

First Meeting of the IHO Inter Regional Coordination Committee IRCC

The First Meeting of the IHO Inter Regional Coordination Committee IRCC as established under the new structure of IHO organs by 1. January 2009 was held in the Auditorium Rainier III (Monaco), on 05 June 2009. Chairs or Representatives from all the Regional Hydrographic Commissions (except RSAHC), Sub-Committees and other bodies were present, as well as numerous observers from IHO Member States and NGIO accredited to the IHO.

Reports from the IRCC Members

The Chairmen or Representatives of the RHCs present - including Chairman BSHC - provided reports of their activities. BSHC chair explained the development of an harmonised Re-survey scheme for the whole Baltic based on a declaration of the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM). He stated this project as a good example of regional co-ordination and that this should be exploited through the IHO Capacity Building Subcommittee. The committee was also informed that the progress of Lithuania to become an IHO Member State has been restrained due to the worldwide economic crisis.

The Chairs or Representatives of HCA, WEND, PRNWSC, CBSC, GEBCO Guiding Committee and IAB provided reports of their activities.

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

For the election of Chair and Vice Chair the Committee agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair should be a representative from any IHO Member State. Subsequently and at the proposal of the NSHC Chairman, IGA Gilles BESSERO (SWPHC Chair and Hydrographer of France) was elected Chairman of the IRCC. At the proposal of the representative from the GEBCO Guiding Committee, Captain Abri KAMPFER (WEND Chairman and Hydrographer of South Africa) was elected Vice-Chair.

Establishment of IRCC Standing Agenda, holding, structure and reporting of its Meetings

The participants approved the Standing Agenda and Structure of IRCC Meetings as in Annex A. The subordinate Bodies of IRCC - namely HCA, PRNWSC (WWNWS) and CBSC - will go on holding their own meetings, independently from the IRCC annual meetings, in accordance with the terms of reference promulgated through IHO CL 115/2007 of 10 December 2007.

IRCC Bodies were invited to include in their meeting reports a section on issues to be considered by the IRCC. Until the establishment of the future IHO Council, the IRCC itself would report to the IHO Member States through the IHB and to the IHC.

Establishment of the IRCC WP for 2010

Under this Agenda Item the Committee considered some proposals submitted in advance of the meeting; the outcomes of the 4th EIHC relevant to the IRCC and the proposals submitted by IRCC bodies to this first meeting to become part of the IRCC work plan. Apart from matters of general strategic and administrative nature (e.g. Strategic plan update, Budget), the following important work items were endorsed (for the complete discussion of individual contributions to the work program see the IRCC_1 minutes):

- To hold regular meeting between RHCs to discuss common boundary issues, eg. ENC overlaps and data harmonisation.
- Drawing experience from the 2005 tsunami devastation, the possibility of setting up of an inter regional Emergency Point of Contact database
- Capacity Building – opening of training courses to member States of neighbouring RHCs and to approve the support to activities that promotes management capacity development.
- In the light of the discussion about the nature of the RHCs within the IHO structure, the IRCC agreed that potential improvements to the existing IHO Technical Resolution T.1.3 should be considered by the IRCC. The USCHC offered to conduct a study and submit a proposal to IRCC members.
- to promote and assist in the development of national hydrographic committees;
- to investigate the best way to address INT charts and ENC overlaps between neighbouring Regional Hydrographic Commissions;
- to promote and assist in the development of partnerships with regional maritime related fora and organizations.
- Replace the WEND Task Group by a permanent WEND Working Group to monitor and address the ongoing coordination and implementation of the WEND Principles and global ENC coverage.. Composition of the WG to be coordinated by correspondence by the IRCC Vice-Chair.

Any Other Business

The relations between GEBCO and IHO were discussed. The representative from the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) stated that the new ToRs and RoPs that have been agreed may help to improve these relations together with a good representation and clear indications from the IHO. It was agreed that Capt. GORZIGLIA (IHB Director and IRCC Secretary) will prepare a report to the IRCC before the next meeting of the GGC and that the IRCC will send a message to the IHO Member States asking support to GEBCO.

Next IRCC Meeting. Venue and Dates.

The Chair invited the Committee to identify the venue and dates for the IRCC2 Meeting by correspondence, if possible jointly with other meeting that could reduce the travel expenses. The IHB is tasked to coordinate this decision.
