

FIFTH MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE
IHO-IRCC5
Wollongong, Australia, 3-4 June 2013

REPORT OF THE NORTH SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (NSHC)
By the Director Evert Flier (NO), Chair NSHC

1. **Chairmen:** Evert Flier (NO) from June 2012
Vice-chair: Peter Kortenoeven (NL) from June 2012
2. **Membership:** Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom.
3. **Meetings:** The NSHC has met once since the IRCC4 meeting. The conference was held in Ålesund (NO), 18-21 June 2012. This was the 30th meeting and at the same time 50 years since the Commission was established.

The NSHC runs several groups that work mainly by correspondence:

- the Region D International Chart Coordination Working Group and the North Sea ENC Harmonization Working Group (UK lead);
- the NSHC Tidal Working Group (FR lead);
- the Dover Strait Survey Strategy Working Group (BE, FR, NL,UK) ;
- the NSHC Re-survey Working Group (DE lead, NL since November 2012) ;
- the European Union Marine and Maritime Policy Working Group (FR lead).

4. Agenda Items:

Task numbers refer to IHO WP for 2012 (see CL 77/2011)

IHO Work Programme 1 - "Corporate Affairs"

Element 1.1 Co-operation with International Organizations and participation in relevant meetings.

Tasks 1.1.5c, 1.1.10b, 1.1.10d: A number of the NSHC HOs representatives are involved in IMO meetings, mainly related to MSC with the sub-committees NAV and COMSAR. During the last few years the development of an e-navigation strategy implementation plan has gained

momentum. E-navigation was addressed during the last NSHC conference. The anticipated difficulties in the transition from S57 to S100/101 and the functionalities in a next generation of ECDIS were discussed. The MS support the strong involvement in e-nav from IHO and the work of the IHO-IMO harmonization WG.

Task 1.1.17b: The signing of the MoU between the IHO and the European Commission took place during the XVIIIth IHC in 2012. In October 2012 IHO and several MS of NSHC met with representatives of DG Mare (EU) for discussing future cooperation. A consultation process of the Green paper “Marine Knowledge 2020” took place ultimo 2012. Several MS contributed with comments to the IHO input (CL97/2012) and some also responded individually to the questionnaire. The increased interest of EU in marine and maritime affairs is expected to bring benefits to the hydrographic work in the NSHC region. The 30th NSHC Conference decided that the NSHC European Marine & Maritime Working Group will act as focal point for EU policy matters (conclusion 94)

A number of HOs are involved in the development of their implementation plan to comply with the EU INSPIRE directive establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community.

The BLAST project (Bringing Sea and Land Together) ended in the autumn 2012. Several interesting results were achieved through the different working groups (Land and sea Model, Navigating the North Sea, Maritime Traffic Harmonisation, Climate Change in the Coastal Zone). For more information consult www.blast-project.eu. Reference is also made to Task 2.12.1.

IHO Work Programme 2 - "Hydrographic Services and Standards"

Element 2.2-2.13 Working Groups

NSHC is heavily involved in the Working Groups under the umbrella of HSSC. One or more MS are represented in all active WG. Totally 6 WG are chaired by representatives from MS within the NSHC geographical area.

Element 2.9 Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group

Task 2.9.1 (also related to Task 3.6.3 below): In the report from last year NSHC referred to governance principles for the definition and monitoring of their national civilian hydrographic and charting program (conclusion 90). This Conclusion is still active as only a few MS reported on the subject. FR presented a procedure for their national planning process.

Element 2.12 Tidal and Water Level Working Group

Task 2.12.1: NSHC tasked the NSHC Tidal Working Group with the formulation of recommendations on the ways forward, to create common and unique vertical reference surface for the whole North Sea area (conclusion 87). Several MS has contributed to the work of referring Chart Datum and Mean Sea Level to the ellipsoid (“ the mathematical defined GPS vertical reference surface”) through the TWG and the Blast Work Package “Land and Sea

model”. The report “Blast vertical datum: Overview, conventions and recommendations” was finalized in 2011. In August 2012 the report “Establishing a consistent vertical reference frame for the North Sea area” was presented.

IHO Work Programme 3 – " Inter Regional Coordination and Support"

Element 3.1 Co-operation with Member States and attendance at relevant meetings.

Task 3.1.8: The Commission has met once since the XVIIIth IHC and all Member States were represented in the meeting held in Ålesund, Norway.

The Commission recognized the need to focus on new technology, especially in the field of airborne and satellite bathymetry. It was agreed to add this item to the standard agenda of NSHC.

The Chairs of the adjacent HCs, not already represented in the NSHC, were invited to the meeting. The Chair of MBSHC participated. GEBCO Guiding Committee (ref Action IRCC4/07) will be invited for the future meetings.

This list of conclusions is an interesting way for keeping record of the main decisions within a Regional Hydrographic Commission and to monitor the progress made in the development of co-operation. This is considered as one of the “best practices” within NSHC.

Task 3.1.1: All remaining items related to ARHC are resolved. The boarder limit is accepted by both commissions and the formal establishment of INT Chart region “N” is finalized. This implies that INTchart region “D” has a defined northern border, which was not the case earlier.

Task 3.1.2: The BSHC has prepared a draft recommendation for harmonizing names of sub-areas of the Baltic Sea. The NSHC discussed a Regional inventory on Limits and Names of the Sea and revision of maritime boundaries. NSHC will follow the process in BSHC closely and re-open the discussion at the next Conference.

Task 3.1.15: MS agreed to invite industry stakeholders to the 30th meeting. Conclusion 100 from the meeting affirms that participation of stakeholders is to be considered for meetings. This is in line with Action IRCC4/30.

Element 3.3 Capacity Building Management

Task 3.3.1: There is no real capacity building initiatives currently carried out within the NSHC. However, it is worth noting that a number of NSHC HOs are involved in the IHO capacity building activities (DE who chairs the CBSC, NO, UK, FR). NO currently represents the NSHC at the CBSC meetings.

Element 3.4. Capacity Building Assessment

Task 3.4.1: Since the IRRC4 several Technical and Advisory visits has taken place with assistance from MS. Especially UK and FR have contributed in many visits. For details reference is made to the IHO webpage where all reports are published.

Element 3.6 Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

Tasks 3.6.1, 3.6.2: The NSHC has established an ENC Harmonisation WG for the regional coordination. UKHO represented NSHC at the Wend meeting in London 21-22 September 2012. Several other MS also attended this meeting. Some MS contributed with input to the amendments for the Guidelines of the Implementation of the WEND principles (annex B and C to PRO-2). (The Minutes for the Wend meeting is not yet published)

Task 3.6.3: NSHC has noticed the initiative and work done in BSHC with respect to suggestions for improvement of C-55. The NSHC working group on Re-surveying has included the item of renewal of C-55 on the agenda.

5. Conclusions and achievements

The main conclusions and achievements from the NSHC are as follows:

A milestone in the cooperation with EU was achieved with the signing of a MoU. The subsequent meeting with DG Mare, IHO and several MS from NSHC implies a concrete follow-up action. NSHC expects an increased attention to hydrography in the North Sea region as well as adjacent regions. The EUM2 Working Group will take care of the contact with EU on behalf of NSHC.

The demand for improvements in surveying techniques is increasing due to the high cost related to traditional surveying with echo sounders. The NSHC has decided to follow the development in remote sensing bathymetry (airborne and satellite) more closely. The next NSHC conference in 2014 will pay particular attention to this subject.

The achievements in the BLAST project and Tidal and Water Level WG have brought the subject of a common, stable vertical reference for the North Sea area closer to a solution.