin altogether.

It is also to be regretted that GRD have chosen to issue grossly inaccurate and offensive statements about the Convention on Migratory Species and its staff, published as part of an attack on our host country's Government for its alleged motives in promoting a merger between the CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariats at the end of 2006 – a merger which was agreed at the ASCOBANS Parties meeting in December 2006. GRD made these statements on a website which intentionally "appropriated" the acronym of a UN body ("ASCOBANS") in an effort to misdirect as well as misinform web users. ASCOBANS Parties have already made their views known to GRD on their behaviour and asked for the website to be removed in its current form.

[www.yod2007.org](http://www.yod2007.org) - CMS celebrates the Year of the Dolphin 2007  
La CMS célèbre l'Année du dauphin 2007  
CMS celebra el año internacional del delfín 2007



At their summit meeting on 27 April 2007, the partners of YOD reconsidered GRD's application, which had previously been unacceptable to two of the 5 partners. At the summit, the application was rejected unanimously. It was felt that GRD's recent behaviour had sadly confirmed any earlier doubts about their suitability as a supporter for YoD. In addition, partners felt that GRD's emphasis on dolphins in captivity deflected attention and focus from the central theme of YOD, which is the threat to dolphins in the wild. In this respect YoD has taken a consistent view with applicants who both primarily support or oppose dolphinariums, by insisting that *all YoD activities* support its initial declared mandate and must focus on dolphins in the wild, and not on animals held in aquaria or other ex situ locations.

The Partners of YoD now place it on record that GRD's hostile behaviour towards YoD and its Partners clearly disqualifies them from an official role in the initiative. The founder partners will continue to take a firm line on this and any other similarly motivated applications, in order to ensure that they do not distract from the delivery of YoD as a successful global campaign. Indeed in that context, the partners would point to the 40 supporting bodies and individuals already working within YoD delivering projects in more than 25 countries. We will continue to take a tolerant view towards further applications. However we will not allow the campaign to be hi-jacked by those who wish to use it for their own ends, or who indulge in abusive language and other behaviour towards bodies with whom they happen to disagree. We would invite any critic of YoD to look objectively at what is being achieved by going first to the YoD website [www.yod2007.org](http://www.yod2007.org) before considering action which only damages conservation and confuses the public.

Robert Hepworth  
Executive Secretary of CMS and Acting Executive Secretary of ASCOBANS

Also signing on behalf of the following:  
Dr. Marie-Christine Grillo Van Klaveren  
Executive Secretary, ACCOBAMS

Chris Butler-Stroud  
Chief Executive Officer, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS)

Dr. Michael Iwand  
Executive Director, Group Corporate Environmental Management, TUI