



International Hydrographic
Organization
Mediterranean and Black Seas
Hydrographic Commission



Tunisian Naval Hydrographic
and Oceanographic Center

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Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission Preliminary Report of Activities Presented to the IHO IRCC

Introduction

The present preliminary report of activities covers the period extending from the previous Mediterranean and Black Seas Hydrographic Commission (MBSHC) meeting (15th MBSHC meeting) held on 22-24 October 2007 in Malta to the present date. It aims to summarize the events relating to the MBSHC activities in the said period, under the chairmanship of Captain Rachid ESSOUSSI, Director of the Tunisian Hydrographic and Oceanographic Center. It is presented to the IHO IRCC at the occasion of the 4th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference.

The outcome of the 15th MBSHC meeting, which is explicitly detailed in the decision table in enclosure as appendix 1, may be categorized in two major fields:

- Capacity Building Support
- Safety to Navigation in the MBSHC region

A- Capacity Building support (MBSHC 15 decisions 7, 8 and 9)

During its 5th meeting held in Riga - Latvia on 5 to 7 June 2007, the IHO CBC allocated funds in favor of the MBSHC for year 2008 in order to cover two activities: CPRNW MSI/GMDSS course and technical visits to countries within the MBSHC region.

A.1- CPRNW MSI/GMDSS course:

The course was intended to host 12 students from MBSHC Member States within a training period of three days (11 to 13 March). Spain offered the venue of the course at the Spanish Hydrographic Institute IHM in Cadiz and the CBC allocated travel and subsistence support for students and CPRNW Lecturers.

Five countries applied to the course for six students:

- MBSHC Member States: Algeria (1 student), Egypt (1 student), Syria (1 student) and Tunisia (1 student)
- MBSHC Associate Member States: Malta (2 students)

A special attendance to the course was accorded to a student from Suriname; this latter having missed the previous CPRNW MSI/GMDSS course held in Jamaica.

The instructors were Mr. Peter Doherty and Mr. Keith Dominic from USA, Mr. Guy Beale from the UKHO and CDR Juan A Aguilar from the Spanish Hydrographic Institute IHM.

Unfortunately, only five out of the six applying students attended the course. The student from Egypt was not able to participate due to bureaucratic problems and Visa delays.

The course aimed to provide practical guidance for drafting radio navigational warnings and for the issuance of Maritime Safety Information under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System GMDSS.

The course was a prosperous continuity to the two previous ones and would be a good boost for a next course.

A.2- Technical visits:

A number of technical visits in favor of MBSHC members and aiming to assess hydrographic capabilities were planned to be carried out by the IHB in cooperation with volunteer MBSHC member states.

The CBC allocated travel and subsistence support for up to 10,000 euros for the visiting teams.

The chairman of the MBSHC has issued two circular letters (MBSHC CL 01/2008 and CL 04/2008) to identify first countries wishing to be visited and then volunteer Member States to conduct the technical visits.

Four countries have indicated their desire to be assessed in hydrographic capabilities: Albania, Lebanon, Malta and Romania.

In response to these requests, two MBSHC Member States volunteered and conducted the technical visits to the above mentioned countries as follows:

- Italy (IIM) conducted technical visits to Albania from the 6th to the 9th of May 2008 and to Malta from the 23rd to the 26th of September 2008.

- France (SHOM) conducted technical visits to Romania from the 8th to the 10th of July 2008 and to Lebanon from the 3rd to the 5th of February 2009.

Each visit was the subject of a thorough report elaborated by the visiting team. The reports were sent to the MBSHC and IHO CBC chairmen.

The comments of the MBSHC chairman were forwarded to the CBC chairman and related countries and can be summarized as follows:

- Technical visit to Albania achieved by Italy (6-9 May 2008)

The Albanian hydrographic Service is undergoing a complete restructuring aiming to improve its hydrographic capacities. Furthermore, and since 1998, an Italian military delegation of experts (DIE) has been working on improving the Albanian Hydrographic Service among other services of the Albanian Defense and Police Forces.

Consequently, possible foreseeable requests, which would be necessary to overcome current deficiencies, could consist of:

- Training for hydrographers or assistance in order to achieve surveys in Albanian Waters.
- Training for cartographers or assistance in chart production
- Assistance with expertise in the acquisition of hydrographic and topographic equipment suitable to the Albanian needs.
- Assistance in the development of MSI promulgation in the Albanian waters.

Comments:

- It is more appropriate to wait for the results of the restructuring of the Albanian Hydrographic Service and the outcome of the assistance offered by the Italian Military Division of Experts.
- Since Albania expressed her willingness to participate as observer in the next MBSHC meeting (16th MBSHC meeting - Ukraine), possible solutions might be adopted during the meeting's sessions.

- Technical visit to Romania achieved by France - IHB (8-9 July 2008)

Romania is facing an urgent need to a complete resurvey of its waters off the 50m depth and to an update in its cartographic catalogue with WGS84 based charts.

On the other hand, in spite of its continuous maintenance of its paper and electronic charts, Romanian Hydrographic Directorate (MHD) is experiencing first, a lack of trained personnel in hydrography, oceanography and cartography and second, a limited period dedicated to surveys per year due to budgetary reasons (40 days / year).

It can be concluded that the current main concern of the Romanian MHD is to increase its capacity with trained personnel in hydrography and cartography.

Additionally, cooperation in hydrography and maritime cartography between France and Romania is under study.

Consequently, and along with the suggestion of the visiting team, CBC assistance in short period training in hydrography and cartography in favor of the Romanian MHD may be provided, after fixing the kind of assistance the French Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service (SHOM) would provide under the said future cooperation.

- Technical visit to Malta achieved by Italy (23-26 September 2008)

Despite its remarkable efforts in maintaining its harbors surveyed, especially with a considerable maritime traffic, Malta Maritime Authorities (MMA) needs an update in its capacities in equipment and personnel, in order to be able to survey all its waters and achieve an independent chart production.

In order to be able to assess Malta needs regionally within the MBSHC, or if not possible seek support from the CBC, Malta would be invited to express explicitly her needs through the national report to the next MBSHC meeting, since to current date no request for CBC support for year 2010 has been received.

- Technical visit to Lebanon achieved by France - IHB (3-5 February 2009)

An initial report was elaborated for the special purpose of the present report.

The Lebanese authorities are interested in the settlement of a hydrographic service and an appropriate national organization aiming especially to enable Lebanon to fulfill its responsibilities in its waters under SOLAS convention.

Additionally, the Lebanese authorities are planning to start the appropriate procedure set by the IHO M2 publication in order to join the IHO as a member state.

It should be noted that on the occasion of the 8th meeting of the Black and Azov Seas Working Group BASWG, held in Kiev - Ukraine on 25-26 March 2008 (MBSHC 15 decision 14), capacity building and training requirements for countries of the Black and Azov Seas countries were discussed among the meeting agenda items.

It was noted that Georgia lacks hydrographic survey data and staff and there is an urgent need to modern hydrographic surveys in the Georgian waters. It was also noted that Georgia may need assistance through regional cooperation or IHO CB programs for hydrographic and cartographic staff training.

Consequently, a technical visit aiming to assess Georgian hydrographic capacities scheduled and financed by the IHO CBC is very welcomed.

Upon request of the IHO CBC chairman (IHB CL 10/2009), on the occasion of the 1st course in hydrographic data processing and marine cartography under the Japan Capacity Building Project, to be held in the premises of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office UKHO from 7 September to 18 December 2009, a letter was addressed to the MBSHC Associate and Observer Member States aiming to inform them on the course and inciting them to apply to it, since it would be a valuable

opportunity to enhance hydrographic and cartographic capacities and to overcome parts of the above discussed deficiencies.

A.3- CBC fund requests:

Conforming to CBC letter regarding the procedure for submitting CB fund requests (IHB file CBC-1 of 2 December 2008), a correspondence was addressed to all MBSHC members on this purpose explaining the proper procedure, the scope of the CBC assistance and the due dates for submitting the requests (email of 9 February 2009). To date no request satisfying the explained procedure was received.

A.4- Conclusion

The visits were within the expected level of expertise and proficiency. The results are very detailed and meaningful in terms of fixing the hydrographic deficiencies in the visited countries, and consequently in helping find the appropriate solutions to overcome those shortages and reflect the overall hydrographic capacities of the MBSHC as a whole body.

The CBC is kindly invited to consider allocating funds to similar technical visits to other MBSHC or any other Regional hydrographic Commission members, for the sake of evolving with hydrography and ensuring safety to navigation.

B- Safety to Navigation in the MBSHC region

B.1- INT paper chart and ENC production - Medintchart Catalogue

The Medintchart catalogue and ENC production scheme in the Mediterranean and Black Seas region are currently coordinated by the French Hydrographic service SHOM.

The most remarkable pending Medintchart issue, as a consequence of which a number of events occurred, relates to the INT chart coverage of the Aegean Sea and parts of the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas covering Greek and Turkish waters.

During the 15th MBSHC meeting, A number of interrelated issues between Turkey and Greece were noted regarding the intermediate scheme at 1:150 000 of the Aegean Sea and four INT Charts at 1:250 000 covering the Aegean, Ionian and Mediterranean Seas. Consequently, the Medintchart coordinator proposed a number of actions and a technical meeting in September 2008 at SHOM premises in France to discuss the advance of those actions (see 15th MBSHC Medintchart decisions in enclosure).

On 15 January 2008, and as a consequence to discussions and positions expressed during the 15th MBSHC meeting and through later correspondences, France issued Medintchart CL 38 giving proposals for consideration to Member States, and inviting

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them to express whether they wish France to remain as Medintchart coordinator or nominating another Member State to take this responsibility.

All reactions to this letter were in favor of that France continues its task as Medintchart coordinator.

On 11 July 2008 France issued Medintchart CL 39 to announce the organization of a restricted technical meeting requesting the attendance of Greece and Turkey in order to discuss issues relating to the Aegean Sea INT scheme.

Upon reception of participation acceptance from invited parties, France suggested a draft agenda for the meeting (email of 2 September 2008). The draft agenda was not accepted by Greece and this latter declined the necessity of the meeting. (email of 24 September 2008).

On 25 September 2008 France cancelled the meeting and declared all her tasks as Medintchart coordinator suspended until further notice.

On 8 October 2008, the Chairman of the MBSHC addressed a letter to SHOM director requesting him to reconsider suspending SHOM tasks as Medintchart coordinator at least until the 16th MBSHC meeting and to include topics meant to be dealt with at the cancelled technical meeting in the agenda of the 16th MBSHC meeting.

On 17 November 2008, France director accepted the MBSHC chairman request but to tasks restricted to routine matters only with no further edition of the Medintchart catalogue. He also stressed on finding an agreement about the exact role of the Medintchart coordinator at the 16th MBSHC meeting.

As a consequence of all these events, the Agenda of the 16th MBSHC meeting shall include an item for the election of the Medintchart coordinator and fixing its role and task, hoping for encouraging steps in solving the issue of the INT coverage of the Aegean Sea.

B.2- Hydrographic survey status and contribution of MBSHC members to IHO S55

The update of the IHO special publication S55 is not satisfactorily maintained. Only five MBSHC Members updated their input in 2009. There are no inputs to the publication from Egypt and Israel.

The Agenda of the MBSHC 16th meeting shall include an item for the status of hydrographic surveys in the MBSHC regions and contribution of MBSHC Members to the IHO S55 publication, reminding on the importance of keeping this catalogue up to date.

B.3- Maritime Safety Information Promulgation

- Nav Sub area in the Caspian Sea

Decision 15-10 of the 15th MBSHC meeting stipulated that Spain as Navarea III coordinator shall inquire states bordering the Caspian Sea on the creation of a new nav sub area in that region. No feed back has been received yet.

- Navtex limits in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea

- In March 2008 Turkey expressed her disagreement with the current configuration of the limits of Navtex service area in the eastern Mediterranean and Aegean seas (ref 7502 addressed to Navarea III coordinator)
- After request of Navarea III coordinator, according to the Navtex Service Manual, Turkey submitted an initial proposed for an amended Navtex Zone, which was circulated to the concerned countries of the region (Greece and Cyprus).
- Greece and Cyprus rejected the proposal due mainly to the following considerations:
 - No failure in broadcast or content of MSI from the existing Navtex service has been reported
 - Neither the IMO nor the IHO has ever reported a necessity to amend the limits of the existing Navtex service.

Based on the good performances of the existing Navtex service and with the disagreement among the relevant parties on the proposed amended Navtex zone, the Navarea III coordinator considered that there is no operational or technical need for any modifications, and submitted a complete report on the situation to the Navtex coordination Panel requesting a decision, with copies to the concerned parties and to the IHO (letter IHM of 10 March 2009).

The response of the Navtex Coordination Panel chairman (letter of 26 March 2009) confirmed the position of the Navarea III coordinator.

- Navarea III sub-area in the Black Sea

The Russian Federation proposed the establishment of a sub-area of Navarea III in the Black Sea during the 8th meeting of the commission on Promulgation of Radio Navigational Warnings (CPRNW) in 2006. Turkey, Georgia and Romania approached positively the proposal, contrarily to Ukraine which opposed to the proposal. Turkey offered to serve as coordinator to the proposed sub-area and attended the last meeting of CPRNW in Brasil – August 2008 in order to support this proposal.

Turkey will address the proposal to the relevant IMO and IHO bodies and will report on the advance of the process.

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- Black and Azov Seas Working Group BASWG

The 8th meeting of the BASWG took place in Kiev - Ukraine on 25 and 26 March 2008 under the chairmanship of Rear Admiral Mustapha Iptes, the director of the Turkish Navy Office of Navigation, Hydrography and Oceanography TN-OHNO.

Many important issues were discussed at the meeting especially those relating to the status of hydrographic surveys in the area, cooperation and agreements between countries in the region and the INT charts and ENC production.

A number of required actions were outlined, the most important of which relates to the Term of Reference and the Rules of Procedure of the working group, the update of the IHO special publication S55 and the Medintchart catalogue.

The 9th BASWG meeting was decided to take place in Constanza - Romania on 23 and 24 April 2009. a provisional Agenda and a draft timetable were circulated to the concerned parties on 09 April 2009.

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