

23rd Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission, Ljubljana, Slovenia, hybrid event 29 March – 1 April 2022

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2022	
Task 3.2.1.6	Prepare for and report meetings of the Regional Hydrographic Commission: MBSHC

Following the invitation from the Directorate of Aviation and Maritime Transport of the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Geodetic Institute of Slovenia, the 23rd Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC) took place from 30 March to 1 April 2022 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, as a hybrid event. Seventy-five registered participants from seventeen Members of the MBSHC (Algeria¹, Bulgaria¹, Croatia¹, Cyprus¹, Egypt¹, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta¹, Morocco, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Tunisia¹, Turkey), three Associate Members (Israel, United Kingdom and the United States of America) attended the event, together with five Observers (Albania, IC-ENC and PRIMAR, the two Regional ENC Coordinating Centres (RENC), the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), the Mediterranean Scientific Commission (CIESM)), and stakeholders from industry (Fugro, GeoAcoustics, iXblue, Kongsberg Maritime and SevenCs¹). The IHO Secretariat was represented by Director Luigi Sinapi and Assistant Director Yves Guillam.

The Conference was chaired by Captain (Dir) José Daniel Gonzalez-Aller Lacalle, Director of the *Instituto Hidrográfico de la Marina* (IHM), and opened by Mr Srecko Jansa, Director General of Navigation and Maritime Transport of Slovenia. In response, Director Sinapi congratulated Slovenia for the outstanding arrangements for this conference, offering many opportunities for the delegates physically present to exchange views directly. In addition to the important challenges under the responsibility of the MBSHC in view of the 3rd Session of the IHO Assembly, Director Sinapi, noting the ongoing situation in the Black and Azov Seas, invited the MBSHC to carefully monitor the situation in the eastern part of the Region in order to provide any potential contribution to maintain the safety of navigation and safeguard the protection of the environment.



¹ In VTC mode.

The Chair presented the work of the ad hoc drafting group in charge of the revision of the MBSHC Statutes, established after the previous Conference (MBSHC-22) to consider the application of the revised IHO Resolution 2/1997. With the quorum reached, the new Statutes of the MBSHC, which include some changes on the voting and decision-making procedures suggested by the Secretariat, were approved. Anticipating the endorsement of the recommendations from the WENDWG² by the IRCC, the MBSHC also decided to start the process for the establishment of the MBSHC-S1xx Working Group, the scope of which being to provide practical recommendations to the MBSHC in support of the S-100 Implementation Roadmap. In the absence of terms of reference and clarity on the objectives and timelines, some concerns were raised by Malta on this matter.

Director Sinapi commended Spain for their efforts to deal with urgent matters in charting coordination since MBSHC-22 when the position of Coordinator of the Charting Region F became vacant. The Commission tasked the Region F ICCWG³ to consider the extension of its scope to S-101 ENC's in the revision process of its own terms of reference (TORs). MBSHC approved the re-establishment of the Region F database in the Aegean Sea in INTOGIS, as it was on 14 February 2022 (cancellation of the "blanking" of INT charts in INTOGIS in the Aegean Sea made by the IHO Secretariat).

The MBSHC approved the designation of Greece as Region F IRCC Coordinator and Turkey as Vice-Coordinator until MBSHC24. The MBSHC also agreed on the rotation on these positions after MBSHC24 (2024) and until MBSHC25 (2026), with Turkey becoming Region F Coordinator and Greece Vice-Coordinator. It was also agreed that the Region F ICCWG supported by the BASWG⁴, will re-consider the INT charts and ENC charting schemes in the Black and Azov Seas globally when the situation in the region is stabilized.



Greece became Region F Charting Coordinator

In addition to the standing agenda items (reports on HSSC and IRCC activities, NAVAREA III, crowd-sourced bathymetry, capacity building, etc.), very enlightening presentations were delivered by Associate Members and Observers/Industry participants, introducing different promising topics such as:

- Mapping marine geological risks in the Mediterranean region (IHO/CIESM);
- Chart On Demand (COD) & Certified Printed ENC (CPENC) (NGA, USA);
- The Potential of Artificial Intelligence in Phase Measuring Bathymetric Sonar Data Processing (GeoAcoustics);
- Remote Hydrography Concept (iXblue).

At the end of the Conference, Ms Vinka Kolić, Director of the Hydrographic Institute of the Republic of Croatia and Vice-Chair of the MBSHC, took over the chairpersonship of the Commission. In the absence of nominations, the designation of the new Vice-Chair and the selection of dates and venue for the next Conference (MBSHC-24 in 2024) will be handled by correspondence. Noting that the next Conference is planned in 2024 after the 3rd Session of the Assembly, the IHO Secretariat drew the attention on the need to launch the selection of the Members of the Commission applying for a seat at the Council, no later than in October 2022.

² Actions WENDWG12/21 and /33 refer.

³ Region F International Charting Coordination Working Group.

⁴ Working Group on the Safety of Navigation in the Black and Azov Seas.

Captain (Dir) José Daniel Gonzalez-Aller Lacalle closed the Conference expressing his gratitude to all participants and to Slovenia's representatives in particular for their outstanding and effective hospitality during the Conference.



Director Sinapi and the Chair thank the Director General and the staff of the Geodetic Institute of Slovenia for a successful MBHSC-23 hybrid event