

**9th MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC9
Paramaribo, Suriname, 12-14 June 2017**

MEDITERRANEAN & BLACK SEAS HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION

MBSHC report to IRCC9

1. Chair

Chair: ingénieur général (hydrographer) Bruno FRACHON, (France), since July 2015

Vice-Chair: according to MBSHC Statutes (article 6), the vice-chair is occupied during a MBSHC Conference by the host country. At the end of the Conference, the vice-chairperson becomes chairperson, and there is no intersessional vice-chair

2. Membership

Members: Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia (suspended), Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.

Associate member(s): Bulgaria, Israel, Palestinian Authority, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Observers: Albania, Germany, Lebanon, DINMA, IOC, IC-ENC, PRIMAR, Secretariat of the IHO

3. Meetings:

The period between two conferences is usually two years.

The last conference, the 19th, has been organized in Batumi, Georgia, June 30th – July 2nd 2015.

Next conference, the 20th, will take place in Herceg Novi, Montenegro, July 4-6th 2017

4. Current MBSHC Working Groups:

- a) International Charting Coordination WG for the charting region F (F-ICCWG), chaired by France – operates mainly as a correspondence WG
- b) Black and Azov Seas WG (BASWG), chaired by Turkey

5. Status of IRCC actions (relevant for the MBSHC):

IRCC8/06: encourage the attendance of Member States and Observers at WWNWS-SC meetings.

France, Georgia, Greece, Russia, Spain, United Kingdom, the United States of America attended the WWNWS-8 in Ålesund, Norway in September 2016.

IRCC8/07: raise awareness of the impact of e-navigation on the provision of MSI in the respective regions and to highlight the use of the Joint Manual on MSI to ensure correct terminology and formats are used in MSI messages.

Will be addressed at the next conference of the commission.

IRCC8/08: Encourage closer engagement of the National MSI Coordinators of Member States with the relevant NAVAREA Coordinator.

Done in every conference.

IRCC8/09: encourage closer coordination between NAVAREA and Capacity Building Coordinators in planning and student selection for the CB MSI training courses.

Done.

IRCC8/13: Work to reduce overlaps by applying the WEND Principles in defining approved ENC schemes.

Undertaken by the F-ICCWG, supported by the RENCs.

IRCC8/21: invite Member States to provide following information in the National Reports to RHC meetings: the status of MSDI; plans for involvement in MSDI; and challenges facing the HO.

Done.

IRCC8/30: invite Member States to provide scanned version of any of the missing [GEBCO] sheets, that that they may have in their archives, to the IHB for inclusion in the online digital archive.

Will be addressed at the next conference.

IRCC8/31: in coordination with Member States, to be attentive to opportunities to raise awareness on the role of hydrography and the importance of improving mankind's knowledge of the seas and oceans in support of the sustainable development goals, disaster risk reduction and the integrity of the oceans.

In the Mediterranean and Black Seas, a strong focus is made on the protection of the marine environment and on the Blue economy. Many initiatives and organizations are dealing with these subjects, and the members of the commission are striving to embark hydrography in these actions. For instance:

- in February 2017, the chair (FR) and the head of the *Istituto Idrografico della Marina* (IT) took part to a special meeting of the Union for the Mediterranean in Barcelona, devoted to the sustainable development of Blue Economy in the Western Mediterranean. They had the opportunity to brief the participants on the role of ocean knowledge and marine data in that perspective;

- same month were launched in Roma two projects funded, by the European Union, on the Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) in the western part of the Mediterranean Sea (SIMWESTMED, led by SHOM, France) and in the eastern part (SUPREME, led by CORILA, Italy). These studies address, among other points, the role and need for good quality hydrographic information for MSP, an important component of the European Blue Growth initiative.

IRCC8/32: invite Member States to send updated information to the Secretariat with respect to the IHO Publications C-55 and P-5 on an annual basis.

Done.

IRCC8/37: send to the IHB a copy of their regulations regarding the designation of Member States to occupy the seats on the IHO Council allocated to their Commission.

Done (Annexe to the Statutes).

6. Agenda Items:

The MBSHC agenda is built according to the IHO work programme.

IHO Work Programme 1– “Corporate affairs”

Cooperation with International Organizations

Cooperation with the European Union

MBSHC member states are active in participating to the IHO-EU network working group (IENWG). Greece is the MBSHC focal point for the IENWG. Several MBSHC Member States took part in European Commission's flagship maritime projects EMODNET and in the Coastal Mapping project.

Cooperation with IMO

Cooperation with CIESM

Cooperation with IOC

Mediterranean initiatives relevant to the commission

Information management

IHO website, WMS, ENC catalogue, ...

IHO Work Programme 2 – Hydrographic Services and Standards

Technical Programme Coordination – HSSC

Development of technical standards

IHO Work Programme 3 –Inter Regional Coordination and Support

IRCC meetings

Cooperation with member States

National reports

Participation on non-member States

Lebanon and Israel attended the last Conference in 2015.

During the 19th MBSHC, IHB and Iran gave an informative focus on the hydrographic activities in the Caspian Sea.

Hydrographic Surveys status

MBSHC Member States provide on an annual basis their Hydrographic status of surveys map to the Commission. These pieces of information are synthetized through a GIS portal hosted by Spain.

INT Charts in region F & Status of ENCs in region F

The coordination and monitoring of the INT scheme and of the ENC coverage is handled by the F-ICCWG. Side-meetings have been organized alongside to the 19th MBSHC Conference, and to the first session of the IHO Assembly. Another meeting will take place back-to-back to the next MBSHC conference.

Activities of the WEND WG

MBSHC is represented to the WEND working group by the chair of the F-ICCWG (France).

RENCs operationCapacity Building Management

Since 2011, Turkey is the regional Capacity Building (CB) coordinator, in charge of updating and monitoring the MBSHC 3 years CB work plan. Turkey represents the MBSHC at the CB Sub-Committee.

CB activities since IRCC-7:

- High level visit in Azerbaijan (October 2016).
- Technical visits in Montenegro and Albania (November 2016).
- Workshop in Multi-Beam EchoSounder and Side Scan Sonar (Istanbul, October 2016).

This agenda item comprises a report of IALA on its capacity building activities.

Maritime Safety Information

The region is coincident with the NAVAREA III, the coordinator of which is Spain. NAVTEX coverage has been improved by transmission by Malta using the Tunisia slot. The creation of a Black Sea sub-region is under consideration by the WWNWS, and pending on regional agreement.

Marine special Data Infrastructures

MBSHC discussed the stakes and feasibility of a Common Bathymetric Database for this region with regards of the third phase of the European project EMODnet.

IHO Council**7. [RHC] cooperation with stakeholders (organizations, industry, etc.):**

- The *Commission Internationale pour l'Exploration Scientifique de la Méditerranée* (CIESM – Mediterranean Science Commission) will take part to the next conference of the MBSHC.
- Industry is invited to take part to the conferences of the commission.

8. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed :Charting

The main difficulties faced by the MBSHC are in the coordination of the INT chart schemes and ENC coverage. Despite a consolidated small scale INT scheme and a growing large scale coverage, mid-scale schemes development have been slowed down by several long-lasting issues.

As for the Regional ENC coverage, MBSHC is impacted by the lack of progress on a disparate Usage Band 1 scheme, with overlapping cases inducing some domino effect, which impacts the issue of UB2 overlapping cases.

The overlapping policy applied by RENCs has not prevented a growing number of overlapping issues in those usage bands.

Discrepancies between new ENCs and existing INT charts are raising new difficulties regarding consistency of nautical information provided by different producers.

Coordination with initiatives regarding the marine environment in the Mediterranean Sea

Another challenge faced by the commission is related to the many initiatives and organizations dealing with the protection of the marine environment and with sustainable Blue Economy (or Blue Growth). These entail numerous programmes on the knowledge of the marine environment, and the MBSHC will have in the coming years to develop liaison with the relevant organizations, in order to put the contribution of hydrography in the right place.

9. Achievements and lessons learned Conclusions:

New members and non-members

- Following up the entering into force of the new IHO Convention, Malta became a member of the IHO in January 2017. It is expected that associate members or observers from the region should ask for IHO membership in a near future.
- MBSHC is developing liaison with States bordering the Caspian Sea.

Charting

- GIS tools built by the Secretariat of IHO are of great support for the discussion on charting schemes.
- Bilateral discussions are most often a pre-requisite to fruitful work of the ICCWG, including in cases involving more than two members.

10. Actions required of IRCC:

The IRCC is invited to note the report.

Ingénieur général Bruno FRACHON

Chair of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Commission