

12th Meeting of the IHO-EU Working Group (IENWG) Video-teleconference (VTC), 8 – 9 December 2021

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2021	
Task 1.1.4	Maintain relationship with European Union Initiatives (such as INSPIRE and EMODnet)

Initially planned to be hosted in Brest, France, the 12th meeting the IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG-12) was re-arranged by video teleconference (VTC) from 8 to 9 December 2021 due to the pandemic.

Ingénieur en chef Pierre-Yves Dupuy (France), Chair of the IENWG, supported by Corine Lochet (France) as Executive Secretary, chaired the meeting. Thanks to the VTC format, twenty-two delegates from 13 Member States (Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, and Sweden) were able to participate in the meeting. Director Luigi Sinapi represented the IHO Secretariat.

The meeting was opened with a status report by the Netherlands on the latest developments about the *European strategy on digitisation and data*. This strategy embraces important concepts on data availability, data sharing, data interoperability, data governance, data infrastructures and technologies, providing legal frameworks to regulate the market of digital services in Europe. One of the key issues for Hydrographic Offices is the impact of such data policies on their individual business model if and when some S-57 data (or feature objects) are included in the official list of the so-called “high value datasets”. The next step for the EU Strategy will be the adoption of the Implementation Act.

Denmark presented the EU Commission with an evaluation of the Inspire Directive and of its implementation. The aim of the evaluation is to analyse how the Directive has achieved its objectives, whether it is effective, efficient, relevant and coherent, and then identify areas for future improvement, as the INSPIRE roadmap will be not fully achieved by the deadline of the end of 2021. It was highlighted that the added value of the Directive mainly consisted of promoting data sharing as a common principle.

Portugal and Ireland presented their national projects to contribute to the Ocean’s knowledge within the UN Ocean Decade challenges, as contribution to the Nippon Foundation GEBCO-Seabed2030 project which is to reach 100% seabed coverage by 2030.

France presented their ‘Horizon 2021-2027 program, and communications from the EU Commission on Blue Economy and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP), highlighting the opportunities for the HOs, especially the sustainable use of ecosystems, Safety and surveillance and climate change threats, as the new challenges offered by the European Green Deal.

France also presented the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF), highlighting the topics of interest to HOs and the priorities for the period 2021-2027 (EMODnet, Marine knowledge and MSP). A particular mention was made on the importance of Metrology, as a science able to support research at sea. In this regard, the MINKE project was presented as an opportunity to integrate key European Marine Metrology Research Infrastructures, to coordinate their use and development and propose an innovative framework of quality of oceanographic data, with the objective to increase the production of FAIR data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable).

Denmark, through the MSDIWG Chair, presented the Baltic Sea and North Sea MSDI (BSNSMSDIWG), highlighting the opportunity to investigate the possibilities to establish a joint online meeting between the EU MSP Technical Expert group on data and the BSNSMSDIWG, in order to share information and to identify areas of cooperation, and how the BSHC and NSHC could work with S-122 and the possibility to establish a pilot project with the North Sea and Baltic Sea as an S-122 test bed.

Director Luigi Sinapi intervened on the importance of the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information, established by UN-GGIM 7 in 2017, to develop more precise guidance on how to measure the application of UN guidance principles on the basis of the Integrated Geographic Information Framework in Hydrography (IGIF-H), in order also to help MSDIWG in measuring the assigned SPI of the new IHO Strategic Plan.

France presented EMODNet and the importance of EMODNet data ingestion for the achievement of the final goal of the Nippon Foundation GEBCO-Seabed2030 project, announcing the release of full EMODnet Bathymetry Digital Terrain Model (DTM) 2022 and associated services.

The IENWG Chair, thanking the participants for their active participation, emphasized the importance of networking as the core of the WG, the concreteness of the topics discussed, the willingness of the WG to contribute actively to the IHO S-100 Roadmap in collaboration with the MSDIWG, and also mentioned the following important events in 2022-2023:

- The Ocean Summit to be launched in France during its EU Presidency in February 2022, to which the participation of IHO Secretariat is envisaged;
- The EU Maritime days in 2022 and 2023, respectively hosted by Italy and France;
- The intention to organize - in collaboration with the EU DG Mare - an event, either in Brussels (Belgium) or Paris (France), to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the signature of the EU-IHO MoU.

The IENWG Chair closed the meeting hoping to hold IENWG-13 at least in hybrid format (dates and venue to be defined).