

## Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC) 22<sup>nd</sup> VTC

**27-28 May 2021**

### Report of the MBSHC Chair

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| Submitted by:      | IHM (Spain)   |
| Executive Summary: | This paper provides a summary report of the activities of the MBSHC since its 21 <sup>st</sup> conference in Cádiz in May 2019. |

### General characteristics of the region

1. The Mediterranean Sea is an intercontinental sea that stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the west of Asia on the east and separates Europe from Africa for a total length of approximately 2,500 miles. The region is referred to as the Mediterranean because it is a word that means the sea between the lands, which is exactly what the Mediterranean Sea is, quite literally. The northernmost point of the Mediterranean Sea is the innermost inlet of Croatia, while the southernmost point of the region is the inland region of Libya that just barely touches the coast of the Gulf of Sidra.

Even with its own peculiarities, the Black Sea, the largest land-locked basin in the world, is part of this regional system. The two basins have been a crucial crossroad in the history, economy and culture of Europe, Middle East and North African countries. However, until very recently, little attention has been paid to the past and current impact of human activities on the basin, and no coordinated plan for a coherent and sustainable use of its resources has been developed yet.

### Memberships

2. Lebanon has become IHO member and has signed the statutes of this RCH, becoming the 23<sup>rd</sup> member of MBSHC.

Members (23): 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.

3. Associate members: Israel, Palestinian Authority, United Kingdom, United States of America.
4. Observers: Albania, CIESM, Germany, IC-ENC, IOC, PRIMAR.

## **Activities since MBSHC21 (May 2019 – Cádiz)**

### ***Corporate Affairs***

6. **Cooperation with the European Union.** MBSHC Member States are active in participating to the IHO-EU network working group (IENWG). Greece is the MBSHC focal point for the IENWG and has provided an updated list of maritime related events, projects and tenders of interest for the MBSHC, as requested, and will be presented as agenda item 4.1.
7. **Cooperation with IOC.** Following the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO recommendations, IHO and IOC increased their cooperation throughout active participation in coordinated initiatives such as working groups, workshops and conferences.
8. **Cooperation with CIESM.** MBSHC Member States increasingly liaison with CIESM under the IHO-CIESM MoU umbrella, for the benefit of the oceanography in the Mediterranean Sea. On 26 March 2021, IHO and CIESM (Mediterranean Scientific Commission) have renewed their Scientific Cooperation Agreement for the next 4 years. This Agreement provide a framework for active cooperation in marine science, so members are encouraged to have an active role under the umbrella of the renewed IHO-CIESM Agreement.
9. **Attending IHO Council meetings (C3 and C4).** As a member of the Council, this Chair attended the meeting of the Council. The first C3 was held in Monaco in October 2019 as a face-to-face event, but the second was a VTC event in November 2020. The most significant recommendation to RHC is to consider the new Strategic Performance Indicators of the Strategic Plan 2021-2026, but this item will be reported in more detail by IHO Secretariat in agenda item 4.1.
10. **The second session of the Assembly (A2)** took place from 16 to 18 November 2020 as remote event (VTC). During this session, the IHO Member States approved the new IHO Strategic Plan which lays out the organization's priorities for the coming years (2021-2026). Also was implemented the IHO Universal Data Model (S-100) which can be utilized by all users of ocean data including navigation, marine energy, oceanography etc and approved the establishment of the joint IHO-Singapore Innovation and Technology Laboratory in Singapore. Finally, as a recommendation, The Assembly invited RHCs to consider the need to adapt their respective instruments / statutes to comply with the recommendations of the IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended by A-2 as appropriate (Decision A2/09) and any other A-2 Decisions such as Decision A2/07 (gender-neutrality) and A2/10 (response to disasters). As result of this recommendation, in item agenda 3.4 will be presented to plenary the possibility creating WG's to make changes to the MBSHC Statutes.

### ***Hydrographic Services and Standards***

11. **HSSC.** Since MBSHC21, the Hydrographic Services and Standard Committee (HSSC) has met in October 2020 (HSSC12). Thanks to the input provided during the Committee works, WGs achieve great results and indicate challenges to face in this decade.

The most important points to highlight are the following:

- Creation of new working groups (WG) and project teams (PT) to develop actions and tasks assigned to the HSSC, as well as considering possible solutions to the challenges to face in the coming years.
  - o HYDROGRAPHIC SURVEYS WG: This WG, apart from maintaining and updating the publications standards for Hydrographic Surveys (S-44) and the

manual on hydrography (C-13), has the challenge of increasing the collaboration amongst member states in a wide variety of fields and activities such as data processing, quality assurance during the surveys and automation in the production processes. It will also act as a focal point for hydrographic surveys industry/scientific/academic engagement with the IHO.

- S-130 PT: This PT will be in charge of developing S-130 product specifications (polygonal demarcations of global sea areas) as dataset model to designate geographic sea areas by a system of unique numerical identifiers.
- MARITIME AUTONOMOUS SURFACE SHIPS (MASS) PT: This PT will have the next goals:
  - Identify and prioritize MASS navigation requirements;
  - Analyse their impacts on current hydrographic standards and services;
  - Develop a set of recommendations/issues to be addressed by existing working groups.
  - BASELINE SYMBOLOGY PT: This PT will be under the NCWG, aiming to support the automated production of paper charts from S-101 data.
- Standards and specifications approved since the last MBSHC meeting:
  - S-4 Regulations for International (INT) Charts and Chart Specifications of the IHO (Edition 4.9.0, April 2021)
  - S-44 IHO Standards for Hydrographic Surveys (Edition 6.0.0, September 2020)
  - S-49 Standardization of Mariners' Routing Guides (Edition 2.1.0, September 2020)
  - S-63 IHO Data Protection Scheme (Edition 1.2.1, March 2020)
  - S-64 IHO Test Data Sets for ECDIS (Edition 3.0(.3), December 2020)
  - S-67 Mariners' Guide to Accuracy of Depth Information in Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) (Edition 1.0.0, September 2020)
  - S-97 IHO Guidelines for Creating S-100 Product Specifications (Edition 1.1.0, June 2020)
  - S-102 Bathymetric Surface Product Specification (Edition 2.0.0, October 2019)
  - S-121 Maritime Limits and Boundaries Product Specification (Edition 1.0.0, October 2019)
- Challenges to face in the coming years:
  - The work in progress for the development of S-101 and other S-100 based products and services, and the way forward for a seamless transition for their implementation by Members States.
  - Contribution of Members States to the Strategic performance indicators, under HSSC, of the targets indicated in the IHO Strategic Plan 2021-2026.
  - Development of the Joint Singapore-IHO innovation and technology Lab and the Joint S-100 geospatial registry.
  - Dual fuel ECDIS (S-57/S-102 data)
  - Validation of S-1xx, S-2xx, S-4xx and S-5xx products and services, not only individually, but also in some cases collectively for consistency.
  - Raise more awareness on ECDIS cybersecurity.

These issues will be elaborated in agenda item 5.1.

### ***Inter-regional Coordination and Support***

12. **IRCC** 12<sup>nd</sup> meeting was held as a remote event (VTC) last October 2020. The main features of this meeting were circulated as an annex of MBSHC CL 04/2020 dated November 16<sup>th</sup>.  
IRCC 13<sup>rd</sup> meeting will be a remote event 23-25 June. In item agenda 6.1 this Chair will present to plenary a short overview of the main topics from MBSHC to be reported to IRCC13.
13. **WEND Principles and Governance.** The 11<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Worldwide ENC Database Working Group (WENDWG), initially scheduled in the USA, was arranged by VTC on February 2021. The objectives and recommendations of this meeting will be presented by MBSHC representative in agenda item 6.3.1  
Also, IC-ENC and PIMAR representatives will report on their activities since MBSHC21 in agenda item 6.3.2.  
The ICCWG meeting has been conducted during 25<sup>th</sup> May and the Coordinator will present the report as agenda item 6.4.2.
14. **Maritime Safety Information.** MBSHC Member States are encouraged to establish closer engagement between their National Maritime Safety Information Coordinators and the NAVAREA Coordinator and are encouraged to use only NAVAREA warning for Safety to Navigation purposes as stated on IMO Res A.706 (17). In agenda item 6.7 the NAVAREA III coordinator will present a report of the MSI for this area.
15. **Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure.** During the last MSDIWG meeting, conducted as a remote event in March 2021, was presented a Draft Work Plan 2021-2024 and other exciting activities that MBSHC MSDI ambassador will report. This report will be available on the WEB, and MS will be informed that any question may be answered by our ambassador if there is time available during agenda item 6.8.
16. **Capacity Building** plays a key role in the Region and the enlargement, not only of the MBSHC, but also of the number of IHO Member States is beneficial. Lebanon, strongly supported by Italy in establishing a National Hydrographic Service, is now a new Member of this RCH. Turkey represents the MBSHC at the CB Sub-Committee and is in charge of updating the MBSHC 3 years CB work plan. This plan and activities since last meeting will be presented as agenda item 6.9.

### **Perspectives Chair's view**

Since MBSHC-21, MBSHC actions have been guided by the desire to promote coordination between Member States. Considering the characteristic complexity of the Mediterranean basin, its geographical and cultural peculiarities, dialogue between the 23 States can be fostered only through a strong coordination, favoring the overcoming of the intrinsic difficulties.

After the differences encountered in the region for the INT Charts Schemes, the recommendation of the IHO Secretariat is that the interested parties concentrate their efforts to solve the issues with regard to 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 the parties from pursuing the production of national paper charts, meeting international IHO standards (S-4), if deemed appropriate. This Chair totally agree with this recommendation and urges Member States to follow this recommendation.

As MBSHC Member States have different needs in accordance with their different level of ambition, competences, and abilities, Capacity Building (CB) is a powerful instrument to build cooperation among countries, not only related to safety of navigation but also regarding marine knowledge in general. Capacity building acts through its instruments: visits, education, on job training and the creation of a shared geospatial infrastructure at Regional level (MSDI). At this regard, the role of the MSDI Ambassador, in line with UN-GGIM principles, needs to be empathized.

Once Lebanon is a Member of this RCH our efforts must be focused assisting Albania to be a new IHO Member State and the 24<sup>th</sup> member of MBSHC.

### **Action Requested of MBSHC Member States**

- a. **Note** this report;
- b. **Make** additions as may be necessary;
- c. **Take** any other actions as considered appropriate.