

13th Meeting of the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA)

Cadiz, Spain, 3-5 December 2013

36th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting
Brussels, Belgium, 20-29 May 2013

The 36th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM36) was held in Brussels in May. The Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting is the primary forum for the representatives of Parties to the Antarctic Treaty to exchange information and formulate measures, decisions and resolutions to further the principles and objectives of the Treaty. The IHO is an Invited Expert to ATCM and was represented at the meeting by President Robert Ward.

As part of the opening ceremony, Prince Albert II of Monaco addressed over 450 delegates representing the 50 States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty and the recognised Observer and Invited Expert organizations. The Prince urged delegates to continue managing Antarctica on an international basis. He noted in particular, that as well as



HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco (right of screen) awaits his opportunity to address the ATCM

international cooperation in scientific research, internationalizing the Antarctic infrastructure and services should be considered. It is worth noting that the IHO, through its Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica, already coordinates surveying and charting between all States with charting interests in the region,

thereby avoiding duplication and gaining obvious efficiencies. This should be seen as a well-established example of international infrastructure and services.

President Ward introduced the report from the IHO that described the state of hydrographic surveying and nautical charting in Antarctica. The report highlighted the fact that over 95 per cent of Antarctic waters remain unsurveyed, which poses serious risks for maritime incidents and impedes the conduct of maritime activities. Noting that

the level of human activity in Antarctica is increasing dramatically, the report expressed concern that resources for surveying activities were at the same time diminishing. In order to prevent disasters, the IHO recommended that the ATCM: consider the serious shortcomings in hydrography and charting in Antarctica and its impact on activities; consider encouraging Parties to increase their support for surveying and charting of Antarctica; encourage States to allocate appropriate resources to accelerate the production of paper charts and Electronic Navigational Charts of Antarctica; and adopt the proposed ATCM Recommendation on hydrography and nautical charting developed by the IHO Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica.

The ATCM delegates noted the IHO's Report but neither commented on it nor implemented any specific initiatives aimed at making improvements to the situation that was described to them.

The 37th meeting of ATCM will take place in Brasilia, Brazil in May 2014.