

**14th MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC14
Bali, Indonesia, 6-8 June 2022 / hybrid meeting**

**MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (MBSHC)
MBSHC report to IRCC14**

1. Chair Vinka Kolić, Croatia, from April 2022

Vice-Chair: Vacancy – MBSHC Chair sent CL No 05/2022 with call to nominate suitable candidates for the position of Vice-Chair in accordance with Article 5 of the MBSHC Statutes.

2. Membership

Members: Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia (suspended), Slovenia, Spain, Syria (suspended), Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.

Associate Member(s): Israel, Palestinian Authority, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Observers: Albania, CIESM, Germany, IALA, IC-ENC, IOC, PRIMAR.

3. Meetings:

The following RHC meetings took place:

23rd extraordinary Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC23): Ljubljana, Slovenia, 30 March – 1 April 2022 (hybrid meeting).

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, MBSHC23 was organized as a hybrid event according to MBSHC CL 03/2022.

Next meeting: MBSHC24 will take place in 2024. Date of the next meeting is still to be determined, probably late May or June 2024.

There is still no host for the next MBSHC24 conference. MBSHC Chair sent CL No 05/2022 with call for candidatures to host the next Conference in 2024 in accordance with Article 10 of the MBSHC Statutes.

4. Current MBSHC Working Groups:

a) International Charting Coordination WG for the charting region F (F-ICCWG)

Position of the Region F Coordinator was vacant after MBSHC22 (May 2021) when Italy resigned as Region F ICCWG Coordinator. In the meantime, two CL were issued calling for nominations for the position of the Mediterranean and Black Seas (Region F) International Charting Coordinator (ICC) – CL 03/2021, 06/2021. Spain in the meantime performed as acting Coordinator for urgent and relevant actions related to cartography coordination in the region.

During the 23rd Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission, Greece and Turkey offered their candidatures for the Region F ICCWG Coordinator. It was agreed that Greece would be designated as Region F ICCWG Coordinator and Turkey as Vice-Coordinator on a rotating basis for a period of four years, two years each.

Once this Commission has a permanent Region F ICCWG Coordinator, it will be provided with guidance for the implementation of the IHO Strategic Plan, mainly about technical aspects.

Member States were asked for proposals about the future role that regional cartographic coordination might have in the coming years with the implementation of S-100 products and services regarding INT charts.

b) Black and Azov Seas WG (BASWG)

During the MBSHC23, TURKEY as Chair of the Black and Azov Seas Working Group presented a short report of the BASWG, providing highlights of the recent BASWG16.

c) MBSHC S-1XX WG

Through the Decision MBSHC23/08, the MBSHC approved the creation of a working group dedicated to S-100 roadmap implementation within the MBSHC region (MBSHC S-1XX WG).

MBSHC CL No 04/2022 was released on 2 May 2022 with the call for applications for the membership and chairmanship.

The deadline for submitting application for S-1XX WG membership and chairmanship has passed.

One application for the Chair of the WG from the France has been received and 6 applications from the Members of the MBSHC (Spain, Turkey, Romania, Italy, Greece and Croatia) and 2 applications from the Associate Members (USA, United Kingdom).

The objectives of the MBSHC S-1XX WG are (but not limited to):

- Experience sharing between WG members on the implementation of the S-100 roadmap in their country/organisation (general policies, governance, tools, calendar);
- Coordinate the capacities in the region for a seamless development and production of S-1xx products in the area through the nine IGIF pathways (See Reference Action WENDWG12/33);
- Identify common axes and priorities for the MBSHC for the development of the S-1XX products and to set up actions to support MBSHC Members (presentation of technical specifications, training, assistance to Members to prepare the S-1XX production in compliance with the IHO S-100 roadmap);
- Coordinate the cooperative actions with Region F ICCWG and MBSHC Capacity Building Coordinator.

This WG is not intended to coordinate the S-101 production in terms of scheme, as this role has been given to the Region F ICCWG by the MBSHC.

The next steps: Issue MBSHC CL announcing the outcome of the call for application, and the MBSHC decision for approving the chairpersonship due to the fact that there is no other nomination for this position. The 1st meeting will be organized (hybrid or VTC) in June 2022 (or maybe in July). The first action will be to draft the ToRs&RoPs of the WG and submit them to the MBSHC for approval in compliance with Action MBSHC23/1.

5. Status of IRCC actions and recommendations to RHCs

No.	Actions/Recommendations of the IRCC13	MBSHC Action
Action 6	RHCs and WGs to include the measurement of the SPI attributed by IRCC in their annual Work Plans (Permanent).	Permanent action. Ongoing.
Recommendation 3	RHC and MS to advise the IHO Secretariat of any update/change to their position in relation with the CSB questionnaire (IHO CL 21/2020)	Complete.
Recommendation 4	RHC to identify regional coordinators to act as a point of contact for CSB/Seabed 2030 and to raise the profile of data gather and provision within their respective Region.	Complete. Lebanon is the MBSHC GEBCO/Seabed 2030/CSB ambassador.
Recommendation 5	RHC to encourage MS to participate in the Empowering Women in Hydrography project.	In progress. Ongoing.
Recommendation 6	RHC to encourage MS to submit Articles and Notes for publication in the IHR.	Ongoing. Permanent action.
Recommendation 7	RHC to consider extend the role of Charting Regional Coordinators for the implementation of the S-100 Roadmap.	Complete. Permanent action.
Recommendation 8	RHC to try to plan at least a face-to-face meeting between the 2nd and the 3rd Sessions of the IHO Assembly.	Complete. MBSHC23 took place in the period between the 2 nd and the 3 rd Session of the IHO Assembly.
Recommendation 9	RHC to coordinate the efforts on the implementation of S-100 and promote the cooperation and exchange of experiences.	Ongoing. Permanent action.
Recommendation 10	RHC to apply Resolution 1/2005 in case of disasters occurred to support the affected States in their Regions	Complete. Disaster Response Framework approved at the MBSHC23. Ongoing activity related to updates of Table 1 and Table 2 of the Disaster Response Framework.
Recommendation 14	RHC to encourage all Member States to actively contribute with new data to GEBCO and to discuss how MS can share existing data.	Permanent ongoing activity. Spain started collaboration on the GEBCO Seabed 2030 Project by contributing data from their research vessels engaged in Antarctica.

6. Agenda Items:

MBSHC Statutes

The new MBSHC Statutes was adopted during the MBSHC23, and in force as from 1 April 2022. The Working Group was created for this matter according to Decision MBSHC22/10.

The Working Group prepared the draft of the proposed revision of the Statutes to consider the application of the revised IHO Resolution 2/1997. The draft was circulated to members, some comments were raised. The

draft text of the Statutes was put to the vote during the last MBSHC23. As there was no disagreement, the new Statutes of the MBSHC as proposed by the Working Group was accepted and approved at the end of the MBSHC23 meeting.

The MBSHC agenda is built according to the IHO work programme.

IHO Work Programme 1 – “Cooperate affairs”

IHO Work Programme 2 – Hydrographic Services and Standards

IHO Work Programme 3 – Inter-regional Coordination and Support

Strategic Performance Indicators – SPI of the IHO Strategic Plan goals

During the last MBSHC23 Procedure to Measure the Strategic Performance Indicators (SPI) allocated to RHCs was presented.

The Strategic Performance Indicators are envisaged as simple figures to measure the progress towards the targets identified under three IHO Strategic Plan goals. The MBSHC Chair encouraged all Member States to attend the next IRCC Workshop on the IHO Strategic Plan to deal with SPI and to think about simple figures for SPI of the Region.

Cooperation with Member States

The most significant issue was the incorporation of Albania as new 98th Member State of the International Hydrographic Organization. The IHO Secretariat was informed by the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Government of Monaco that the Government of the Republic of Albania deposited its Instruments of Accession to the Convention on the IHO on 3 May 2022. Two Member States (Israel, Libya) are still non-members of the IHO.

During the MBSHC23 IHO invited Albania to sign the MBSHC Statutes at the end of the meeting to become Full Member of the MBSHC region.

ALBANIA expressed readiness to fulfil all membership-related obligations after consultations with the head of Albanian HO. There is still no feedback whether the MBSHC Statutes has been signed by Albania or not.

Two Member States were suspended (Serbia and Syria). As links with Syria restarted in 2021, IHO expressed confidence to have Syria again among the IHO membership.

LEBANON as a new MS of the MBSHC (from February 2021) during the last MBSHC23 reported on achievements of the LNHS in the field of maritime safety, hydrographic surveys and cartography, highlighting accomplishment of the Cartographic Plan in co-production with IIM (Italy), establishment of the National Hydrographic Coordination Committee, the IALA Technical Visit in August 2021 providing opportunity for Lebanon to activate its membership in IALA as well as to cooperate with maritime stakeholders. LEBANON also acknowledged assistance provided by the Turkish and US hydrographic services, and by the IIM, which offered their hydrographic ships to survey unsurveyed Lebanese waters. LEBANON noted that LNHS planned to become the primary chart authority for its waters following the transition phase with SHOM, and also expressed willingness to cooperate with UKHO either in IC-ENC matters or chart reproduction. The Lebanon report, as a new MS of the region, shows the benefits of the membership in the IHO and how much cooperation and support is needed among MS, especially for the new members.

Related to Recommendation 10- IRCC to apply Resolution 1/2005 in case of disasters occurred to support the affected States in their Regions MBSHC created Disaster Response Framework and it was approved at the MBSHC23 (March2022).

Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

The NAVAREA III Coordinator for this region is Spain. The NAVAREA III Region covers the Mediterranean Sea from the meridian 005° 45'W, and the Black Sea, including the Azov Sea. Since May 2020, the NAVAREA III navigational warnings have been broadcast on SafetyNET II. Since last March, this NAVAREA III Coordinator centre has been broadcasting in training mode through the IRIDIUM service, using the SAFETYCAST platform.

The coverage of NAVTEX stations in this region is satisfactory, and the coordination between contacts is effective. The MBSHC Member States are encouraged to establish closer engagement between their National

Maritime Safety Information Coordinators and the NAVAREA Coordinator.

Due to crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine, an intense coordination activity NAVAREA is carried out in the Black and Azov Seas area. For the last two years, the number of NAVAREA III warnings continues to decrease. Most of the warnings, about 75 % of the messages, are from the Aegean Sea, the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Seas.

Member States are urged to use only NAVAREA warnings for the safety of navigation purposes, as defined in IMO Res A. 706 (17).

Participation in other IHO or IMO Working Groups, Regional Hydrographic Commissions, regional conferences over past years: 2021 – Intersessional meeting of Communications Working Group (ISWG-COM), VTC, 7 – 13 April; Navigation, Communications, Search and Rescue Sub Committee (NCSR 8), VTC, 19 –23 April; Document Review Working Group (DRWG19), VTC, 26 – 29 April; 2022 – 20th meeting of the WNWNS-SC Document Review Working Group (DRWG20) 21 – 24 March 2022 by VTC.

Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI)

The MBSHC ambassador on the MSDIWG is Italy. Since the last MBSHC23 one hybrid meeting MSDIWG13 was held in Singapore (9 – 13 May 2022). The meeting was incorporated with the annual meeting of the OGC Marine Domain Working Group, the third expert meeting of the UN-GGIM WGMGI, the International Seminar on United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management, with the theme “Effective and Integrated Marine Geospatial Information”.

On this issue, the creation of a specific working group for the region should be considered. MSDI is becoming more and more relevant due to marine spatial data integration and new standard S-100. There is a constant need to cooperate with MS, to encourage training, awareness of the importance of the integrated geospatial information framework and involvement of the MS in the MSDI initiatives and challenges in the region.

Capacity Building

The MBSHC CB Coordinator is Turkey. Capacity building plays a key role in the Region, and it is based on assessing the development and capacities of each coastal state in the MBSHC region. The main goal and objective of the capacity building activities is to create necessary capabilities to fulfil the needs and obligations of the Hydrographic Offices (SOLAS Convention obligation).

Turkey as the MBSHC CB Coordinator represents the MBSHC at the CB Sub-Committee and is in charge of updating the MBSHC three-year CB work plan.

A three-year plan for Capacity Building activities in the MBSHC region was approved by the Member States during MBSHC22. The plans for 2023 & 2024 are still under review.

During the MBSHC23, CB Coordinator presented the three-year CB Work Plan (2022–2024).

During the MBSHC23, CB Coordinator encouraged Member States to provide feedback on their needs.

All the remote Capacity Building activities that were planned for 2021 and funded by CBSC were carried out successfully: Transition to S-1xx based Products, Airborne Lidar Bathymetry, AI as a Sonar Noise Classifier and Satellite-derived Bathymetry.

The only face-to-face training Cartographic Data Management was postponed to 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual trainings organized for the Member States and carried out by the UKHO were performed earlier this year: Understanding ENC, Introduction to S-57 and Compiling for Navigational Safety. Two Satellite-derived Bathymetry webinars, organized by MBSHC and sponsored by industry leaders, were carried out globally with attendance of more than 500.

The new CB Work Plan 2022 with a new set of priorities, was approved during the CBSC20 Meeting in Bali from 1 to 3 June 2022.

Worldwide ENC Database (WEND) matters

During the MBSHC22, MBSHC Chair provided a presentation on the outcome of the 12th WENDWG meeting in February 2022, and actions and decisions that may affect MBSHC, focused on overlap in ENC coverage, dual standards regarding the transition from S-57 to S-101 ENCs, and key role of the RHC for harmonized production and distribution of future S-100. It was also reported on the modernized World Port Index (WPI) Database.

7. MBSHC cooperation with stakeholders (organizations, industry, etc.):

Cooperation with European Union (EU)

During the MBSHC23, Greece presented a report on the IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG) activities during the reporting period, highlighting the main projects and initiatives: Coastal Mapping, European Ocean Observation System (EOOS), European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODNet), Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), EU Directive on Public Sector Information.

Cooperation with the Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM)

During the MBSHC23, CIESM presented the joint IHO/CIESM initiative Mapping Marine Geological Risks in the Mediterranean Region. IHO reminded that in March 2021 the MoU was renewed to be updated with current global initiatives for the oceans, and that the IHO worked closely with the CIESM. IHO invited all the Member States of the Commission to participate in this development.

The importance was stressed of tide-gauge reporting in real time for the tsunami warning and of managing disaster hazards in the region, and the need was underlined for circulations models based on high-resolution bathymetric data. It was announced that the workshop on disaster response would take place in 2023.

Cooperation with International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA)

During the MBSHC23, IALA gave a presentation on goals, standards, committees, and obligations of IALA, as well as on the role and tasks of the IALA World-Wide Academy. The Academy specifically addresses capacity building and sharing of expertise with the whole world. It aims to ensure that all coastal states can fulfil obligations related to marine aids to navigation placed upon them in SOLAS. The IALA World-Wide Academy conducts training programmes, technical missions, and risk management training. IALA also reported on the renewed IMO VTS Guidelines, and encouraged all Member States to ratify the IALA Convention aiming to transform IALA from a non-governmental association to an inter-governmental organization.

Industry and RENCs

Both RENCs and Industry took part in the last MBSHC Conference, and will be invited to the next one.

8. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed

a) Difficulties:

The main difficulties faced by the MBSHC are in the coordination of the INT chart schemes and ENC coverage. Discrepancies between new ENCs and existing INT charts are raising new difficulties regarding consistency of the nautical information provided by different producers.

Sometimes, the only way forward is to conduct bilateral discussions for the solution of ENC overlapping issues.

One of the major difficulties in the last period was the lack of interest for the position of Chair and Vice-Chair of the MBSHC region. The MBSHC region is the largest commission in the IHO. We had a situation that the position of Vice-Chair was vacant from 06/2019 to 9/2021. MBSHC is now in the situation that there is no candidate for the Vice-Chair. We also had a situation that the position of Region F Coordinator was vacant from 05/2021 to 04/2022, where Spain performed only urgent tasks in the F region. It is crucial to enable continuity and stability in performing the tasks in the MBSHC region.

It is important to highlight the decisions made during the last MBSHC23 conference, because of the lack of candidates for handover of relevant posts in this Commission:

- The Vice-Chair position is vacant. In accordance with Article 5 of the MBSHC Statutes, Member States are invited to nominate suitable candidates for the position of Vice-Chair. MBSHC CL No 05/2022 was released on 27 May 2022.

b) Challenges:

- A major challenge is the implementation of S-100 products in the region.
- Dual standards regarding the transition from S-57 to S-101 ENC's, and key role of the RHC for harmonized production and distribution of future S-100.
- Improving cartographic coordination in the region is ongoing task and permanent challenge.
- MBSHC region need to develop e-learning capabilities which in turn will enable capacity building activities to reach a wider audience in a more cost-effective way. The main activities in the CB programme should be focused at S-100 Universal hydrographic model and MSDI.
- In order to enhance better results and ensure continuity of the work and implementation of the assigned tasks to the MS in the region, IHO/MS need to find a way to motivate MS for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair of the MBSHC (other RHC).

9. Achievements and lessons learned:

- Capacity building plays a key role in the Region.
- New Member States and the enlargement of the MBSHC memberships is beneficial. Lebanon is a good example of improving capacities and its capabilities in Hydrography and Cartography, with the support of the Member States and IHO CB programmes.
- Bilateral discussion is the only way for the solution of ENC overlapping issues and is only way for the step forward.
- The coordination role of the IENWG is a great example of the cooperation between European HOs in large EU funded projects.
- MBSHC creation of a working group dedicated to S-100 roadmap implementation within the MBSHC region.

10. Conclusions:

The cooperation within the MBSHC is good but due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, all efforts to maintain communication and active participation of Member States were not as effective and productive as they should have been, especially because MBSHC is a RCH of small geographic size but with the largest number of countries. Face-to-face meetings are very necessary and cannot be replaced by remote events, especially in this RCH, since the personal relationships and bilateral meetings that take place there end up clarifying misunderstandings that are impossible to deal with remotely.

Member States actively participated in the IHO working groups and Committees. The main challenge in the MBSHC region is the implementation of the S-1xx framework services, and for that reason additional effort and cooperation among Member States in the region is required.

11. Actions required of IRCC:

The IRCC is invited to:

- Note the report.
- Take any action consider appropriate.

Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission MBSHC

Chairwomen

Vinka Kolić, MSc