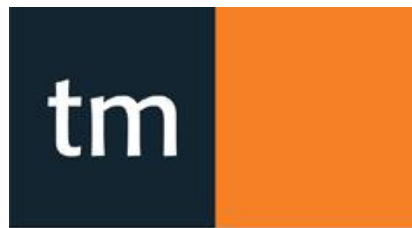


**MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS
HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION**

XXIV CONFERENCE

CONTRIBUTION BY MALTA



Transport Malta

**Romania
2 July – 4 July 2024**

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Item 1 **Hydrographic Office**

1.1 General

Transport Malta is an autonomous corporate body with one clear strategic vision of serving as a holistic regulator of the transport sector in Malta. The Authority is made up of different Directorates, one being the Ports and Yachting Directorate which has a regulatory role. To achieve its objective the Ports and Yachting Directorate monitors the maritime activities which take place within the internal and territorial waters of Malta and manages port facilities which are under the control of the Authority, including yachting and mooring facilities.

The Hydrographic Office forms an integral part of the Ports and Yachting Directorate. The Chief Officer responsible for the Ports and Yachting Directorate who is also the Harbour Master, acts as Director of the Hydrographic Office. This year has also seen some changes in the hydrographic structure as the head of the hydrographic office retired and a member of the existing staff has been earmarked as head for some time for a smooth transition. The Maltese Hydrographic Office (MHO) performs a wide variety of roles in support of Transport Malta that include the gathering and providing hydrographic data, monitoring of Tides, compiling and disseminating Electronic navigational charts and providing maritime safety information to mariners, in compliance with the requirements of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS).

The Hydrographic Office is now based at the Malta Transport Centre, Triq Pantar Lija. LJA2021. Malta

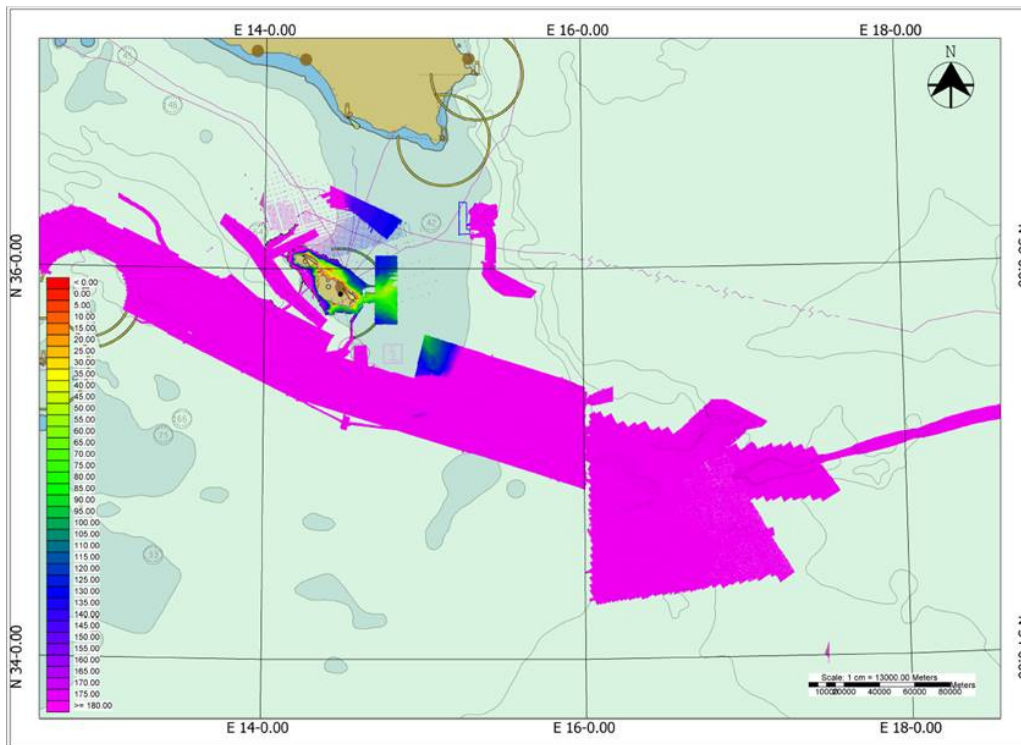
1.2 IHO Convention

For many years, the MHO has maintained active links with the international hydrographic community and has complied with the Conventions that came into force. The Malta Hydrographic Office became a full member of the International Hydrographic Office (IHO) in January 2017.

Item 2 Surveys

2.1. Surveying: The MHO's survey capability meets the requirement for large-scale surveys in port and harbour areas. Regular surveys have been carried out in ports and harbours to maintain Navigational Charts of Maltese waters. To perform this function the Hydrographic Office utilises a 13m survey boat equipped with a newly acquired Norbit WBMS multibeam system complete with two Trimble GNSS antennas for positioning. The unit is mounted over the side of the vessel. The MHO also uses a portable single beam echo sounder ELAC HYDROSTAR combined with a Trimble DSM 12 GPS for positioning. The MHO recently acquired an Uncrewed Survey Vessel (USV) for shallow water measurements to IHO standards. Bathymetric surveys are carried out using sophisticated hydrographic hardware and software, The MHO also monitors tidal gauges and issues water level information.

2.2 The chart below showing survey coverage with multibeam.



The Chart shows the total survey coverage to date.

Item 3 New Charts and Updates

Navigational Charts of Maltese waters are available in both paper and digital formats. Paper charts for Maltese waters are produced by the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO). Malta provides the necessary data and information, and to ensure continuity, Malta has established a bilateral agreement with the UKHO. With regards to Digital Charts, the MHO has the capability and responsibility of producing, maintaining, and updating Electronic Navigational Charts of the Maltese waters. Charts produced by the MHO, are also used to support the local VTS system and for the production of limited paper charts and diagrams for specialist local purposes

such as, Navigational Warnings, Notices to Mariners, construction and maintenance works. Nautical cartography is limited but otherwise covered by the MHO's close links with UKHO.

At present, the MHO has now produced a total of eleven ENC's.

Malta is now in the process of producing three additional ENC's to its ENC portfolio. The UKHO is collaborating with Malta to produce more ENC's of the Maltese waters and that includes coverage of the Maltese Islands at a 5 Band level scale.

Item 4 **Publications**

The MHO has a major role in providing Maritime Safety Information (MSI) data to users of the marine environment: This information varies from the immediate notification of the failure of local aids to navigation, to the routine administration of marinas and notification of temporarily prohibited areas, to permanent and temporary changes affecting navigational charts.

Notices to Mariners are invariably published on the government Gazette and on the Transport Malta website, as soon as it is reasonably possible, after having received the relevant information. These Notices are categorised as Local and Coastal. Below is a tabulated list of the total Notices to Mariners that have been promulgated. The Coastal Notices to Mariners and Navigational warnings are sent to NavArea 3 Coordinator (Spain), Italy, and the UKHO.

Malta		
Year	Coastal Notices	Local Notices
2022	44	222
2023	43	225
2024 (Until May)	14	43

Information is sent to the UKHO in instances where the Mediterranean Pilot Sailing Directions NP 45, List of Lights and fog signals NP 78, Admiralty list of Radio Signals NP 286(3) and Maritime Communications NP 289, are being updated with the latest information for Maltese waters.

Besides the above several project publications are available from the Physical Oceanography Research Group.

Item 5 **MSI**

Navigational warnings are promulgated by (NBDP) NAVTEX and VHF radio transmissions via the Malta Coast Radio Station (MCRS) that is operated by the Armed Forces of Malta (AFM) which also manages and operates the Coastal VTS. The AFM are also responsible for all search and rescue operations within the areas designated to Malta.

Contact details of Armed Forces of Malta Coast Radio Station (MCSR) are as follows:

Malta Radio
 Operations Centre
 Armed Forces of Malta (AFM)
 C2S COY, 4 Regt
 Luqa Barracks
 Luqa VLT 2000
 Malta
 TF: +356 22494208 / 9 / 10
 TF: +356 22494202
 TF: +356 21257267
 FAX: +356 21809860

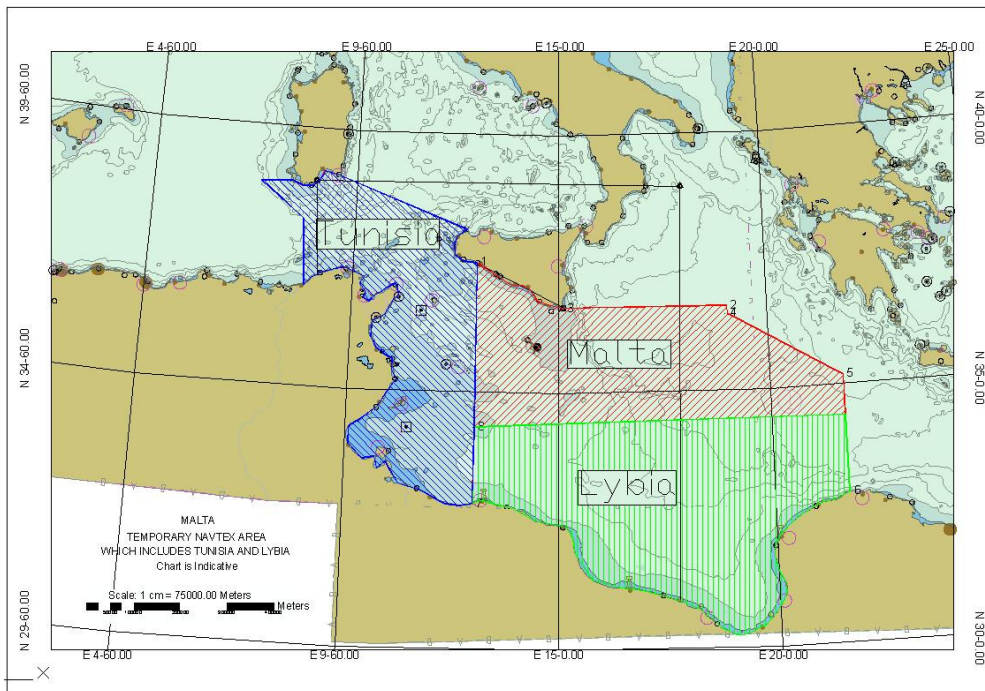
EMAIL : rccmalta@gov.mt – Rescue Coordination Centre
Opsroom.afm@gov.mt – Operations Centre
 INMARSAT : 421599999
 MMSI:002150100
 IRIDIUM: 00881641709216
 MMSI: 000000320

Malta	
Year	Navigational Warnings
2022	43
2023	32
2024 (Until May)	62

Since 2015 the NAVTEX service area has been reassigned to cover also the west coast of Tunisia and the coast of Libya. This service was agreed upon with Tunisia and the Navarea III Coordinator in 2015. The below is a list of Notices to Mariners that were promulgated in the time slots allocated to Tunisia.

Tunisia	
Year	Warnings (Through Malta)
2022	25
2023	12
2024 (Until May 2024)	60

The below is an Indicative chart showing the current coverage by the NAVTEX Service area of Malta which is including those of Tunisia and Libya.



National Focal point:

Malta Hydrographic Office
Ports and Yachting Directorate
Malta Transport Centre
Triq Pantar Lija LJA 2021
Malta
Email: info.tm@transport.gov.mt
TF +356 25554430
TF + 356 22914429

GMDSS

A Master Plan has been implemented and is now operational in sea areas A1 and A2. A fully compliant coast radio system is incorporated into the Coastal VTS (Malta VTS) that is operated by the AFM. In 2010, the plan included the installation of a new NAVTEX transmitter and a complete re-location of all existing transmitters and associated antennae.

Since 2015, following an agreement between the IMO Chairman of the NAVTEX Committee and the Maltese and Tunisian authorities, the MCRS has officially taken over the Tunisian transmissions, utilising Tunisian MSI time slots to broadcast MSI information on behalf of the Tunisian Coast Radio Station located at Kelibia until the latter station becomes operationally capable to resume the required transmission in its MSI area. To this extent, the MCRS is conducting 12 transmissions daily rather

than 6 transmissions, along with additional transmissions in the Libyan MSI areas as required in the absence of the Libyan Coast Radio Stations. Malta is also transmitting Italian Notices to Mariners that fall within the Malta NAVTEX service area.

Therefore, due to the above-mentioned commitments and an increase in transmissions on the MCRS' antennae, it is imperative that the Maltese authorities have a clearer picture on the progress towards the return to fully operational status of the Tunisian Coast Radio Station. This shall allow MCRS to better plan and conduct its fiscal policy and projections regarding the station's maintenance and upkeep.

Item 6 **S-55 Latest Update** – no update

Item 7 **Capacity Building** –

Title The hydrographic office is in the process of engaging three personnel one to study as a Cartographic and two to study as Hydrographers.

The Malta Hydrographic Office would also like to apply for other short course through the MBSHC Capacity Building plan that will be held in the near future.

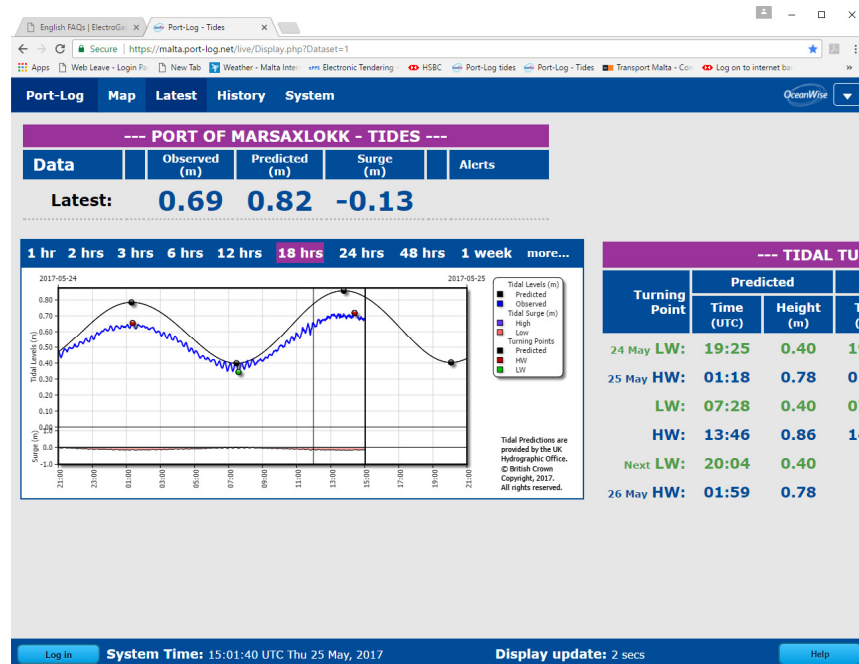
Item 8 **Oceanographic Activities**

8.1 Tide Gauge Network

A tide gauge was installed and setup in the port of Marsaxlokk in the southern part of the Island in order to transmit tide data in real time. The site can be accessed through the following weblink <https://malta.port-log.net/live/Display.php?Dataset=1>.

An Additional tide gauge is to be installed in Mgarr Gozo in the coming months and a third Tide gauge is being considered for Valletta Harbours.

This will be beneficial for MHO and Malta as the three tide gauges would cover most of the Islands, thus having a clear picture of tides throughout the Maltese Waters in real-time. The tide gauge network will all be calibrated to the Lowest Astronomical Tide.



Item 9 MHO - Other activities

- During the past 2 years extensive maintenance dredging took place at the Southern Port and in the Port of the northern sister Island of Gozo, the Malta Hydrographic Office kept regular monitoring of dredging operations here and in Grand Harbour.
- Assisting the Chief Officer and Harbour Master in decision making for the berthing of vessels and safe passage around Malta and in Ports and Harbours.
- Monitoring of Navigational Aids and issue of Notices to Mariners and Navigational warnings.
- Provision of charts in connection with mooring areas in the Maltese coastal waters.
- The Malta Hydrographic Office also attends the IHO Council Meetings regularly.

9.1 Marine Data Spatial Infrastructure - Malta

The Planning Authority in Malta incorporates the national Mapping Agency and is also a major data repository at a national level. In 2017 the Planning Authority has embarked on a national project with the support of EU funding for the development and implementation of a national spatial data infrastructure aimed at the creation of a strategic approach to spatial data and creation of critical base data sets covering the national territory. The SIntegraM project is expected to provide Malta with the necessary infrastructure in terms of aerial, terrestrial and marine technologies. Through the Partnership of all Ministries involved, this project is expected to lay the foundations for enhanced governance of spatial data at a national level. To-date all the marine equipment has been delivered and is being utilised. The strategy has also been finalised and is pending formal acceptance for dissemination. By the third quarter of 2019, the new national basemap, dissemination portal and projection tools should be finalised.

The Planning Authority is also the designated Competent Authority for the implementation of the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive through the national MSP Regulations under Planning Law. Through the SIMWESTMED project, the Planning Authority undertook a desk study to evaluate the potential of developing an MSP portal that would support policy development and implementation. The outcome of this work will feed into the deliverables of the SIntegraM project. In parallel, the Planning Authority chairs the MSP Technical Committee aimed at supporting the implementation of the MSP Directive. During 2019-2021 efforts have been made towards improving governance in the MSP process including data management, amongst relevant government entities.

Item 10 **Conclusions**

The Maltese Hydrographic Office now comprises one qualified Hydrographic surveyor and two qualified Cartographers. It is maintaining the Maltese Navigation Charts both paper and ENCs and contributes to safety of navigation in Maltese waters by keeping up to date the Nautical Charts. The MHO issues Notices to Mariners and Navigational Warnings to the Mariner.

The MHO is an integral part of the Harbour Masters' Office and is in addition considered as a "value added service" when it comes to tackling issues related to Safety of Navigation.