

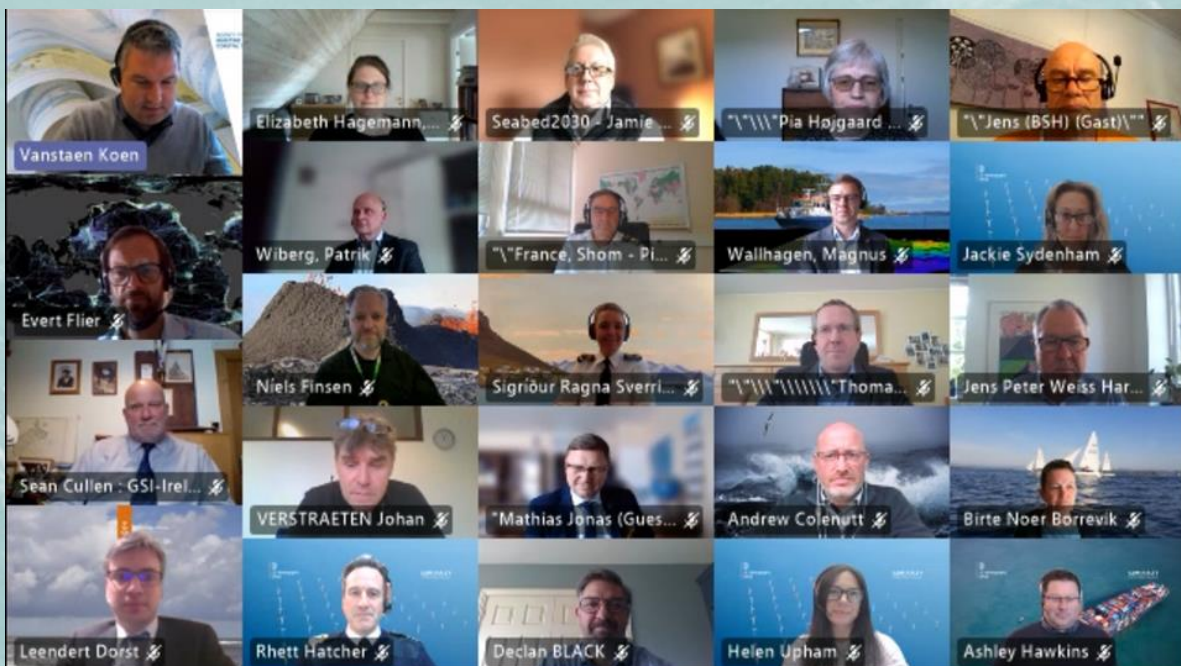
## 34<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE NORTH SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (NSHC34)

Video-teleconference (VTC), 27 & 28 April

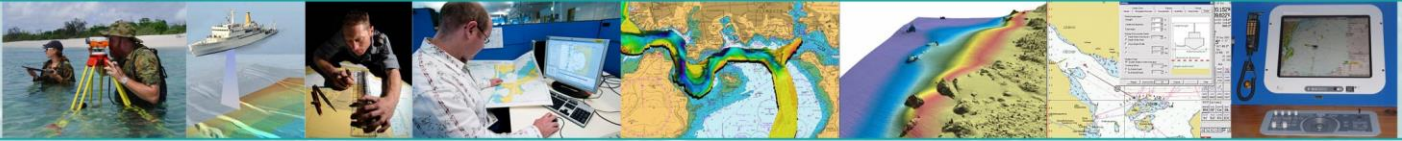
Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2021	
Task 3.2.1.	Prepare for and report meetings of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions: NSHC

The 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the North Sea Hydrographic Commission (NSHC34), initially planned to be held in Reykjavik, Iceland in March 2020 was held on 27 and 28 April 2021 in a VTC format due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting was chaired by Koen Vanstaen (Belgium). Forty delegates from ten Member States (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherland, Norway, Sweden, and United Kingdom), two representatives of the SeaBed2030 project, seven Industry Observers (Terratech, Teledyne CARIS, Sea ID, SevenCs, Kongsberg, iXblue and Xocean) and one Observer Member State (USA) participated in the meeting. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Secretary-General Dr Mathias Jonas.



Some participants at the NSHC34 Meeting



The meeting commenced with welcome words by the NSHC Chair, Koen Vanstaen (Belgium) and the IHO Secretary-General provided his opening remarks. The meeting proceeded with the approval of the agenda and the matters arising from the previous NSHC33 Meeting and the respective list of actions.

Secretary-General Dr Jonas reported on the general arrangements of the IHO and operations of the IHO Secretariat. He continued with the outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly (A-2) and the resulting actions of the 4<sup>th</sup> Council (C-4) with an impact on Regional Hydrographic Commissions. He specified the approval by the A-2 of the new IHO Strategic Plan and S-100 Roadmap and the task to the Council to proceed with their implementation. The Secretary-General also invited the NSHC to examine its respective instruments to ensure compliance with the recommendations of the IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended by A-2.

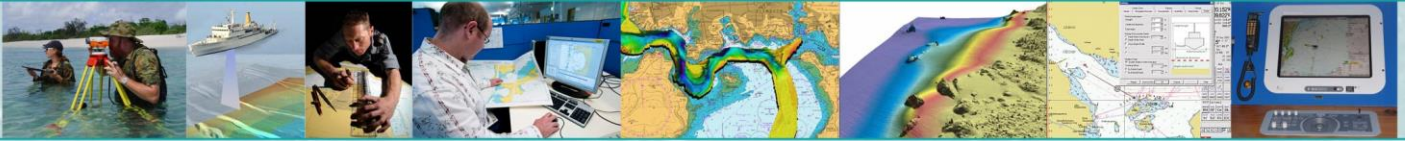
Members agreed on the next steps in order to address the outcomes of the IHO's 2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly and the 4<sup>th</sup> IHO Council, both held in November 2020. The explanations of the Secretary-General on the new IHO Strategic Plan were echoed by France's report on proposals how the NSHC should reflect the strategic directions as part of its activities. It was agreed to develop a common NSHC gap analysis for each goal and related targets. With the objective to define 'Where are we now?', 'What is the gap?', 'What is the role of the NSHC to meet the goals and targets' and 'How do we collectively meet the challenges and achieve the goals and targets?'

For the sake of efficiency the meeting omitted with the usual National Reports. Instead the Commission addressed a wide range of topics, including liaison aspects with the European Union, survey activities, crowdsourcing, autonomous shipping, and charting schemes in the region.

Germany being the nominated NSHC representative at the IHO EU Network Working Group, reported on EU initiatives affecting the work of European Hydrographic Offices such as the Implementation of the Open Data Directive, the future of EMODnet and the European Ocean Observing System (EOOS).

The chair of the BS-NS MSDIWG, Jens-Peter Hartmann (Denmark), elaborated on how the BSHC and NSHC could work with S-122 and if it was possible and desirable to establish, as an S-122 test bed, a pilot project with the North Sea and Baltic Sea. The Commission agreed to investigate the possibilities to establish collaboration between the EU MSP (Maritime Spatial Planning) Technical Expert group on data and the BS-NSMSDIWG in order to share information and identify areas of cooperation.

In the context of Crowdsourced Bathymetry and Seabed 2030, it was discussed how to increase the availability of data across the North Sea and beyond, including the data from academic institutes and industry. During the meeting, Dr. Patrick Westfeld (Germany) was appointed as the new NSHC CSB/Seabed 2030 Coordinator, taking over from Thomas Dehling.



The UKHO presented some of the challenges ahead to support fully autonomous shipping, including data challenges for hydrographic offices. The NSHC endorsed a way forward to conduct a harmonized risk assessment across the NSHC region to define survey and resurvey priorities using CATZOC classifications.

The Commission's 34<sup>th</sup> meeting was held as an online meeting for the first time. As a result of the positive outcomes, members agreed to change from bi-yearly physical meetings to yearly meetings, with the meeting every other year to be held online. Further, the long-standing habit of having meetings hosted and chaired by different participating organizations was not regarded as the most effective way at the present time. The Commission accepted the proposal for organizing as a physical meeting, the upcoming NSHC35 on 5 to 6 April 2022 in Iceland, followed by a VTC session (NSHC36) in 2023 – both hosted and chaired by Iceland, and again a physical meeting (NSHC37) in 2024 – hosted and chaired by Sweden.

At the end of the meeting Georg Kr. Lárusson, Director General of the Icelandic Coast Guard, took over the role of Chair from Koen Vanstaen (Belgium).