

Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC)

23nd Meeting

Ljubljana (Slovenia)

29 March- 1 April 2022

Report of the MBSHC Chair

Submitted by: IHM (Spain)

Executive Summary: This paper provides a summary report of the activities of the MBSHC since its 22st VTC conference in June 2021.

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

Activities since MBSHC22

Corporate Affairs

5. **Attending IHO Council meetings.** No Councils meetings have been held since the last meeting of this hydrographic commission. The next Council meeting, which will be the 6th, is scheduled to take place in October this year in Monaco.
6. **Session of the Assembly.** No IHO Assembly has been held since the last meeting of this hydrographic commission. The next Assembly, which will be the 3rd, is scheduled to be held in 2023.

Hydrographic Services and Standards

7. **HSSC.** No meetings of the Hydrographic Services and Standard Committee (HSSC) has been held since MBSHC21.
 - 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.
 - 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.

Inter-regional Coordination and Support

8. **IRCC** 13rd meeting was held as a remote event (VTC) last June 2021. The report of the most relevant aspects of this meeting will be presented in agenda item 5.1, but it is necessary to highlight the action derived from the RHCs to establish SPI of the new SP at regional level. In this respect, the most important aspects to be taken into account on this matter in this hydrographic commission will be presented in agenda item 6.1. Next meeting will be held in June as a hybrid event in Deansapar, Indonesia.
9. **WEND Principles and Governance.** The 12nd meeting of the Worldwide ENC Database Working Group (WENDWG), was arranged by VTC on February 2022. This meeting highlighted the need for member states to start production of S-100 products and the importance of being aware of the S-100 roadmap. Agenda item 4.2 will present the most relevant aspects of this roadmap for this Hydrographic Commission.
Since there was no candidate for the role of Region F ICCWG Coordinator, SPAIN is in charge of the most urgent and relevant matters related to ICCWG. The urgent need for a candidate to fulfil this crucial position in the Hydrographic Commission is one of the most critical issues to be resolved at the next meeting. All member states are asked to consider the possibilities of being able to fill this role from their services.
10. **Maritime Safety Information.** SPAIN is acting as NAVAREA III Coordinator. MBSHC Member States are encouraged to establish closer engagement between their National Maritime Safety Information Coordinators and the NAVAREA Coordinator. Highlight the intense coordination activity NAVAREA is carrying out in the Black and Azov Seas area due to the crisis between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Member states are urged

to use only NAVAREA warning for Safety to Navigation purposes as stated on IMO Res A.706 (17).

11. **Maritime Spatial Data Infrastructure.** No meetings of the MSIDIWG has been held since the last MBSHC22. The next meeting of this working Group is planned as a hybrid event in Singapore during May this year. ITALY is the ambassador of the MBSHC for this issue.
12. **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. Turkey represents the MBSHC at the CB Sub-Committee and is in charge of updating the MBSHC 3 years CB work plan. The last Intersessional Meeting of the IHO Capacity Building Sub-Committee was on March 17.

Perspectives Chair's view

During the last years, 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.

Member States are encouraged to concentrate efforts to solve the issues regarding regional ENC coverage and its maintenance rather than remaining focused on disputed INT Paper Charts Schemes.

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.

This 23rd meeting of the MBSHC was a decision MBSHC22/08 and it was planned in a primarily face-to-face format because of the need to resolve some outstanding issues that could not be properly addressed in a remote meeting format.

The hybrid meeting format in which it will finally take place will allow progress to be made in resolving the main obstacles of this hydrographic commission:

- The continuity of the Chair through the election of a new Vice Chair.
- The election of a new cartographic coordinator for this region, an issue of the highest priority that will require a greater involvement of the member states.
- The approval of the new statutes for the region and the terms of reference of the cartographic co-ordination group.

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.