

7th Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission Conference

22-24 August 2017, Ilulissat, Greenland

Report of the IHO-EU network working group (IENWG)

Background

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is established between the IHO and the European Commission (EC). The purpose is to provide a framework ensuring a continuing liaison between IHO and EU in the specific areas of common interest. The EU Commission's Directorate General (DG) for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) acts as the contact point on the EC side. From the IHO side the IHO-EU Network WG (IENWG) has been established as a working group under IRCC, which acts as the IHO contact point. The IENWG is chaired by France, Laurent Kerléguer, and consists of representatives from all Regional Hydrographic Commissions concerned.

Members:

- IHO Secretariat,
- ARHC, represented by Denmark
- BSHC, represented by Sweden
- EAtHC, represented by France
- MACHC, represented by France
- MBSHC, represented by Greece
- NHC, represented by Norway
- NIOHC, represented by United Kingdom
- NSHC, represented by Germany
- SAIHC, represented by France
- SWPHC

Italy and Ireland have declared their intention to become observers at the IENWG

Meetings during the period:

IENWG 5 – Brussels, Belgium (13-14 October 2016)

Next meeting:

IENWG6 - Saint Mandé Paris, France (27 - 28 Sept. 2017).

Agenda Items:

The IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG) has been established by the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) to monitor and deal with the activities and processes related to hydrographic aspects under the aegis of the European Union (EU).

Tasks

For more information see

https://www.iho.int/srv1/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=608&Itemid=846&lang=en

Work Items

A/

“Coastal Mapping”:

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG Mare) has awarded a contract to an altogether 18 (11 European HOs) partners' consortium led by SHOM (French Hydrographic Service). The overall aims of the project are to:

- Assess the current availability of digital coastal maps in the EU
- Disseminate this information by EMODnet
- Share experience of coastal mapping in the EU
- Develop standards for best practices
- Propose how a future JECMaP could operate

Duration of the contract is 36 months and the budget counts to xxx.

An important milestone of the project was the presentation to DG/MARE, in December 2016, of the project's propositions for an EU-wide coastal data acquisition programme (governance, budget, objectives) embedded into the EU scope of regular sponsored activities.

Three years after the ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission (EC) and the IHO, coastal mapping has been the first significant coordination activity of the IENWG to form a consortium of national HOs taking the lead in an important EU project.

B/

“EMODNet”:

The European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet) is a long term marine data initiative from the DG MARE underpinning its Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy. The main purpose of EMODnet is:

- to unlock fragmented and hidden marine data resources and to make these available to individuals and organizations (public and private), and
- to facilitate investment in sustainable coastal and offshore activities through improved access to quality-assured, standardised and harmonized marine data which are interoperable and free of restrictions on use.

Currently EMODnet has finalized the 2nd phase of development with seven sub-portals in operation that provide access to marine data from the following themes:

- bathymetry,
- geology,
- physics,
- chemistry,
- biology,
- seabed habitats and
- human activities.

Several European HOs have actively contributed to the first and 2nd phase of EMODNET by data provision.

The Executive Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises (EASME) issued a call for tender for “High resolution seabed mapping” on 4 May 2016 which can effectively be considered as EMODNET phase 3 for the bathymetry theme.

As proposed by IENWG, consultations between the affected organisations resulted into a merger of the bathymetry consortium of the second phase of EMODNet with the IENWG coordinated coastal mapping consortium.

EASME awarded the contract to this consortium in December 2016.

C/, D/

The promotion of IHO and of the Hydrographic Offices as authoritative data providers has been ensured through participation to several demonstrations and meetings (nonexhaustive list hereafter):

- European Maritime days in Turku on 18-19 May 2016,
- Meeting of the Committee of regions on "The Importance of Marine data for the Development of the Blue Economy on Local and Regional Level" 13 October 2016.

Due to the national role of several HOs for maritime spatial planning which is a growing subject of interest in Europe (Directive 2014/89/EU), IENWG has sought and obtained a position of observer in the EC Member State Expert sub-group on Maritime Spatial Planning.

Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed:

IENWG considers that its notoriety has progressed significantly at DG-Mare, the next task will be to extend notoriety of IHO and of HOs beyond DG-MARE to other DGs (Research, Regio, Growth).

In view of bathymetric information, the European strategy for marine knowledge has so far fostered the gathering of existing (mostly low resolution) data and the establishment of internet based GIS portals to make those data accessible. As one important lesson learned from the coastal mapping project, IENWG proposes to focus on systematic high quality data acquisition and aggregation. IENWG strives to claim a key role for discussing with DG-Mare the proper organization for coordinating and financing of such future European wide acquisition strategy.

Achievements/outputs/conclusions:

IENWG has proved its interest in sharing views amongst HOs and to develop cooperation between HOs for answering European calls for tenders.

IENWG considers that IHO and HOs, and their possible input for a European policy in the field of marine knowledge, are now better understood from DG-Mare.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the ARHC continues to monitor the ongoing work within the EC through participation in the IHO-EU Network. Denmark is willing to continue to represent the ARHC.

Action required of ARHC7

The ARHC7 is invited to:

- a. Note the report;
- b. Take any other action as appropriate.