

22nd Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC)
Video – Conference, 27 – 28 May 2021

The 22nd Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC) was held in virtual format, from 27 to 28 May. The Conference was preceded on 25 May by the 6th meeting of the Region F International Charting Coordination Working Group (Region F ICCWG). The Conference was chaired by Captain José Daniel Gonzalez-Aller Lacalle, Director of the Instituto Hidrográfico de la Marina (IHM), the Spanish Hydrographic Office. A total of 49 registered participants from 19 Member States of the MBSHC (Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine) and two Associate Member States (United Kingdom and United States of America) attended the Conference. Dr Geneviève Bécharde (Canada) as Chair of the IHO Council, the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), IC-ENC and PRIMAR, as the two Regional ENC Coordinating Centres (RENC) and one stakeholder from industry participated as observers. The IHO Secretariat was represented by Director Luigi Sinapi and Assistant Director Yves Guillam.

1. Opening and Administrative Arrangements

1.1 Opening Address (Chair, IHM Director, IHO Director)

The Conference was opened by the CHAIR who welcomed the Hydrographer General of CANADA as an Observer. He also took the opportunity to share the condolences of MBSHC Members to the family and relatives of RDML Richard Brennan (US, NOAA) who passed away recently.

The IHO welcomed LEBANON as full Member to MBSHC. In his introduction, Director Luigi Sinapi gave an outline of the most important topics to be addressed during the Conference, one of them being the implementation by the Commission of the decisions and actions resulting from the 2nd Session of the Assembly (A-2) and from the 4th meeting of the Council (C-4). The other one, more structural, was to ensure business continuity of the MBSHC and its subordinate working groups. He also reported on the recent renewal of the agreement between the IHO and the CIESM. Together with the activities handled by the IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG) and reported by Greece, these two bodies, CIESM and IENWG, play an important networking role in the region. The IHO also discussed the replacement of the MBSHC Vice Chair and the Region F ICCWG Coordinator.

1.2 Administrative Arrangements

Docs: *MBSHC22-01.2A* *List of Documents (Chair)*
MBSHC22-01.2B *List of Participants (Chair)*

The CHAIR introduced a presentation on administrative arrangements.

1.3 Nomination and Election Vice-Chair and Arrangements for Secretariat of 22nd Conference

Doc: *MBSHC22-01.3* *Nomination and Election of Vice-Chair, Possible consequences on Business Continuity, Calendar for MBSHC*

Due to the lack of candidates for the position of Vice Chair, the CHAIR introduced a paper for consideration on election of Vice Chair and business continuity, which stated that SPAIN would cumulate the functions of Chair and Vice Chair until the end of 2021, when a new Vice Chair should be elected to take over as Chair after MBSHC23. CROATIA could take over as Vice Chair if Ms Vinka Kolić is re-appointed as Director of the Hydrographic Institute of the Republic of Croatia.

FRANCE commented to stress the need for nominations and the risk to the commission. SLOVENIA commented that they still offer to host the next in-person conference. TURKEY commented on COVID

restrictions and the attached uncertainty and appealed to the responsibility of all Members. IHO commented on the importance of continuity in MBSHC. FRANCE commented that there is no confirmed solution yet and candidates are required. The CHAIR agreed but as no candidates have come forward hence the proposal. IHO supported the proposal. CROATIA commented that they have passed the first stage for the designation of their director and that it should be complete in June. France commented to support the proposal. The CHAIR announced that the proposal was approved.

2. Approval of the Agenda

Docs: MBSHC22-2 Agenda and Timetable (Chair)

The CHAIR summarized the Agenda, which was subsequently approved by the Conference.

3. MBSHC Administration

3.1 Welcome to the Lebanese Republic

The CHAIR announced the ascension of LEBANON as full Member and welcomed them into the MBSHC. IHO welcomed LEBANON into the Commission and a full hand. Technical issues prevented LEBANON from responding at this time, so this matter was referred to Agenda Item 6.2.1.

3.2 Chair's report

Docs: MBSHC22-03.2A Chair's report (Chair)

The CHAIR presented a report on MBSHC activities since its 21st Conference in Cádiz in May 2019, focused on membership, corporate affairs, HSSC, and Inter-Regional Coordination and Support. No comments.

3.3 Matters arising from Minutes of 21st MBSHC Meeting

Docs: MBSHC22-03.3A Minutes of MBSHC21 (Chair)
MBSHC22-03.3B Status Report on the MBSHC21 Action List (Chair)

The Minutes of MBSHC21 were not reviewed as they had already been approved and circulated. The CHAIR reviewed the Action List from MBSHC21, divided into three sections: permanent actions, actions with a deadline previous to this conference, and actions with a deadline of this conference. The CHAIR proposed to maintain permanent actions in a separate list. ITALY commented that they supported this proposal and reported that the action list should be amended as some ICCWG actions were still pending. TURKEY commented to support the proposal and supported checking ICCWG actions. GREECE commented on pending ICCWG issues and reserved their right to object. TURKEY also noted their disagreement. Matters were referred to Agenda item 6.1

3.4 Review of MBSHC Statutes and Region F ICCWG ToR

Docs: MBSHC22-03.4 Requirements to review MBSHC Statutes and way forward (Chair)

The CHAIR suggested that two ad hoc working groups be established, one to revise the MBSHC Statutes, as a matter of priority to implement A-2 and C-4 decisions including the new IHO Resolution 2/1997 as amended, the second to consider the possible evolution of the responsibilities for the Region F ICCWG Coordinator with the development of S-100 services and its consequences on the corresponding burden for the Region F ICCWG Coordinator. This should be addressed in the revision of the Region F ICCWG Terms of Reference. IHO clarified the status of revised IHO Resolution 2/1997. UK commented to propose to include a text on their advisory nature. GREECE commented to support the proposal by the Chair and regular revisions. FRANCE commented to support the proposal by the CHAIR and GREECE, commented on the UK proposal, and volunteered to join the working group. IHO commented on deadlines to establish the working groups so that volunteers should be identified during the conference, and also commented on procedures on amendments,

and suggested linking to resolutions rather than incorporating the text. The CHAIR agreed to ask for volunteers for the working groups and declared the proposed action approved.

3.5 Black and Azov Seas Working Group – BASWG

Docs: MBSHC22-03.5 Report of BASWG (Chair)

TURKEY as Chair of BASWG presented a report of BASWG15 held via VTC on 27-28 May. The CHAIR thanked TURKEY for the report.

4. IHO Work Programme 1– “Corporate affairs”

4.1 General update on IHO activities that may affect MBSHC and outcome of the 2nd Session of the IHO Assembly (A-2) and 4th meeting of IHO Council (C-4)

Docs: MBSHC22-04.1 IHO Secretariat’s Report (Secretary)

IHO presented a report on IHO activities affecting the MBSHC, focused on IHO Membership encouragement of and non-IHO Member States of the MBSHC region (Albania, Israel and Libya) to become IHO members, INT Chart and ENC Production Coordination in Region F, IHO GIS and Databases, outcomes of the Second IHO Assembly and 4th Meeting of the IHO Council, IHO Centenary Celebrations, Capacity Building, CSB / Seabed 2030, and the renewal of the IHO-CIESM Agreement. IHO reminded MBSHC Member to consider applying for attendance at the IHO Council as the meeting will take place as a remote event. The CHAIRMAN stated that relevant information would be circulated when they received the corresponding IHO Circular Letter.

As Council Chair, CANADA encouraged Members to participate in IHO activities. The CHAIR acknowledged the report. FRANCE commented to thank the IHO for their report, supported gender equality initiative, and commented on the relevance of the Chart Coordinator role.

4.2 Cooperation with European Union (EU) Commission

Docs: MBSHC22-04.2 IHO-EU Network WG Report (IENWG)

GREECE provided a presentation on IENWG activities since the last conference. FRANCE commented on the reuse of information in EU. IHO commented on the importance of cooperation with EU, specially for non-European MBSHC Members.

4.3 Cooperation with the Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM)

Docs: MBSHC22-04.3 CIESM Activities that may affect MBSHC (IHO Secretariat).

This Agenda Item was covered in para 4.1 of the IHO Secretariat’s report.

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

Docs: MBSHC22-04.4 IALA Activities that may affect MBSHC (IALA)

IALA reported on activities affecting MBSHC. IHO commented on cooperation IHO/IALA on capacity building. LEBANON commented on a possible IALA mission to the country. FRANCE commented on the possible signature to the ratification of IALA as an Inter-Governmental Organization, and asked Members to support this initiative at the State level.

4.5 Cooperation with Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC)

Docs: MBSHC22-04.5 IOC general activities that may affect MBSHC (IOC)

No report from IOC was received.

5. IHO Work Programme 2– “Hydrographic Services and Standards”

5.1 HSSC Activities that may affect MBSHC (HSSC Chair)

The MBSHC CHAIR provided a presentation on HSSC activities and outcomes of the last two HSSC meetings, held since MBSHC21. Relevant issues included the Roadmap for the S-100 Implementation Decade, Strategic Performance Indicators (SPIs) of the Strategic Plan 2021-2026, the impending the Joint IHO-Singapore Innovation and Technology Laboratory, and the establishment of the joint S-100 Geospatial information registry, the hydrographic surveys working group, and the S-130, Maritime Autonomous Surface Ships (MASS) requirements, and Baseline Symbology project teams

IHO commented that the HSSC only has five MBSHC members and encouraged other Members to attend, taking advantage of the VTC format, and commented on future production of S-101 ENCs, and industry collaboration. FRANCE commented on the importance of RENC contributions, and the work of National Hydrographic Offices on S-57 / S-101 ENC production.

6. IHO Work Programme 3– “Inter-Regional Coordination and Support”

6.1 Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC)

Docs: MBSHC22-06.1 Topics to be reported to IRCC13 (Chair)

The CHAIR reported on the outcome of IRCC12 and the main topics from the MBSHC to be reported to IRCC13, specially ENC coverage and overlapping, and the implementation of S-1xx framework of services. No comments were raised.

6.2 Cooperation with Member States

6.2.1 Lebanese Republic Report

Doc: MBSHC22.06.2.1 Lebanese Republic Hydrographic Service

LEBANON acknowledged the welcome into MBSHC, and introduced a presentation on the Lebanese Republic Hydrographic Service. LEBANON warmly thanked ITALY for their support in the development of the LNHS under a technical arrangement for the next decade signed in July 2020 and for their cooperation in the development of the Lebanese National Nautical Charting Plan in particular. LEBANON also commended FRANCE and the UK for their rapid response deployment plan in the survey of Beirut Port after the tragic explosion in August 2020: a direct and positive application of the IHO Resolution 1/2005 – IHO response to disasters - that was just revised by the Assembly in 2020. FRANCE commented on the appreciation by LEBANON of the assistance by the French Navy and other countries, and as the charting authority offered to cooperate with LEBANON. LEBANON commented on the transition phase between FRANCE and LEBANON regarding charting responsibilities for the safety of navigation.

6.2.2 National Reports

Docs: MBSHC22-06.2.2.X National Report

The CHAIR presented a summary of the main topics of the National Reports. Eighteen national reports were received, including some interesting aspects related to acquisition of new equipment and software, overseas hydrographic support, chart overlapping between different bordering countries, web services, capacity building needs and offers, and progress in use of UAVs and AUVs. The influence of COVID-19 was highlighted, remarking its effects on activity and training, as well as the opportunity to review the production processes and training methods.

FRANCE introduced a supplementary presentation to their national report, describing support operations by the French Navy to LEBANON after the blast in the Beirut Port. The CHAIR thanked FRANCE and UK for their support after the Beirut explosion. IHO commented that resolution 1/2005 was implemented. FRANCE commented that they and UK informed the CHAIR of their operations. LEBANON commented on surveying operations after the explosion assisted by UK and France, also with equipment from ITALY. ITALY commented on their support of LEBANON. The CHAIR commented that a report on this support would be submitted to IRCC13. The IHO commented on the strong support by RHC members after disasters.

6. IHO Work Programme 3 – “Inter-Regional Coordination and Support” (continued on 2nd day)

6.3 WEND Principles and Governance

6.3.1 Activities of WENDWG

Docs: MBSHC22-06.3.1 WENDWG11 Outcome, and Actions and Decisions that may affect MBSHC

ITALY briefly reported on the WENDWG11 Outcome, and Actions and Decisions that may affect MBSHC. IHO commented that a new WEND Resolution proposal is going to be introduced, and on the implementation of WEND S-100 principles and S-102 HD ENC. FRANCE commented on WEND guidelines on S-57 and S-100.

6.3.2 Regional ENC Coordination Centre (RENCs) Operations

IC-ENC and PRIMAR provided presentations of their activities regarding IHO S-10x. CROATIA commented on developments in e-navigation. IHO commented the importance of RENCs and the S-100 implementation strategy. FRANCE commented on the role of RENCs on S-101 dissemination to end users.

6.4 Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

6.4.1 Hydrographic survey status in the MBSHC area

Doc: MBSHC22-6.4.1 Hydrographic survey status in MBSHC area (Spain)

SPAIN presented a graphic index of Hydrographic survey status in MBSHC area. FRANCE commented on the discontinuance of this action as it is not defined clearly, and on SPI developments. SPAIN commented that the situation with SPI will be clarified soon.

6.4.2 Region F ICCWG Activities-MEDINTCHART Catalogue (INT Charts and ENCs)

ITALY as the ICCWG Coordinator reported on the outcome of ICCWG6. GREECE commented on the email submitted by the MBSHC CHAIR on the INT Chart scheme in the Aegean Sea. The CHAIR commented that this issue was resolved following the modification to Decision MBSHC21/03, corrected due to procedural matters. GREECE asked the CHAIR on their revised proposal of the INT scheme. The CHAIR replied that the new proposed scheme will be considered for approval by ICCWG. GREECE commented that the assessment is completed and accepted by the previous coordinator and the issue should not be postponed. The CHAIR commented that the ICCWG must submit the Scheme to MBSHC in accordance with Statutes and ToRs. TURKEY commented that a new proposed scheme should be submitted and approved as such, as per procedures. GREECE commented that this is another deadlock, that GREECE is trying to be constructive to move forward, and that GREECE will protest the CHAIR for not accepting the scheme. GREECE submitted a formal protest in writing which is attached to these Minutes as Annex 1. The CHAIR commented that the protest is taken into consideration, but the CHAIR needs a proposal from the ICCWG before it can be put to a vote in the next MBSHC Conference. IHO included the following statement for the record of the minutes: *“Due to the standing situation still pending on unresolved bilateral situations, it is intention of this Secretariat*

to maintain in those areas blank situation for INT Charts (produced and schemed) and for ENC schemes on the INOTGis, till the pending issues are resolved by the interested Countries.” IHO announced 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, and invited the CHAIR to report on these issues to the next IRCC meeting. Regarding the above IHO statement, GREECE is reserved to issue comments in due course. The Region F IRCCWG Coordinator reported on discrepancies in the ENC overlap risk assessment among concerned parties (GREECE, TURKEY) and IC-ENC in the Aegean Sea UB2 cells. IHO recommended the application of IHO Resolution 1/2018 - Elimination of overlapping ENC data in areas of demonstrable risk to the safety of navigation.

6.5 GEBCO/Seabed 2030 Project/Crowd-Source Bathymetry Activities

Doc: MBSHC22-6.5 GEBCO/Seabed 2030 Project/Crowd-Source Bathymetry Activities

ITALY as the MBSHC GEBCO/Seabed 2030/CSB ambassador provided an overview on the latest developments of GEBCO/Seabed 2030 Project and Crowd-Source Bathymetry activities. ITALY noted the activity of the IHO CSB Working Group and the involvements of National Hydrographic Offices.

6.6 Designation of pending MBSHC representatives to other organizations

The CHAIR bade farewell to LtCdr Marta Pratellesi as the MBSHC representative to other organizations. ITALY thanked the CHAIR. The CHAIR introduced a presentation on pending MBSHC representatives as GEBCO/Seabed 2030/CSB ambassador and Region F ICCWG coordinator. No candidates were identified, so the CHAIR referred the matter to a circular letter. IHO commented that a rotation could be introduced to fill these positions. The CHAIR commented that the proposed rotation for the position as Region F ICCWG coordinator would be considered and asked for volunteers. The CHAIR commented that the deadline for candidates would be short to speed up the process.

6.7 Maritime Safety Information (MSI)

Docs: MBSHC22-06.7 Report of NAVAREA III

The NAVAREA III Coordinator (SPAIN) reported on MSI activities and developments within the MBSHC region. FRANCE commented that the La Garde NAVTEX Station damages are extensive and there is no schedule to be back online. MALTA commented that the Malta CRS station is only operational during the night-time and on weekends, and that they are covering for TUNISIA so they asked if Kelibia is going back into operation. TUNISIA commented that discussions with the companies on that issue are ongoing.

6.8 Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI)

Docs: MBSHC22-06.8 Report of MSDIWG

The Report of the MBSHC Ambassador (ITALY) on MSDIWG is available on the WEB.

6.9 Capacity Building

6.9.1 Capacity Building activities within MBSHC

*Docs: MBSHC22-06.9.1 MBSHC Report to CBSC17
MBSHC22-06.9.2 3-year MBSHC CB Plan*

The MBSHC CB Coordinator (TURKEY) reported on the outcomes of last CBSC and presented the 3 years CB work plan. TURKEY showed that despite the COVID pandemic, activities are progressing in the region and that the scope of CB is extending to many topics other than the traditional ones such as: Airborne Lidar Bathymetry, using AI as Sonar Noise Classifier, Cartographic Data Management, underwater photogrammetry, oil spill detection with remote sensing. Thanks to the support provided by the RENCs, as

well as the establishment by A-2 of the IHO e-Learning Center, it is likely that transition to S-1xx will also become a key topic in the next coming years. FRANCE commented on the decrease in the number of students. TURKEY commented that the number of students has not decreased but the number of applications has increased, and mentioned the difficulties of remote training. FRANCE commented on webinars and e-training. IHO commented on the wide scope of CB activities, specially regarding remote sensing and anti-pollution training. TURKEY commented that it was new training. OHI commented on the relevance of webinars for goals 2 & 3 of the IHO.

7. Other Information

7.1 Digital update to the World Port Index (WPI)

Doc: MBSHC22-07.1

US provided a presentation on crowdsourcing elements to the World Port Index (WPI). IHO commented on publication P-51 to monitor chart coverage and an ATA between NGAS and Korea, and S-131 on port data.

7.2 Global Maritime Density Service (GMTDS)

Doc: MBSHC22-07.2

US provided a presentation on the Global Maritime Density Service (GMTDS) to map global maritime vessel traffic. OHI commented on EMODNet certificates for MBSHC Members.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 WGs to review MBSHC Statutes and Region F ICCWG ToRs

The CHAIR reported on candidates for the WGs and asked FRANCE for clarification. FRANCE commented that they volunteer for the WG to review MBSHC Statutes. The CHAIR proposed to merge both WGs into one as membership was very similar. FRANCE commented that it would not be a problem. IHO commented on the chair position for the WG. The CHAIR commented that SPAIN volunteered to Chair the joint WG. OHI commented that work should be focused on MBSHC Statutes. ITALY commented that work on IRCC required guidance, and that working groups should not be joined. FRANCE commented that they agreed with the position by IHO. MALTA commented on the difficulties with participation and decision making. FRANCE commented that that they volunteer for the WG to review MBSHC Statute or the joint WG. IHO commented that WGs and PTs are the normal way to deal with new arising topics in RHCs, and that the Council requested the update of RHC Statutes. The CHAIR proposed to create one working group, with the priority to review MBSHC Statutes and then IRCCWG ToRs, and as the only volunteer SPAIN would be the CHAIR. A letter would be circulated the following week. Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Turkey, UK and Ukraine volunteered for working group on review of MBSHC Statutes and ICCWG ToRs.

9. Closure

9.1 Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

The CHAIR proposed that if face to face meetings are viable again, MBSHC23 will be held in Slovenia before late May 2022. SLOVENIA commented that they confirm their availability, pending exact date. IHO commented that the deadline for the arrangement of the meeting should be mid December 2021.

9.2 Review of Actions, Decisions and Recommendations

The Chair presented a provisional list of Actions, Decisions and Recommendations, to be circulated next week for comments and amendment.

9.3 Designation of MBSHC Representatives in WENDWG, CSBWG, CBSC... / Transfer of the Chairmanship if appropriate

The CHAIR reported that SPAIN will continue as CHAIR until the next Conference if a new Vice Chair is designated. A Vice Chair will be selected via mail. There are no candidates for ICCWG Coordinator so a letter requesting candidates will be circulated. Lebanon volunteered for GEBCO / SEABED 2030 / CSB Ambassador. ITALY commented to support LEBANON. IHO commented that the ICCWG will remain dormant until a new Coordinator is designated. LEBANON commented on their role in MBSHC. FRANCE commented on the serious precedent of leaving the ICCWG dormant.

9.4 Closing Remarks (End of Conference)

The CHAIR bade farewell to Mr Joseph Bianco of MALTA as a long-time member of the MBSHC. IHO thanked the CHAIR and all attendants for their participation. The CHAIR provided the closing remarks of the Conference.

Reservation by Greece

Submitted to MBSHC22 on 28th of May 2021

The revision of the Greek proposal submitted in Cadiz and its submission to the F-ICCWG on 25 May 2021 was done without prejudice to Greece's position regarding the promulgation of the Minutes of the 21st MBSHC Conference.

More specifically, Greece would like to state that the promulgation of the Minutes of the 21st MBSHC Conference is still pending since the relevant procedure foreseen in article 8 of the Statutes of the MBSHC, was not properly followed.

In particular, the Minutes and List of Actions and Decisions of the 21st MBSHC Conference as circulated by MBSHC Circular Letter No 01/2020 and uploaded to MBSHC site are null and void as they do not include the final decisions regarding the F-ICC Coordinator's proposal on the nine (9) INT charts in the Aegean Sea proposed by Greece, which were taken in this Conference.

It should be emphasized that all the Decisions taken during the 21st MBSHC Conference, including the MBSHC 21/03, are final as they were read at the end of the Conference and adopted according to article 8(b) and 11 of the Statutes. Moreover, these Decisions became operative immediately according to art. 11(c) of the above Statutes. The same final Decisions were sent again by e-mail, requesting the Member States "to make editorial changes/revision to MBSHC21 minutes", which by no means include changes that would alter the very content of the minutes.

In this regard it should be underlined that the competence of any chairperson is limited to procedurally post, through a Circular Letter, the Minutes and List of Actions and Decisions as formed, accepted and presented during the MBSHC Conference conclusion. As stressed above, no modification of the Actions and Decisions taken therein is permitted except editorial ones.

It is obvious that the current MBSHC chairman's (Cpt Jose Daniel Gonzalez-Aller LACALLE) action to unilaterally modify the above MBSHC21 Actions and Decisions is not in line with the MBSHC Statutes, ICCWG TORs & ROPs and IHO Regulations. In this regard Greece protests the current MBSHC chairman's actions, as well as his persistent refusal, despite Greece's demarches, to duly circulate the valid MBSHC21 Actions and Decisions as formed, accepted and presented originally during the 21st MBSHC Conference, which took place under the chairmanship of the current IHO Director RAdm Luigi SINAPI. Such actions constitute a clear infringement of the IHO principles and of the rules and procedures provided in the institutional documents of MBSHC and F-ICCWG and eventually lead to a deadlock, thus undermining the credibility both of IHO and of the MBSHC.

Greece is looking forward to all necessary relative corrective actions so that the aforementioned Minutes and List of Actions and Decisions (MBSHC 21/03) are duly circulated as formed, accepted and originally presented during 21st MBSHC Conference and subsequently the relevant INT charts in the Aegean Sea proposed by Greece are uploaded to IntoGIS.