

Involvement of BASWG Representative in the Composition of the Council

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Executive Summary:	This paper invites the BASWG to incorporate in its work programme the consideration of the involvement of BASWG Representative in the Composition of the Council, in order to report to the MBSHC24 in 2024.

Background

1. The IHO, through a Strategic Planning Working Group, undertook an extensive review of the Organization from 1997 to 2007. As a result, in 2005 the 3rd Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (EIHC-3) agreed a range of amendments to the Convention on the IHO, and in 2007 the 17th International Hydrographic Conference (IHC-17) adopted the supporting Basic Documents, and several organizational and administrative changes.

2. The amendments and changes included the establishment of a Council. The establishment of the Council is covered in Article VI of the Convention on the IHO. It is further described in Article 16 of the General Regulations.

3. In describing the composition of the Council, clause (a) of Article VI of the Convention on the IHO states:

One fourth of, but not less than thirty, Member states shall take seats on the Council, the first two thirds of whom shall take up their seats on a regional basis and the remaining one third on the basis of hydrographic interests, which shall be defined in the General Regulations.

4. Clause (c) of Article 16 of the General Regulations then states, among other things:

The remaining one-third of the Council seats shall be held by Member States that have the greatest interest in hydrographic matters and have not been selected under the procedure described in sub-paragraph (b) above. The definition of what constitutes an interest in hydrographic matters shall be reconsidered at the latest at the second Assembly meeting. Meanwhile, the scale by which an interest in hydrographic matters is measured shall be national flag tonnage. ...

Discussion

5. BASWG is constituted within the framework of the Mediterranean and the Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC). The main objective of the WG is to consider the hydrographic, cartographic, navigational and maritime safety information needs (MSI) and requirements of the States in the region and coordinate the appropriate actions.

6. The members of the WG are Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine.

7. BASWG boasts a larger number of member countries compared to the Nordic HC, Arctic RHC, US/Canada HC, South-East Pacific RHC and South West Atlantic HC.

8. Twenty-five percent of MBSHC's membership (6/24 countries) are also affiliated with BASWG. However, BASWG do not have a continues representation in the IHO Council.

9. According to the General Regulations of the IHO Article 16:

a. *“Two-thirds of Council seats shall be held by Member States selected by the RHCs.”*

b. *“The remaining one-third of Council seats shall be held by Member States that have the greatest interest in hydrographic matters...”*

10. the resultant distribution of the 20 seats on the Council allocated to the RHCs was informed with

CIRCULAR LETTER 43/2022 Rev1 dated 07 November 2022. The Number of Council seats allocated to the MBSHC according to that letter is 3.

11. Given that BASWG boasts a larger number of member countries compared to several other regional hydrographic commissions (RHCs) and the fact that a significant portion of the members of the MBSHC are also affiliated with BASWG strengthens the case for considering a quota allocation from MBSHC to BASWG.

12. Implementing a quota allocation from MBSHC to BASWG could help bridge the representation gap and ensure that the diverse perspectives and interests of BASWG member countries are adequately considered within the IHO Council. This would not only enhance the inclusivity and fairness of decision-making processes but also contribute to more comprehensive and effective global hydrographic initiatives.

13. We believe that the issue of BASWG representation within IHO Council is crucial for ensuring diverse perspectives and equitable decision-making in the hydrographic field. The observation that the BASWG lacks permanent representation on the IHO Council highlights a potential gap in the representation of its member countries' interests and perspectives.

Action Required of the BASWG

14. The BASWG is invited to:

- a. **agree** that the BASWG include in its work programme the consideration of the involvement of BASWG Representative in the Composition of the Council, in order to propose to the MBSHC24 in 2024.
- b. **take any other actions** that may be appropriate.