

Welcome Address by the Mayor of Limassol

Mr Yiannis Armeftis

9th Meeting of the Parties to the ACCOBAMS Agreement (MOP9)

Crowne Plaza Hotel – 18.11.2025 – 9.00 a.m.

Distinguished delegates,

Representatives of international organizations,

Distinguished representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Municipality of Limassol, it is with great honor and pleasure that I welcome you to our city on the occasion of the 9th Meeting of the Parties of the Agreement of the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the contiguous Atlantic area – ACCOBAMS.

It is with particular joy that we host in our city, for the first time, a Meeting of the Parties of this very important Agreement.

Your presence here today – representatives of governments, international organizations, scientific institutions and civil society – sends a strong message about our shared responsibility to protect the marine environment and, in particular, the whales, dolphins and seals that inhabit our seas.

Allow me to extend a warm welcome to the Executive Secretary of ACCOBAMS, Mrs Maÿlis Salivas, to the Chairperson of the ACCOBAMS Bureau, Mrs Marie Thérèse Gambin, to the representatives of UNEP/MAP, CMS, CIESM, IUCN, WWF and other organizations, as well as to all delegates from the 24 Parties of the Agreement. Your presence in Limassol honors us.

Limassol is a coastal city whose identity, history and economy are closely tied to the sea.

We are a port city, a center for international shipping, tourism and services and, at the same time, a community that enjoys and depends on the marine environment.

As a city with a large commercial port, intense coastal activity and a constantly growing population, Limassol is fully aware that it is part of both the challenge and the solution.

It is our duty to ensure that economic development, the blue economy and tourism go hand in hand with strong environmental protection.

In this effort, the role of the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research is crucial.

As the responsible authority representing Cyprus in ACCOBAMS, the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research works systematically to monitor cetacean populations, to identify threats and to promote effective conservation measures at national and regional level.

At local level, the Municipality of Limassol cooperates closely with the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and other stakeholders to prevent and control marine pollution, to protect aquatic organisms and habitats, and to support the sustainable management of our coastal and marine ecosystems.

Through joint initiatives – from monitoring and public awareness activities to clean-up campaigns and environmental education – we seek to translate international commitments into concrete action on our own shores.

We see Limassol not only as a host city for this Meeting, but also as an active partner in the wider regional effort to protect the Eastern Mediterranean.

We also believe that investing in a healthy marine environment is not an obstacle to development, but a foundation for sustainable progress.

A clean, vibrant sea supports responsible tourism, sustainable fishing and aquaculture, innovative blue-economy activities and a higher quality of life for residents and visitors.

The protection of cetaceans and marine biodiversity is, in this sense, not only an environmental imperative, but also a smart economic and social choice.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Department of Fisheries and Marine Research and all the stakeholders involved for the excellent organization of this Meeting, and to thank ACCOBAMS and its Parties for the trust they have shown in Cyprus and in Limassol as the host city.

I wish you every success in your endeavors, which will strengthen the protection of cetaceans and the marine environment for the future.

Welcome to Limassol. I wish you a very successful Meeting.
Thank you.