9th meeting of the IHO-EU Network Working Group and European Ocean Observing System (EOOS) Conference Brussels, Belgium

20 – 23 November 2018

Contribution to the IHO Work Programme 2018		
Task 1.1.4 Participation in the 9th IENWG Meeting		

The IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG), established by the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) to monitor and deal with the activities and processes developed under the aegis of the European Union (EU), held its 9th meeting (IENWG-9) in a plenary session in Brussels, Belgium, from 20 to 21 November, at the DG-Agri[1] of the European Commission, hosted by DG-Mare[2]. Delegates representing DG-Mare[2], EuroGOOS[3] and EMODnet[4] were present. The IENWG-9 meeting was followed by the 2018 EOOS Conference[5], from 21 to 23 November – *Connecting Communities for End-to-End Solutions*, hosted at the Egg, in Brussels.

The IENWG-9 meeting was chaired by Laurent Louvart (France) and supported by Corine Lochet (France) as Executive Secretary of the IENWG. Twenty-two delegates including National Hydrographers, from 13 Member States (Belgium, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania and Sweden) attended the meeting. Assistant Director Yves Guillam represented the IHO Secretariat.

The main objectives of the IENWG-9 meeting were:
- to review the EOOS strategy and its draft implementation plan in order to examine how the Hydrographic Services of the IHO Member States can contribute and get benefits and visibility in return;
- to compare the different methodologies and web services used by the coastal States to make available and portray their official baseline and coastline data;
- to take the opportunity of the overhaul of the IHO communication plans and means (including social medias) in order to develop the visibility of the objectives and achievements of the IENWG, at least at the European level;
- to consider the possible impact on the economic models of Hydrographic Services if the revision of the European Directive on the re-use of public sector information leads to the inclusion of nautical charts (including ENCs) in the list of the so-called "*high-value public data for re-use*"…the consequence of which being that these data should be made available for free.

---

[1] Directorate-General – Agriculture.
[2] Directorate-General – Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.
[3] European Global Ocean Observing System.
[4] European Marine Observation and Data Network (http://www.emodnet.eu).
[5] www.eoosconference2018.eu

First, the members noted the "*call to action*" from EOOS, most of the themes being of interest to the IHO community and aligned with the MoU[6] between the IHO and the European Commission. They are, in substance:

   "*1. Countries should coordinate all national marine and coastal data collection efforts to improve efficiency, and identify priorities and gaps …. Observations should be standardised and operationalized within and across regional seas, building on the work done via existing regional coordination frameworks;*

   2. …This requires a concerted effort to ensure that different EU investments in marine and coastal data collection infrastructures are better connected and are linked to existing data management and sharing initiatives; and…

   3. … support integration and drive innovation in infrastructure and technology development to reduce the cost and expand the coverage of ocean data collection, …"

In support of these objectives, participants agreed to promote the current IHO infrastructure, the activities managed and carried out through the Regional Hydrographic Commissions and the Seabed 2030 Project. They also mentioned the current developments in crowd-sourcing bathymetry. It was agreed that the IENWG should prepare a statement of interest towards EOOS, under the umbrella of the existing IHO-EC MoU.

The participants shared their concerns with regard to the possible evolution of the EU Directive on the re-use of public sector information, trying to identify and harmonizing the arguments that could be put forward, at national levels, to avoid a major destabilisation effect in the economy of ENC (and S-57 data) production, maintenance and distribution for Hydrographic Services whose budget relies substantially on the licencing revenues and sales.

The EOOS event was co-organised by the secretariats of the European Marine Observation and Data Network (EMODnet), European Marine Board (EMB) and European Global Ocean Observing System (EuroGOOS). The IHO was mentioned several times, in particular highlighting the added-value provided for several applications, by the bathymetry portal of EMODnet to which several European IHO Member States have contributed. The Conference launched the EOOS Strategy 2018-2022 and its Implementation Plan. The IENWG will now consider the possibility of submitting concrete proposals in line with the IHO programme of work.

Four Member States (France, Italy, Netherlands, and Portugal) presented technical posters (7) at the EOOS Exhibition. One of which was a summary of a presentation[7] already given by Ellen Vos

---

[6] Memorandum of Understanding.

[7] "*What geospatial information is needed for managing wind farm projects at sea and how are we going to organise that?*" - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJzMnzEdr2Y&t=589s

(Netherlands Hydrographic Service) at the European Inspire[8] Conference in August 2018, where she was awarded with the Golden Pineapple Inspire Price for her contribution.

Participants at the 9th IENWG meeting, Brussels, Belgium

The closing session of the EOOS, chaired by Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO, highlighted the European contribution to Ocean Observation in the context of International Strategies and developments (the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Decade of Ocean Science for sustainable development), while the closing remarks were given by Karmenu Vella, European Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries.

---

[8] Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe.