

29th Conference of the Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission (BSHC)
Tallinn, Estonia
18 – 19 September 2024

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2024

Task 3.2.1.2 Prepare for and report meetings of the Regional Hydrographic Commissions (RHC) / BSHC

High level summary:

- Commission members informed each other about their recent hydrographic activities in the Baltic Region.
- Baltic States are in pole with the implementation of S-100 Roadmap. Eight out of nine Baltic States will start the regionally coordinated provision of S-101 ENC's and S-102 high resolution bathymetry datasets with significant coverage on the main shipping routes and important harbours from 2026 onwards.
- Some committee members are successful in national coordination for the uptake of amending services such as S-104 and S-111 for current and water level information, S-124 for Navigational Warnings and the S-41x range to provide sea weather information in the second half of the running decade.
- Germany presented an AI-driven self-learning methodology for the automated detection of boulders in multibeam data sheets and offered knowledge transfer to interested neighbour countries.

Details:

Twenty-six participants representing seven BSHC Members (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Sweden), one Associate Member (Lithuania) and two observers (United Kingdom and USA) participated in the Conference.

The BSHC Conference was chaired by Mr Olavi Heinlo, National Hydrographer of Estonia. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Secretary-General Dr Mathias Jonas.


Mr Kristjan Truu, Director Maritime Division of Estonian Transport Administration extended words of welcome and highlighted the importance of the collaboration between the Baltic states in the field of hydrography. He gave special emphasis to the challenges which lay ahead of the Commission to agree about a concerted implementation of the S-100 concept.

The Meeting itself commenced with the IHO Secretariat's Report. BSHC Members were informed by the IHO Secretary-General of the strategic issues which will be on the agenda of the upcoming 8th meeting of the Council. All Commission members agreed on the compelling need for the installation of the envisioned IHO Infrastructure Centre to facilitate the roll out and future maintenance of the S-100 technical ecosystem. In his presentation, the Secretary-General also put special emphasis on the ongoing Secretariat's activities for further digitalization of its services rendered for online meeting registration and the geodata portal INTOGIS.

All participants reported on their national activities in the Baltic region since the last Conference. The Conference took note of items such as uncrewed survey technology, national survey programs, harmonisation of vertical datum, ENC gridding schemes, marine spatial planning in waters under national


jurisdiction and other themes of relevance for all Hydrographic Offices of the region. Lithuania reported that the benefit to accede to IHO (and consequently to become a full member of BSHC) was recognized by the Estonian administration in general, however, since the country is facing a change of the government after the forthcoming election the parliamentary process for accession can only start after. The commission as well as the IHO Secretariat confirmed their support by sending another letter presenting arguments in favour of the accession to both bodies.



All Commission members present confirmed their principal readiness to start the regular provision of S-101 and S-102 products according to IHO’s agreed S-100 roadmap implementation timelines. The regional coordination to achieve compatibility of the respective national contributions will be undertaken under an EU funded project named Baltic Sea E-Nav Partnership.




Baltic Sea e-Nav – Commercial Rollout 2026

- **S-101 ENCs**
full coverage of the major shipping routes in the Baltic Sea
- **S-102 Bathymetry**
will cover most relevant shipping routes, fairways and harbor approaches, where hydrographic survey data of sufficient quality is available
- **S-104 Water Level and S-111 Surface Currents**
The Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI) will establish overview services for mostly the Finnish areas of the Baltic Sea





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Estonia holds the presidency of the Council of the Baltic Sea States from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025. Among the priorities of the Estonian presidency is “Sustainable and Prosperous Region priority”. The Expert Group on Sustainable Maritime Economy (EGSME) will carry out the work on the creation of green corridors launched by the German Presidency and continued by the Finnish Presidency. The Estonian Presidency will work towards reaching a common understanding of the meaning of a green corridor and creating a network of interested parties. As a new initiative, the Presidency will aim to start the preparations (mapping existing projects and defining interested countries) for creating a digital twin of the Baltic Sea, i.e. collecting real-time data in order to simulate marine processes and in this way have a better understanding of the condition of the sea. The 2nd meeting of the member states expert group on Ocean Observatory and meeting of the experts on sustainable maritime economy organized by the DG MARE of the European Commission to be taken place end of September in Tallinn were identified as an opportunity to present BSHC’s role in planning hydrographic surveys in the Baltic Sea and future contributions to the digital twin. It was agreed that the Estonian colleagues will represent the BSHC scope and ambitions in S-100 service provisions on behalf of the Commission on both meetings.

Group Photo



Upcoming meetings:

At the end of the meeting, Mr Janis Krastins from Latvia took over the BSHC chairmanship, with Lithuania as Vice-Chair. It was agreed that the next meeting of the BSHC will be hosted by Latvia in Riga from 23rd-24th September 2025.