

5th Meeting of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission

Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation

28 - 30 October 2015



The 5th Meeting of the Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC) was held in Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation from 28 to 30 October. Four of the five Member States, Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation and the USA were represented, together with representatives of Finland and Iceland attending as observers. Canada was unable to attend the meeting. President Robert Ward represented the IHB. The meeting was chaired by Captain Leonid Shalnov on behalf of the Hydrographer of the Russian Federation, Captain Sergey Travin.

The meeting agenda covered the further development of a strategic directions document for the ARHC as well as initiatives to raise awareness of the shortcomings of hydrography and charting in the region so as to gain greater levels of national and regional support. Participants exchanged views on best practices and new technologies for surveying in the Arctic. Discussion also centred on providing relevant input to the Arctic Council working group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME).

Reports were presented from each Member State covering the status of hydrography, progress made and the charting priorities. This prompted a number of informal and fruitful technical discussions between the delegates during the intervals between sessions of the meeting.



Evert Flier, Director of the Norwegian Hydrographic Service, delivers his national report

The representatives discussed how the Member States of the Commission might contribute to improving the evolving Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure (MSDI) for the Arctic region.



Cartographers from the Russian Federation and the USA discuss the harmonization of their trans-boundary chart coverage

Chart coverage issues that were discussed included the IHO INT chart scheme and better harmonization of ENC chart compilation - especially in relation to compilation scales and the allocation of navigation purpose codes.

The Members at the meeting agreed to invite Finland to apply for associate membership of the

Commission. They also agreed to work intersessionally to develop protocols for the selection process for representatives on the IHO Council when it is formed as part of the revised terms of the Convention on the IHO.

In accordance with the established policy of rotation, Canada was elevated from the position of vice-chair to take over the chair at the end of the meeting. Denmark was elected to occupy the resultant vacant vice-chair position.

The meeting noted Canada's offer to host the next meeting in October 2016 and invited Canada to provide specific dates and details of the venue in due course.