

High Level Official Visits to Albania, Montenegro and Bulgaria

22 - 26 July 2013

IHB Director Mustafa Iptes undertook official visits to Albania, Montenegro and Bulgaria from 22 to 26 July. The purpose of the visits was to encourage Albania to apply for membership and to urge Montenegro and Bulgaria to complete the procedure to become Member States of the IHO. During his visits he presented the vision, mission and activities of the IHO and underlined the importance of hydrography and the benefits of becoming a full Member State. He also provided information on regional and global cooperation, the IHO Capacity Building programme and hydrographic training activities.

First, Director Iptes visited Albania on 22 July. He made an official visit to the Albanian Navy HQ in Durres where he met with Brigadier General Qemal Shkurti, Commander of the Albanian Navy accompanied by Captain Gezim Koci, Chief of the Hydrographic Service. This was followed by a meeting with Mr. Arben Imami, Minister of Defence, in Tirana. Director Iptes was informed that Albania was very keen to join the IHO in the near future and to develop its hydrographic capabilities.

Director Iptes' second visit was to Montenegro, on 23-24 July. In Podgoricia, he visited Mr Luka Mitrovic, Director of the Institute of Hydrometeorology and Seismology of Montenegro, followed by a meeting with Mr Branimir Gvozdenović, Minister of Sustainable Development and Tourism. Director Iptes was informed that the Government of Montenegro intended to deposit its Instrument of Accession for full membership of the IHO and this would be done following formal parliamentary approval in September. Director Iptes also had meetings with Mr Ivan Mašulović, Deputy Minister of Defence, and Mr Damir Grbovic, Director General for Multilateral Affairs and Regional Cooperation.

In the last part of his programme, Director Iptes visited Bulgaria. He met Mr Ivan Ivanov, Deputy Minister of Defence, in Sofia, and Commodore Dimitar Denev, Deputy Head of the Navy. The meetings were fruitful and it would appear that Bulgaria is likely to deposit its Instrument of Accession for full membership of the IHO, some 21 years after obtaining the required approval by two-thirds of existing Member States.



Director Iptes exchanges gifts with Brigadier General Qemal Shkurti, Commander of the Albanian Navy.



Director Iptes and Mr Luka Mitrovic, Director of Institute of Hydrometeorology and Seismology of Montenegro



Director Iptes and Mr Ivan Ivanov, Deputy Minister of Defence of Bulgaria, accompanied by a member of his staff.