

**26<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF THE BALTIC SEA  
HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION  
Virtual Video Conference, 21 - 23 September**

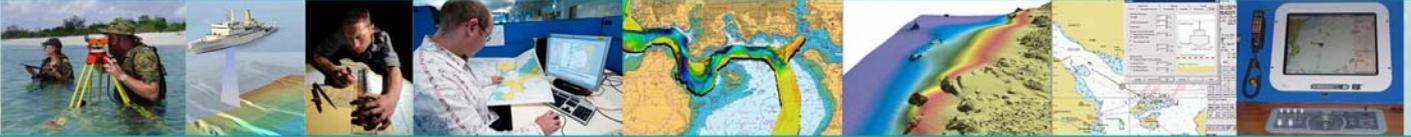
**Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2019**

Task 3.2.1.6	Prepare for and report meetings of the Regional Hydrographic Commission: BSHC
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The 26<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission (BSHC26) was held in a virtual format from 21 to 23 September, under the Chairmanship of Mr Magnus Wallhagen (Sweden). A total of twenty five attendees from seven of the eight full members of the Commission (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, and Sweden) and associate member Lithuania were represented at the Conference. The delegation of the Russian Federation did not participate and the United Kingdom, the United States (NGA) and the Council Chair, Dr Geneviève Béchard, attended as Observers. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Director Abri Kampfer.

In the opening speech the Chair stressed the importance for BSHC to address the IHO S-100 implementation decade. The benefits could be identified in areas such as route optimization, Under Keel Clearance Management (UKCM) for optimized loading, improved safety and eventually support for automated navigation and autonomous surface ships. BSHC has been successful in coordinating and performing hydrographic surveying of the Baltic Sea. Accurate bathymetry data is a precondition for many of the future S-100 services and the region therefore has a good foundation for establishing the next generation of hydrographic products.

The conference adopted the agenda and reviewed the status of the Actions of the 25<sup>th</sup> BSHC Conference. The review of the IHO Work Programme commenced with feedback on the 4<sup>th</sup> Council meeting (C-4). Sweden is the Council representative on BSHC mandate for three years since C4 (2020) until C6 (2022). Sweden (*Mr. Magnus Wallhagen*) informed about C-4, held as a brief VTC meeting following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly, on 19 November 2020. The main outcomes and actions relevant to the BSHC were communicated. In his capacity as HSSC Chair, the Chair furthermore informed the Conference about some of the Council's specific tasks for HSSC, and the work that is on-going before C5. These include S-100 implementation priorities and prioritized product specifications, the proposed implementation timeline, and a synoptic diagram on options for parallel production of S-101 and S-57. Director Kampfer further reported on the IHO Work Programme and the Organization's activities during the previous year and about the outcomes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly.



All Members, with the exception of the Russian Federation, provided National Reports informing on projects and developments of interest since the last Conference. Sweden, as BSHC's representative to the IHO-EU network (IENWG), presented the highlights of the work done in the IENWG with focus on the discussion on the question of high value datasets and the Horizon 2020 Green Deal call for proposals within the "Digital Twin of the Ocean". A network meeting is planned from 8 to 9 December 2021, as a VTC or on-site in Brest, FR. All MS agreed on the importance of having this collaboration group, to keep track on important EU developments and discuss related issues in the future.

The Commission reviewed on-going regional initiatives in particular the activities of the Monitoring Re-survey Working Group (MWG), The Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) will be revised at the upcoming HELCOM Ministerial Meeting. The revised BSHC-HELCOM Harmonized Re-Survey Scheme now also includes HELCOM CAT III areas with a set timetable, and is planned to be a part of the revised HELCOM BSAP 2021. The Baltic Sea Bathymetric Database Working Group (BSBDWG) chair reported that the web portal currently has some technical issues with downloading subsets of the data. The BSHC websites have been offline for a period during summer 2021, but the number of visitors is slowly increasing, as well as the number of scientific references to the database. The Chart Datum Working Group (CDWG) chair reported on the implementation of the Baltic Sea Chart Datum (BSCD2000) in the different MS and the continuation of gravity measurements and geoid computations within the FAMOS Finalisation project initiative. An article about BSCD2000 was published in the *International Hydrographic Review*<sup>1</sup> and the work has been presented at several conferences. Most BSHC member states are now in varying phases of BSCD2000 implementation. The BSCD2000 has also been registered in the IHO Geospatial Information Registry (as chart datum 44), and the WG chair showed an example of how information about the new chart datum can be conveyed as a Notice to Mariners.

The Baltic Sea MSI Working Group (BSMSIWG) chair reported on the increasing number of Navtex warnings, with over 800 messages in 2020. He stressed the importance of the validity and expiration date of navigational warnings and that it is important to communicate with *Sweden Traffic*, the Navarea coordinator for the Baltic Sea sub-area, who operate the transmissions to reduce the overload on some transmitters. The joint North Sea and Baltic Sea Marine Spatial Data Information Working Group (BSMSDIWG) chair informed about the main topics discussed during last meeting of working group (9<sup>th</sup> online meeting 1-2 September 2021), namely MSP Data ESG, S-122 (Marine Protected Areas), OGC API standards and possibilities to collaborate with the Singapore Innovation Tech Lab.

Regarding the BSHC response on the IHO Strategic Plan 2021 the Chair presented a paper submitted by Sweden as BSHC's representative at the Council and BSHC Chair. Council C4 has tasked all RHCs to analyse their work with regard to the revised IHO strategic plan. Even if BSHC's on-going work more or less supports all three IHO goals, with the current shift to S-100, as well as increasing interest in maritime geodata from other stakeholders, a re-evaluation of BSHC's own strategic work is considered very relevant. The BSHC agreed

<sup>1</sup> J. Schwabe, J. Ågren, G. Liebsch, P. Westfeld, T. Hammarklint, J. Mononen and O. B. Andersen (2020). The Baltic Sea Chart Datum 2000 (BSCD2000) – Implementation of a common reference level in the Baltic Sea, *International Hydrographic Review*, 23, pp 63-83.

[https://iho.int/uploads/user/pubs/ihreview\\_P1/IHR\\_May2020.pdf](https://iho.int/uploads/user/pubs/ihreview_P1/IHR_May2020.pdf)



to establish a correspondence group, chaired by Sweden, to draft a strategic plan for BSHC. A draft proposal, including considerations of the form of such a document, should be delivered to BSHC27.

Finland presented a paper highlighting the need for S-100 implementation coordination at national, regional and global level. Finland has already established coordination between national data providers and authorities regarding S-100 governance and data production. It was proposed that the regional coordination level could very well take place within the BSHC. The Conference decided that BSICCWG ToR should be updated, to include S-100 coordination. It was further agreed that the newly established strategic correspondence group, with consultation of the BSICCWG Chair, also could get the task to look further into how the Commission should organize regional S-100 coordination. Regarding some specific product specifications, BSICCWG, BSMSIWG and CDWG were be tasked with coordinating S-101, S-102, S-124, S-104 and S-111.

Reports were received from the BSHC representatives to the WENDWG, CBSC, CSBWG and Prof Martin Jakobsson, Stockholm University was invited to the Conference to present *the Nippon Foundation-GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project*. He gave an overview of this project, aimed at inspiring the maritime community to collaborate with the aim of completely mapping the world's ocean by 2030 and compile the bathymetric data into a freely available ocean map.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that Mr Magnus Wallhagen (Sweden) will continue as the Chair of the BSHC and Mr Rainer Mustaniemi (Finland) as the Vice-Chair. It was also agreed that the next meeting of the BSHC will be hosted in Stockholm by Sweden from 20 to 22 September 2022.



Participants of the 26<sup>th</sup> BSHC Conference