

43rd CIESM Congress Palermo, Italy 14-18 October 2024

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2024

Task 3.2.1.6

Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission - MBSHC (notable stakeholders outside IHO: IALA, IC-ENC, PRIMAR, CIESM, Industry).

High level summary

- The 43rd CIESM Congress is an event that not only celebrates scientific breakthroughs but also bridges diverse cultures across the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions, by exploring a wide range of marine disciplines such as dynamics of phytoplankton, environmental toxicology, ocean biogeochemistry, marine biodiversity, sea level variability and coastal hydrodynamics, sustainable blue bioeconomy, microbial biotechnology, geodynamics and marine geological hazards, marine litter and nano/microplastics, climate change impacts, deep sea & extreme environments, aquaculture, ocean literacy, assessment of fishery resources, and Mediterranean Straits.
- Particular attention during the Congress was paid to research into the effects of climate change and anthropization in the Mediterranean and Black Sea areas, such as the impact of maritime traffic on marine species, in particular vessel collisions with whales, as well as changes in habitat use by marine species and threats to marine flora.
- CIESM and IHO signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017, renewed in 2021, to cooperate together for the seas under the auspices of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) principles, to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation for marine policy development and to exchange relevant experience on how modern web-based tools can be used to visualize multiple datasets of various types, enabling a better understanding of interactions within the complex ocean system.

Details:

The 43rd CIESM Congress took place in Palermo, in the prestigious venues of Palazzo Sclafani and Palazzo dei Normanni from 14 to 18 October 2024. The Congress, aiming at strengthening the scientific cooperation amongst coastal States in the Mediterranean and Black Seas, was opened by H.S.H. Prince Albert II, under the scientific direction of the Director General of CIESM, Dr Laura Giuliano. 400 delegates from Institutions, Research Centres, Academia and Organizations belonging to the 23 Member States of CIESM attended the congress. Director Luigi Sinapi represented the IHO as speaker in the “*Mediterranean Straits: From Ancient Myths to Renewable Energy*” panel, held on 18 October 2024 at Palazzo dei Normanni.

Due to its geological and hydrological setting, the Mediterranean has a lot to say on most relevant Earth’s and climate transformation events. Its Straits, connecting this semi-enclosed sea with Earth Ocean, play a pivotal role. Inspiring ancient myths evolving through the culture of fishing villages or enlightening modern hydrodynamic theories with application in renewable energy sectors, Mediterranean Straits are well known since their ancient history, for their economic, strategic, and political importance. The Panel tackled all Mediterranean Straits’ aspects, encompassing their physical, ecological, economic, strategic, legal, and political importance.



Panel on “Mediterranean Straits: From Ancient Myths to Renewable Energy”

In his intervention entitled “*Safety & security in Mediterranean Straits*”, Director Sinapi provided an overview on the Mediterranean Straits as key routes for maritime trade, significantly impacting global commerce. They also serve as gateways for cultural and diplomatic exchanges and are essential natural corridors for marine fauna. The Strait of Gibraltar is crossed by approximately 109,000 ships each year. The Suez Canal handles nearly 30% of global container traffic and the Strait of Sicily provides a vital corridor for ships traveling between the eastern and western Mediterranean.

Hydrography and the IHO play a crucial role in ensuring the safety and security of navigation in Mediterranean straits. With products based on the S-100 Universal Hydrographic Data Model, ships will have access to up-to-date information on underwater obstacles, currents, and tides. This will help prevent accidents that could potentially cost lives and have negative economic impacts. Additionally, with IHO products like the S-122 Marine Protected Areas, mariners can be informed of biological activity along their shipping routes, helping them make decisions to prevent ecological harm, such as avoiding collisions with marine mammals.

Photo



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Upcoming meetings:

The 44th edition of the CIESM Congress is planned to be held in 2026 (venue TBD).