

**13<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
IHO-IRCC13**

**VTC, 23-25 June 2021**

**Report of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission**

|                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Submitted by:</b>      | Chair MBSHC |
| <b>Related Documents:</b> |             |
| <b>Related Projects:</b>  |             |

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|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Chair:</b>             | Captain Jose Daniel González-Aller Lacalle (Spain)   |
| <b>Vice-Chair:</b>        | Vacancy  |
| <b>Secretary:</b>         | Commander Salvador Moreno Soba (Spain)   |
| <b>Member States:</b>     | 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. |
| <b>Associate members:</b> | Israel, Palestinian Authority, United Kingdom, United States of America.   |
| <b>Observers:</b>         | Albania, CIESM, Germany, IC-ENC, IOC, PRIMAR.  |

## **1. Meetings Held During Reporting Period**

22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC22): 27 - 28 May 2021 (VTC).

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, MBSHC22, initially scheduled in June in Slovenia, was rearranged as a remote event to May 2021 according to MBSHC CL 02/2021.

Next meeting: The MBSHC Chair accepted the offer received by Slovenia to host the face-to-face MBSHC23 conference. Date of next meeting is still to be determined, but before May 2022.

## **2. Work Program**

### Cooperation with Member States

The most significant issue was the incorporation of Lebanon as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Member State of this RHC, after his incorporation to IHO. The Director of the Lebanese Navy Hydrographic Service signed the Statutes of this Regional Hydrographic Commission (RHC) in February 2021. Now, the RHC efforts are focused on assisting Albania to become a new IHO Member State and the 24<sup>th</sup> member of this Commission.

### Region F IRCCWG

Italy has resigned as Region F ICCWG coordinator after MBSHC22. After a call for candidates via Circular Letter previously to the Conference, no Member States have come forward. A new short period has been opened again by Circular Letter, but in the meantime Spain will perform as acting coordinator for urgent and relevant actions related to cartography coordination in the region.

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 have been asked for proposals about the future role of regional cartographic coordination may have in the coming years with the implementation of S-100 products and services regarding INT charts.

After years of collecting hydrographic surveys carried out by the member states of the Commission, the question was raised during the MBSHC22 as to the best way to perform this action and what the objective could be. In order to standardize this action with the rest of the RHC, it was proposed to raise this consultation to the IRCC in order to align it with the objectives of the strategic plan and to mark it as one of the indicators of these objectives.

Following the differences encountered in the region for INT Charts Schemes, the recommendation of the IHO Secretariat is that the interested parties concentrate their efforts on solving the issues regarding regional ENC coverage and its maintenance, rather than remaining focused on disputed INT Charts Schemes. In order to maintain proper printed nautical publications, there is no reason that prevents parties from pursuing the production of national paper charts, meeting international IHO standards (S-4), if deemed appropriate. This Chair totally agrees with this recommendation and urges Member States to follow this recommendation.

Regional Cartography Coordinator (RCC) also informed about a ENC Overlap Risk Assessment Report from Greece about UB2 cells, and that there were discrepancies in the ENC Overlaps Risk Assessment among concerned parties and RENCs in the Aegean Sea. While Greece assessment of the risk is “High”, RENC is “Medium” and Turkey is “Low”. A new assessment of this Risk has been requested to Turkey and a new valuation will be requested to RENC.

During the MBSHC22, due to the differences parties failed to reach an agreement on the Aegean Sea INT Scheme, and noting that no constructive dialogue was possible, the IHO Secretariat was obliged to take measures by which the Aegean Sea in S-11 Part B will become a “blank” area, with no approved ENC and INT chart scheme until a bilateral agreement is reached between interested parties.

Finally, RCC has asked for guidelines for the ICCWGs for the implementation of the S-1xx framework of services and the role of this WG regarding the workload that this new standard will entail.

#### Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

The NAVAREA III Coordinator for this region is Spain.

The coverage of NAVTEX stations in this region is satisfactory, and the coordination between contacts is effective. No major problems have been detected in the region, apart from some misuse of NAVAREA messages for matters not directly related to safety of navigation purposes, as is stated on IMO Res A. 706 (17).

#### Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure (MDSI)

The MBSHC ambassador on the MSDIWG is Italy.

On this issue, the creation of a specific working group for the region should be considered. MSDI is becoming more and more relevant and there is a lot of work ahead in order to comply with the MSDIWG Work Plan 2021-2024 when it comes into force.

#### Capacity Building

The MBSHC CB coordinator is Turkey. Most of Capacity Building (CB) activities scheduled for 2020 have been postponed to 2021.

CB Plan for this year is to carry out 4 activities. These activities are the following:

- Transition to S-1xx products
- Airborne Lidar Bathymetry
- Using AI as Sonar Noise Classifier
- Cartographic Data Management

The first three activities will be online workshops and the last one is due to be a face-to-face workshop, depending on COVID-19 pandemic circumstances. Furthermore, the CB coordinator commented that MBSHC Member States could also benefit from a webinar on Satellite-derived bathymetry soon.

The CB Coordinator is working on the CB working plan for the next two years too, compiling the needs from MBSHC Member States.

### Ongoing Activities

The following activities are ongoing / started:

- In the absence of any candidate and designation for the position of Vice-Chair during MBSHC22, Spain will keep as Chair of the Commission until an in person MBSHC-23 Conference is hopefully held before May 2022.
- A new process by Circular Letter to call for candidates for Region F ICCWG Coordinator has been opened to Member States.
- A Working Group to review the MBSHC Statutes have been established to approve a new version of them in the next Conference. As second priority of this group is the revision of the ToR of Region F ICCWG.

### **3. Progress on IRCC Action Items**

The following table summarizes the progress on IRCC Action Items:

| No.   | Action (Agenda Item)  | MBSHC Action   |
|-------|---|--|
| 12/1  | RHC to Instruct MS in the promotion and distribution of publication of S-67 Mariners' Guide to Accuracy of Depth Information in Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) to the Marine Institutions and Education Schools.                            | Complete. Furthermore, it is encouraged to populate the CATZOC values (1 to 5) of MS ENC cells as a permanent action |
| 12/2  | Member States to review the paper on the Future of Paper Charts and provide feedback on it.   | Complete   |
| 12/3  | Member States are strongly encouraged to continue updating C-55.  | Complete. Permanent action   |
| 12/4  | RHC to implement the IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended by A-2.   | In progress. Established a WG for revision of Statutes.  |
| 12/6  | Invite the Member States who have experience in developing and providing eLearning contents to share their resources and experiences to the eLearning PT.   | Complete. Permanent action   |
| 12/11 | Promote the discussion of any item with relevance to SDI/MSDI/MSP and to take appropriate actions.  | Complete. Permanent action   |
| 12/12 | Consider CSB and Seabed 2030 initiatives to be permanently added as an agenda item at future RHC meetings.  | Complete. It was added as a permanent action, along with cooperation and support to the GEBCO projects.              |
| 12/13 | Encourage Member States to support the CSB initiative with positive actions, such as requiring all research vessels to collect bathymetric data for later uploading, when on passage or when it does not interfere with other research activities | Complete   |
| 12/14 | Support the modification of the current "RHC Seabed 2030 Coordinator" to a joint "RHC CSB/Seabed 2030 Coordinator" and provide the identification of the Coordinators.  | Complete   |
| 12/16 | Encourage MS to release datasets or subsets into the public domain via the IHO DCDB.  | Complete. Permanent action   |
| 12/17 | Encourage Member States to promote the vital need to map the entire seabed.   | Complete   |

| No.   | Action (Agenda Item)   | MBSHC Action |
|-------|--|--------------|
| 12/19 | Encourage all Member States to make existing seabed mapping data available for use by Seabed 2030 in the GEBCO Grid.                 | Complete     |
| 12/20 | RHC to participate at Regional level in those actions of the UN Ocean Decade matching with IHO's new strategic targets (IRCC12-08C). | Complete     |

#### 4. Problems Encountered

Having noted some disagreements on the INT Charts Schemes, this Chair echoes the recommendations of the IHO Secretariat on concentrating the efforts of the interested parties in solving the issues concerning regional ENC coverage and its maintenance, rather than remaining focused on disputed INT Charts Schemes.

Discrepancies on the Risk Assessments of the ENC overlaps in the Aegean Sea made this Chair to act as established on Res 1/2018. A new Risk Assessment has been requested to one of the parties and will seek the assistance of a RENC to assist in development of this assessment.

This situation has led IHO Secretariat to take the measures by which the Aegean Sea in S-11 Part B will become a "blank" area, with no approved ENC and INT chart scheme until a bilateral agreement is reached between interested parties.

It is important to highlight the decisions made in the last MBSHC22 conference because of the lack of candidates for handover relevant posts of this Commission:

- Vice Chair will be elected between September and December 2021. Spain will continue as Chair until MBSHC23 conference, provided that a Vice-Chair is elected before the end of 2021. If not, Spain will resign on 1 Jan 2022.
- While seeking for a candidate for Region F ICCWG Coordinator, Spain will act as RCC for urgent and relevant questions.

#### 5. Any Other Items of Note

This Commission wants to highlight the support by France, UK, and Italy, after the explosion in Beirut, to Lebanon with:

- Joint surveys of Beirut quays and basins.
- Production of temporary charts to be used in addition to nautical charts
- Updates of charts and ENC.

#### 6. Conclusions and Recommended Actions

During all this time, and due to the restrictions imposed by the Pandemic, all efforts to maintain communication and active participation of Member States have not been as effective as they should have been. 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.

The MBSHC Chair accepted the offer received by Slovenia to host the face-to-face MBSHC23 conference. Venue and date of the next meeting will be determined before May 2022.

#### 7. Justification and Impacts

Nothing to report.

#### 8. Action Required of IRCC

The IRCC is invited to:

- Note the report.
- Consider the harmonization with other RHCs, the best way possible, to monitor adequately the national survey coverage through the IHO-GIS.
- Consider the need to establish guidelines for ICCWGs for the implementation of the S-1xx framework of services, and the role of this WG regarding the workload that this new standard will entail