

**Limit of areas of responsibility for surveying in the southern North Sea and Dover Straits**

This has been a subject for discussion at many NSHC meetings, being first raised at the second meeting in 1963. In 1984 an agreement between Netherlands, France and UK established the areas of responsibility for hydrographic surveying in the southern North Sea and Dover Straits.

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the NSHC in Den Haag in 1996, an action was placed upon France to form a working group with UK, Netherlands and Belgium to address survey strategy in the southern North Sea and Dover Straits. This came about following concerns raised by FR. The working group reported their intention to produce an agreement between the nations, to the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting in 1998. It was agreed that the 1984 limits would be retained, omitting the critical areas defined in the existing diagram. Each country had agreed to produce a letter of intent outlining their survey policy for the area of their responsibility.

At the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting in Reykjavik in 2000 an agreement was signed by UK and Belgium. France and Netherlands signed following the meeting. The limits of responsibility were amended slightly from the 1984 diagram, to exclude the inshore zones and to re-align with amendments to the routeing measures.

Since then there have been further changes to the traffic routeing measures in the area and developments in survey techniques. It is suggested that each of the four countries should review their letter of intent to bring it up to date for current practices. Also each country should consider whether the limits of responsibility are still applicable.