



IHB File No. S3/0128

CIRCULAR LETTER 11/2008
25 January 2008

IHO HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION ON ANTARCTICA
Proposed amendment to the revised IHO General Regulations

Reference: a) CL07/2008 dated 18 January
b) Decision no. 3 of the 17th International Hydrographic Conference

Dear Hydrographer,

1 The particular case of the Hydrographic Committee on Antarctica (HCA) within the new IHO structure and with the revised IHO General Regulations, as approved by the 17th International Hydrographic Conference in May 2007 (Decision no. 3 refers), was considered at the 7th HCA meeting, as reported in the Circular Letter in reference a.

2 It has to be recalled that a proposal to introduce the figure of "Special Hydrographic Commission" that could have accommodated HCA within the IHO new structure was submitted by Australia, but this initiative was not accepted by the Conference and at the same time there was not a conclusive position on how HCA would be considered.

3 The Committee acknowledged that while the HCA has almost the same characteristics as an RHC in the implementation of INT Chart schemes and the coordination required to achieve IHO's mission, it cannot operate under Article 8(e) of the revised IHO General Regulations, which states "Full membership is reserved for Member States within the region", because no coastal States exist within the region. Similarly the Committee considered that HCA cannot operate as a Sub-Committee under Article 6(b), which states "Any body ... shall be open to all Member States ...", as membership is not open to all IHO Member States. Membership of HCA requires certain and particular qualifications to be met, such as, whilst members must be IHO Member States, they must also have acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and are contributing resources and/or data to IHO INT Chart coverage of Region M.

4 After lengthy discussions, the Committee firstly decided to adopt the name of "Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica" but not the name of "Regional Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica" to avoid any conflict with Article 8 and Annex of the revised General Regulations. In order to sort out the membership issue, the Commission decided that the following amendment to Article 8(e) of the revised General Regulations would best suit the HCA case:

"Full membership is reserved for Member States within the region. In the unique case of the Antarctic region, membership of the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) is reserved to Member States whose governments have acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and contribute resources and/or data to IHO INT Chart coverage of Region M."

5 It was decided that HCA Chair would submit the above proposed amendment to Article 8(e), to the IHB Directing Committee for further action. It is the IHB's opinion that this proposal would formalise the existence of the HCA within the new structure and therefore the IHB strongly supports this initiative.

6 Member States are requested to consider the proposed change to Article 8(e) of the revised IHO General Regulations, and return the voting form in Annex, to the IHB by **31 March 2008**.

7 Any comments will be welcome.

On behalf of the Directing Committee
Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'H. Gorziglia', written over a faint circular stamp.

Captain Hugo GORZIGLIA
Director

Annex: - Voting Form. Proposed change to Article 8(e) of the revised IHO General Regulations

REVISED IHO GENERAL REGULATIONS

Proposed change to Article 8(e)

VOTING FORM

*(to be returned to the IHB by 31 March 2008
E-mail: info@ihb.mc - Fax: +377 93 10 81 40)*

Member State:

Contact:..... **E-mail:**

Do you approve the replacement of the existing wording of Article 8(e) of the revised IHO General Regulations, i.e.

“Full membership is reserved for Member States within the region.”

With the following wording:

“Full membership is reserved for Member States within the region. In the unique case of the Antarctic region, membership of the Hydrographic Commission on Antarctica (HCA) is reserved to Member States whose governments have acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and contribute resources and/or data to IHO INT Chart coverage of Region M.”

YES

NO

Comments:.....

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.....

.....

Name/Signature:

Date: