

Statement by Greece

Thank you madam Chair,

1. Hellenic Navy Hydrographic Service expresses its strong discontent about the unilateral decision made and announced by MBSHC's Chair through its Circular Letter No12/2024 dated 26 June 2024, not to include in the MBSHC24 Agenda the Greek proposal, as per MBSHC CL 10/2022-Proposal of INT chart scheme by Greece.
2. Procedure-wise, the decision violates the statutes of the MBSHC (9th edition, April 2022) for the following reasons:
 - a) The Greek proposal of INT chart scheme on the Aegean Sea is pending from the 23rd Conference of MBSHC as Decision MBSHC 23/17 and remains fully operative according to article 7e of the Statutes of the MBSHC.
 - b) As such and as explicitly stipulated in Status report on the list of Actions and Recommendations from MBSHC 23 from the MBSHC 23 up to 15 February 2023, the action is transferred for discussion to MBSCH 24.
 - c) According to article 7d of MBSHC Statutes, the Chair has no competence whatsoever to overrule any decision adopted by the MBSHC. On the contrary, the article provides that MBSHC decisions "should be adopted by consensus in general or otherwise in accordance with the procedure described in article 4". What is solely left at the discretion of the Chair according to the very same article of MBSHC Statutes is the decision to submit or not a decision or resolution to a vote.
 - d) In light of the above, the Chair has exceeded the limits of its power and competencies by announcing unilaterally and arbitrarily the withdrawal of the Greek proposal from the agenda.
 - e) Moreover, the MBSHC Chair contradicts herself since in MBSHC CL 02/2023, 01 February 2023, she expressed her intention to call for a secret ballot voting procedure in a physical session at the beginning of MBSHC 24. Besides, it should be recalled that the Chair put the Greek proposal to the vote, in December 2022, without raising the political concerns she is invoking now, merely two working days before the Conference.
3. As to the rest of the Chair's allegations in the CL 12/2024, the Reference D to the ToR and RoP of the Region F- ICCWG is misleading, since the F-ICCWG has already decided that Greek INT charts are technically sound and that technical arguments to the contrary are absent (see 2019_CL_02_RegionF_ICCWG_8_DMI_REX_INT_result).

4. Content-wise, references in the said Circular Letter 12/2024 such as “consensus between Greece and Turkiye is required”, “bilateral disputes should be overcome”, “a common solution should be found” are not related to hydrographic issues, thus falling outside of the scope of IHO. Such references involve MBSHC and consequently IHO, into baseless unilateral political claims and runs counter to article II of the Convention on the IHO which clearly states that “The Organisation shall have a consultative and purely technical nature.”

The eight Greek INT Charts depict exclusively continental and insular Greek territory along with its territorial waters as well as international waters (a map is provided for your convenience). No Turkish territory is depicted in those charts whatsoever, and therefore there is no need of Turkish consent in this respect.

5. Considering all the above,

- Greece requires the withdrawal of the MBSHC CL 12/2024.

This is a prerequisite to uphold the credibility both of the IHO and of the MBSHC, which is an integral part of the IHO.

- Greece requires the immediate implementation of Decision MBSHC 23/17 and the inclusion of the Greek proposal in the Agenda of MBSHC 24 in order a new voting procedure to take place.

Thank you.