

20th Conference of the Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission

(MBSHC)

Herceg Novi, Montenegro

4th-6th of July 2017

Chairman's report

1. This report covers the activities of the MBSHC since its 19th conference in Batumi in July 2015.

General characteristics of the region

2. The Mediterranean and Black Seas are semi-enclosed seas, bordered by more than 20 nations having strong maritime tradition. Since a long time, maritime navigation is a key component of their economy and their culture. Furthermore, the role of the Mediterranean Sea for the transit of goods between Asia, Europe and the East coast of America gives this maritime region a global perspective: 25 % of the world shipping sails through this maritime area representing 1 % of the area the world ocean. In the recent years, the opening of the new Suez Canal is a clear signal of the continuing importance of the area for the global shipping.
3. New challenges for hydrography in the region are arising, with development of sectors of the maritime economy, like cruising, deep offshore oil & gas, which induce further requirements for a better knowledge of the hydrography of the region. These needs are strengthened by the simultaneous concern for better understanding the specific environmental challenges of these semi-enclosed seas. A complex geography, including narrow sea basins bordered by several countries, impacts strongly the hydrographic issues, especially in coordination of charting.
4. These stakes and the historical maritime tropism of the bordering nations explain that coastal States of this region has a high rate of IHO membership, and are fostering the development of numerous initiatives dealing with economic and environmental challenges.

Memberships

5. Members (21): Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Georgia, Greece, Italy, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia (suspended), Slovenia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine.

6. Associate members: Bulgaria, Israel, Palestinian Authority, United Kingdom, United States of America.
7. Two coastal States of the region are among the Observers: Albania and Lebanon.
8. The IHO membership of Bulgaria, approved by IHO members under the previous accession regime, is awaiting the deposit of the instrument of accession. IHO Secretariat (IHOS) support has been requested by the Navy Hydrographic Service to assist in the procedure.

Activities since the last conference of MBSHC (July 2012 – Batumi)

Corporate Affairs

9. Cooperation with the European Union – The cooperation of IHO with the EU has been formalized by a MoU signed in 2012, monitored through a WG under the IRCC, the IHO-EU Network Working Group (IENWG). Greece is the focal point of the Network for the region. Since the last conference of the MBSHC, some hydrographic offices among its members have been involved in the “Coastal Mapping” project (Spain, France, Italy, Greece, Slovenia). Other institutions from Italy and Romania have taken part to the project. From the results of the study, a way forward for improving the bathymetric knowledge of the European littoral has been proposed to the European Commission at the beginning of 2017. Meanwhile, an “EMODNet High Resolution Coastal Mapping” study has been launched, involving hydrographic offices from MBSHC members (France, Italy, Slovenia), and other institutions from States bordering the Mediterranean and Black Seas (Bulgaria, Spain, Greece, Romania).
10. Beyond those studies funded by the directorate general for maritime affairs and fisheries (DG MARE) of the European Commission, other subjects of interest could be developed with the EC, as e.navigational, digital availability of historical hydrographic documents, for supporting studies on global change. The strong interest of European coastal States and European Regions in maritime stakes, including cooperation across the Mediterranean Sea, should encourage European hydrographic offices to engage more firmly with the European Commission through the IENWG.
11. Cooperation with IMO – IHO is engaged with IMO for the provision of hydrographic services as stated in the SOLAS convention, including the perspective offered by e.navigational, and hydrographic capacity building of the coastal States parties to IMO and / or IHO. For the former, IHO has proposed through the IMO subcommittee on Navigation, Communication, Search and Rescue the activation of the IMO/IHO Harmonization Group on Data Modelling (HGDM) to assist in developing guidance on the definition and harmonization of the format and structure of Maritime Service

Portfolios (MSPs) in support of the implementation of e-navigation. The 1st meeting of the HGDM should be held in London from 16 to 20 October.

12. In the field of capacity building, the concept “deliver-in-one” developed by IHO, IMO and IOC has been hampered by the lack of funding from the IMO Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme for the last two years.
13. Cooperation with IOC – several MBSHC members are strongly involved in national or regional tsunami warning systems (TWS), parts of the IOC Tsunami Early Warning Systems. As it has been exposed to the commission during its 18th Conference (Istanbul 2013) a major earthquake in the Mediterranean and Black Seas region is very likely in the forthcoming decades, and member States should envisage the best ways to support the TWS. A key component of the TWS are the sea level observing devices (tide gauges). The increase of their numbers connected in real time with the TWS is a critical improvement of their efficiency.
14. IOC has been for a long time involved in integrated coastal zone management, which is more and more handled in the perspective of Maritime Spatial Planning, subject of a conference organized in March 2017 by IOC and the European Commission. Hydrographic information is a key enabler for this activity, now considered as a necessary ground for the sustainable development of Blue Economy. MBSHC member States could envisage ways and means for promoting the role of hydrographic information in that perspective.
15. Cooperation with CIESM – the *Commission Internationale pour l'exploration scientifique de la Méditerranée* – Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM) has been created in 1919 and established in Monaco. Most MBSHC member States, associate members or observer States are members of CIESM (Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Spain, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Monaco, Morocco, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine), joined by other nations having scientific interests in the Mediterranean (Portugal, Switzerland). A MoU has been signed between IHO and CIESM on the 24th of March 2017, to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. The 20th Conference of the MBSHC is an opportunity to look at practical implementation of this MoU.
16. With regard to the performance indicators of the IHO, we note that:
 - 25 coastal States in the region provide, directly or indirectly, hydrographic services, including ENC;
 - 90% of member States, and one non-member States, are attending the 20th conference of the MBSHC;

- ENC schemes for usage bands (UB) 4, 5 and 6 are proposed for approval. Difficulties still occur for UB 1, 2 and 3.
17. 19 members of the MBSHC attended the 1st session of the Assembly of the IHO in Monaco, 24-28 April 2017. This first session was a major event related to the entry into force of the amended convention of the IHO. The consequences of the decision of the Assembly will be examined during the 20th MBSHC conference, among them the following are of particular interest for the MBSHC:
- Planning, programming & budgeting cycle (decisions 1, 3).
 - Consistency between paper charts and digital charts and publications (decision 11).
 - Continuing HSSC and IRCC under their current terms of reference (decisions 6, 14).
 - Use of satellite derived bathymetry (decision 18).
 - Availability of bathymetric data worldwide (decision 21).
18. The Assembly has approved a three years programme and budget, characterized by continuity. From a surplus for the 2016 budget, an extra amount of 191,000€ has been allocated to the Capacity Building fund.
19. A renewed IHO Secretariat has been elected by the Assembly, and will take its post on the 1st of September 2017, with Dr. Mathias Jonas as the Secretary General for a term of office of six years, and Capt. Abri Kampfer, for a term of office of six years, and RAdm (ret.) Mustafa Ipteş, for a term of office of three years, as directors.
20. The Assembly has confirmed the composition of the Council of the IHO (see §38), for which France, Italy and Turkey have been selected by the MBSHC, and two other Members of the MBSHC, Cyprus and Greece, have been selected according to their greatest interest in hydrography matters (see IHO General Regulation Article 16.c).
21. The second session of the Assembly will take place in Monaco, from 19 to 25 April 2020.

Hydrographic Services and Standards

22. The 8th meeting of HSSC took place from 14 to 18 November 2016 in Monaco. The report can be consulted at http://iho.int/mtg_docs/com_wg/HSSC/HSSC8/HSSC8_Minutes_final_20170124.pdf
23. Among the outcomes from this meeting, it is requested that Member States ensure that the information on any requirements for ECDIS back-up arrangements using paper charts which has been posted on the IHO website at Home > ENCs & ECDIS > ENC Availability > Backup Paper Charts, and that Member States update or give confirmation of no change at least once a year.

24. The next meeting of the HSSC will be held in Ottawa, 6-10 November 2017. Being the first meeting after the session of the Assembly, a new HSSC chair and vice-chair will be elected during the meeting, for the next three years. Member States are invited to nominate suitable candidates for these positions.

Inter-regional Coordination and Support

25. MBSHC chairman has represented MBSHC to the meetings of the inter-regional coordination committee (IRCC) in 2016 (IRCC-8, Abu Dhabi) and in 2017 (IRCC-9, Paramaribo). The chair of IRCC has been held by Dr. Parry Oei, from Singapore, since August 2015, after taking over RAdm. Tom Karsten (United-Kingdom). At the last meeting, in June, Dr. Parry Oei, was re-elected as the IRCC chairman. The works of the IRCC during these two years have resulted in:

- a) increasing exchanges between chairs of the regional hydrographic commissions (RHC) on emerging topics as hydrographic risk assessment, capacity building, maritime spatial data infrastructure, crowd-sourcing;
- b) establishing on this last topic a crowd-sourced bathymetry working group (CSBWG), which has produced draft guidance document, that could be submitted to adoption by the IHO Member States towards the end of 2018;
- c) monitoring the implementation of WEND principles and guidelines, especially by fostering reduction of overlapping data in regional ENC coverage (§27), and relying on RENC to RENC co-operation;
- d) better understanding of the implications of maritime information overlays on ENC;
- e) increased the of oversight of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) project and the governance and administration of the GEBCO Guiding Committee (GGC) with regard to the effective financing and implementation of the GEBCO work plan;
- f) monitoring performance indicators, supported by biannual reporting of the RHC on the overall status of their respective work programmes.

26. More specifically, MBSHC has continued to develop sub-regional cooperation through the Black and Azov Seas Working Group. Links with coastal States bordering the Caspian Sea could be an important next step of the development of hydrographic co-operation in the area.

27. France, as coordinator of international charting schemes for the region F (F-ICCWG), has represented the MBSHC to the 6th (Stavanger, 8-10 March 2016) and 7th (Washington, 31 January-2 February 2017) meeting of the Worldwide ENC Database Working Group (WEND WG). These meetings have enabled progress on the

implementation of WEND guidelines, as well as on the definition of a procedure for handling overlaps between ENC.

28. The FIG-IHO-ICA International Board for Standard of Competencies (IBSC) has established new draft version of S-8A and S-8B (nautical cartographers), to be submitted to the IHO Member States.
29. Spain has ensured the coordination of the dissemination of maritime security information in the area Navarea III. This activity is the subject of a specific report (MBSHC20-6.7).
30. The participation of representatives of industry at the MBSHC conferences is effective. It participates to the understanding of hydrographic problems of the region and fosters the exchange of complementary points of view on the matters of interest for the commission.

Capacity Building

31. Two meetings of the Capacity Building Sub-Committee (CBSC) have been held since the 19th Conference of the MBSHC, in Abu Dhabi (24-26 May 2016) and Paramaribo (7-9 June 2017). During this last meeting, Thomas Dehling (Germany) has been re-elected as chair of the CBSC, and Lamberto Lamberti (Italy) as the vice-chair. The report of this last meeting is available on the IHO website at http://iho.int/mtg_docs/com_wg/IRCC/IRCC9/IRCC9_Docs.htm). It acknowledges:
 - the limit of available resources to achieve the goals of capacity building, though IHO contribution is increasing and despite the generous contribution of Korea and Japan;
 - the role of in-kind contribution from Member States and industry;
 - the promising regional approaches developed in some RHC and the interest of e.learning;
 - the need of augmentation of the IHOS support to Capacity Building.
32. Since the last conference of the MBSHC, Turkey as the capacity building coordinator has organized or overviewed various activities, in the framework of the five years MBSHC capacity building plan 2013-2017 approved by MBSHC in 2013. It included workshop on Maritime Safety Information, MBES and SSS systems, technical visits to Albania, Montenegro. Workshops, on ENC production and distribution on one hand, and on technical aspects of maritime boundaries on the other hand, are planned to be held during the last quarter of 2017.

Coordination of global surveying and charting

33. Initiatives have been taken for improving the bathymetric knowledge of the Ocean :
- the launch of the Sea Bed 2030 initiative – a roadmap for Future Ocean Floor Mapping, on the 6th of June 2017 at the United Nation Ocean Conference, following-up the Forum for Future Ocean Floor Mapping held in Monaco, June 15-17, 2016;
 - the setting up of a Crowd sourced bathymetry working group (CSBWG – see § 25-b).
34. The progress of international charting coverage in the Mediterranean and Black Seas (paper and electronic) is monitored by the Region F International Charting Coordination Working Group (F-ICCWG), chaired by France. It has been decided at the last conference of the MBSHC to organize ICCWG meetings in order to speed-up the resolution of long standing difficulties in certain areas of the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Although ENC coverage is continuously improving, some new overlaps issues are appearing, and the progress on INT paper charts are very slow. MBSHC chair is however confident that some of those issues can be solved, especially by bilateral discussions, to which the regional coordinator is ready to provide support as required.

Perspectives

35. It is chair's view that improving charting coordination should be a major focus of the MBSHC in the coming years.
36. Strengthening the technical capacity of non-member coastal States should also be an important axis of effort. IHO membership is a powerful enabler to this, and, considering the facilitated procedure for IHO accession, it is proposed that new memberships be an objective of MBSHC.
37. The sensitivity of Mediterranean Sea to pollution and the major role of the maritime activities in Members States economy and citizens' life have led to the development of numerous initiatives and institutions dealing with the marine environment. It is proposed that MBSHC develops its engagement with these institutions.
38. The 1st meeting of the IHO Council in Monaco in October 2017 will be an opportunity to discuss important issues regarding the management of the IHO and its effectiveness. The MBSHC has a strong possibility to have its voice listened to, and it is suggested that the Commission give indications of the important points that it wishes to be dealt with, in the perspective of the inputs to be submitted by Council members before the 17th of July.

Conclusion – Actions for EAthC

39. Members, associates members and observers MBSHC are invited to:

- Note this report;
- Make additions as may be necessary;
- Take any other action as deemed appropriate.