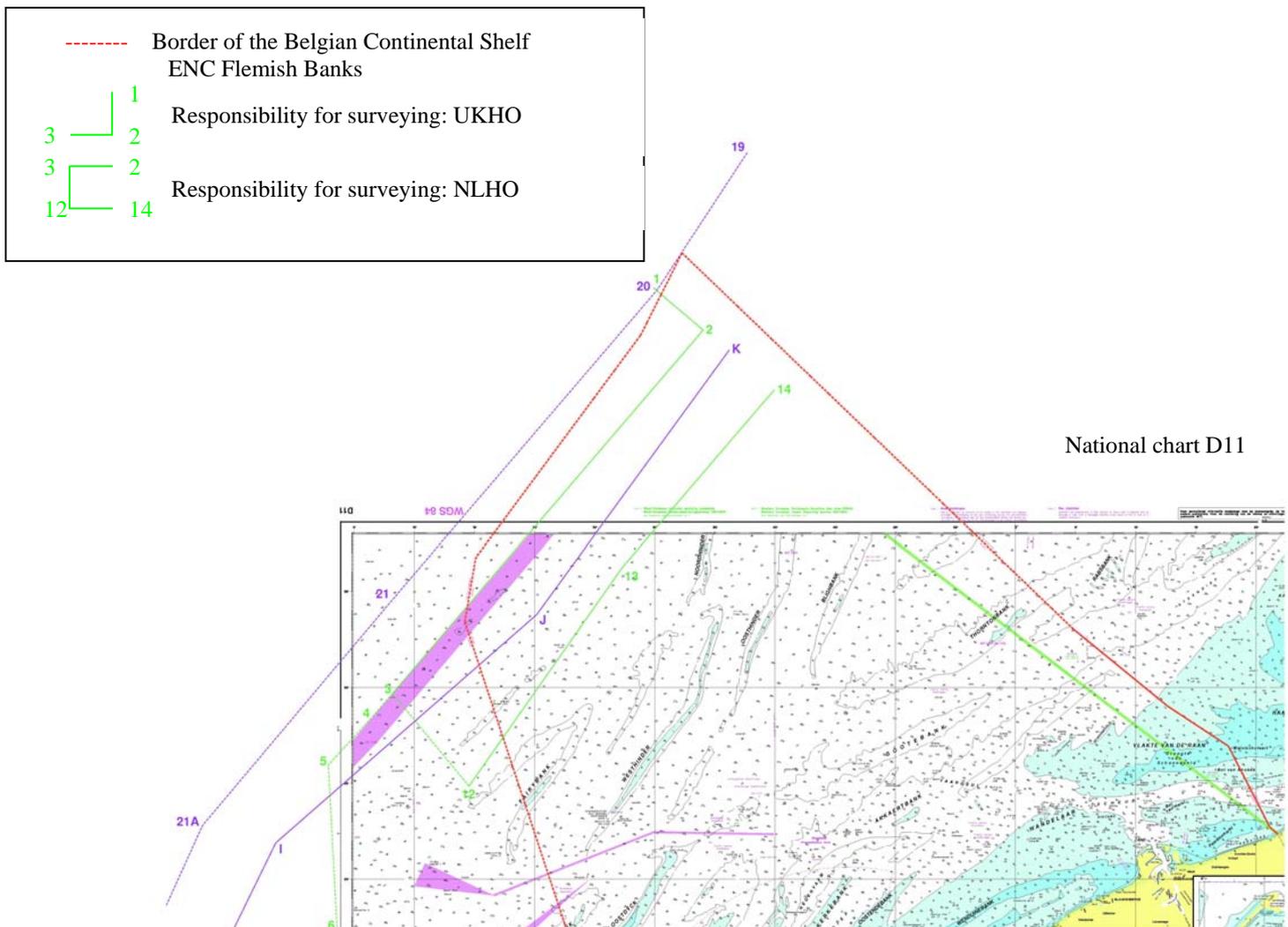


First bilateral agreement: arrangement for co-operation between the UKHO and the Flemish Hydrography.

The Flemish Hydrography has finished its bilateral discussions with the UKHO and will sign its first bilateral agreement. In order to formalise the distribution of the ENC's of the Flemish Hydrography by IC-ENC, which has been done on an informal basis for many years now, also the cooperation arrangement with IC-ENC will be signed by the Flemish Hydrography.

This should be a first step in establishing more bilateral agreement, such as these with the Dutch Hydrography, French Hydrography, ... in the near future.

During the internal preparation of the bilateral agreement, the Flemish Hydrography noticed that the current Dover Strait Survey Strategy implies some irregularities concerning the surveying of the Belgian Continental Shelf.



Following the hydrographic survey strategy for the Dover Strait/Pas de Calais, the most northern part of the Belgian Continental Shelf is surveyed by the UKHO and the NLHO.

However, the UKHO nowadays does not perform any hydrographic measurements itself. The hydrographic measurements are performed by other departments of the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Defence. And the coordinates (point 1, 2 and 14) which mark the borders with the Netherlands area still correspond to the previous border between the Belgian and Dutch Continental Shelf. In 1998 the new border (indicated as a red line in the figure above) was agreed upon and published in the law gazette of Belgium and the Netherlands.

The Flemish Hydrography is re-examining its survey strategies and will investigate in the near future if it is possible to take its own responsibility for surveying the complete area of the Belgian continental shelf.

During the past North Sea Ministerial Meeting, important decisions were taken resulting in the Gothenburg Declaration I and more specifically in the endorsement of “additional measures to ensure improved hydrographic services recommended by the North Sea Hydrographic Commission. These include systematic re-surveying of major shipping routes and ports, and promotion of the use of official Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC)”.

Keeping in mind these decisions, the Flemish Hydrography would like to update the Dover Strait Survey Strategy. The question remains if this should become an action within the North Sea Hydrographic Commission or if this should be arranged through bilateral agreements with the corresponding countries.