

REPORT OF THE IHO-EU NETWORK WORKING GROUP (IENWG)

1. **Chair:** Laurent Kerléguer (France)

Vice-Chair: -

2. **Membership:**

IHB, [now: IHO Secretariat]
ARHC, represented by Denmark
BSHC, represented by Sweden
EAAtHC, 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

3. **Meetings:**

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

IENWG 4 - Saint-Mandé, France (18-19 January 2016)

IENWG 3 - Saint-Mandé, France (9-10 June 2015)

IENWG 2 - Saint-Mandé, France (28-29 January 2015)

IENWG 1 - Saint-Mandé, France (2 September 2014)

IENWG 6 – Saint-Mandé, France (May / June 2017 tbc)

4. **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

	Task	IHO work programme items to which the task contributes
A	To monitor the outcome of the EC call for tender “Coastal mapping”	3.6; 3.7
B	To prepare the position of European HOs about the future phase of EMODNet, the long term marine data initiative from the European Commission	3.9

C	To improve cooperation with the European Commission, by promoting amongst its entities and with decision makers the role of the hydrographic offices in development of EU maritime policies	3.1
D	To monitor European directives, calls for tenders and proposals, projects, events, etc, potentially impacting HOs and to define actions to be conducted in accordance	3.1

Work Items

“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 HO) 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.

The kick-off meeting was held at the end of June 2015 in Saint-Mandé, France. The coastal mapping portal was opened on December 2015.

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 form a consortium of national HOs taking the lead in an important EU project.

The results of the project are presented at a stakeholders conference 7 February in Brussels.

“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 objectives of EMODnet are:

- 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 organizations resulted into a merger of the bathymetry consortium of the second phase of EMODNet with the IENWG coordinated coastal mapping consortium. This consortium applied a tender to the call and was awarded the contract in December 2016.

The High Resolution Seabed Mapping project wants to operate along three axis:

- AXIS 1: Set up coordinated programmes for data acquisition at maritime basin scale,
- AXIS 2: Increase the possibilities for bathymetric data acquisition in the framework of the EU operational programmes and funds,
- AXIS 3: Promote the production of usable bathymetric data for maritime policies by different categories of coastal users and from multiple sources; “the community sourcing”

Other Activities:

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

- European Parliament Intergroup “Sea, rivers, islands, coastal areas”, meeting “MARINE DATA: WHAT ROLE FOR EUROPE?” in Brussels 2 July 2015,
- IHO Director Gilles Bessero and Ingénieur Général Bruno Frachon, National Hydrographer of France, on behalf of the IENWG, met with Mr Joao Aguiar Machado, Director-General MARE at the European Commission (EC) in Brussels, 18 February 2016,
- European Maritime days in Turku, Finland 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.

5. 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 learnt 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.

6. 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.

The coordinating role of IENWG to present several national HOs of Europe in a joint consortial body has proved successful for winning contracts. This must be sustained.