

FOURTH MEETING OF THE IHO INTER REGIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

IHO-IRCC4

Singapore 7- 8 June 2012

REPORT OF THE NORTH SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION (NSHC)

By the Chairman Ingenieur General Bruno Frachon (FR)

1. **Chairman:** Bruno Frachon (FR), from September 2010
Vice-Chair: Evert Flier (NO) from September 2010
2. **Membership:** Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom.
3. **Meetings:**

The Commission met on 28 -29 September 2010 in Brest (FR). The next meeting is planned in Ålesund (NO), 18-21 June 2012, in accordance with the NSHC Statutes.

The NSHC runs several groups that work mainly by correspondence:

- the Region D ICCWG (former NW European Charting WG) and the North Sea ENC Harmonization Working Group (UK lead);
- the NSHC Tidal Working Group;
- the Dover Strait/*Pas de Calais* Survey Strategy Working Group (BE, FR, NL,UK) ;
- the NSHC Re-survey Working Group (DE lead) ;
- the European Union Marine and Maritime Policy Working Group (FR lead).

4. **Agenda Items:**

Task numbers refer to IHO WP for 2011 (see CL 81/2010)

IHO Work Programme 1 - "Corporate Affairs"

Element 1.1 Co-operation with International Organizations and participation in relevant meetings.

Tasks 1.1.5c, 1.1.10b, 1.1.10d: A number of the NSHC HOs representatives are involved in IMO meetings (mainly NAV, COMSAR, e-navigation) together with IHB reps. With the development of e-navigation, and the ECDIS mandatory carriage requirements implementation plan, the NSHC believes that this co-ordinated involvement along national Maritime Safety Agencies is of huge importance for the sake of safety of navigation and for raising the awareness of the important IHO role. This importance requires strong involvement of IHO members and bodies, which must be optimized.

→ A more efficient and straightforward co-ordination mechanism across RHCs, IHO SCs, and IHO MS in IMO activities (MSC, TCC, NAV) might be considered by the IHB in the future.

Task 1.1.8: The International Cartographic Conference ICC'2011 took place in Paris in July 2011, a summary report of which by FR is to be published in the IHO bulletin.

Task 1.1.17b: The NSHC made little progress in the follow-on of the MoU between the IHO and the European Commission although it is acknowledged (conclusions 91, 92) that European marine and maritime policies are changing the global environment, are playing an increasing cross-boundary role (Marine Knowledge 2020 for instance) and are impacting HOs activities, business models, etc. A number of HOs are already involved in the development of their implementation plan to comply with the EU INSPIRE directive establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community. The BLAST project (Bringing Sea and Land Together) is progressing according to the plan. A interesting result is the ENC Harmonization Checker (ENC-HC), a tool that automatically compares adjacent ENCs and identifies geometric inconsistencies and inconsistent use of attributes

→ The NSHC decided that HOs of EU MS and of non-EU MS should be kept informed of the development of EU policies that may interfere with or support IHO objectives, as appropriate.

IHO Work Programme 2 - "Hydrographic Services and Standards"

Element 2.9 Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure Working Group

Task 2.9.1 (also related to Task 3.6.3 below): The NSHC members share concerns on their MSDI activities and decided to provide and compare, at the next NSHC conference, the governance principles for the definition and monitoring of their national civilian hydrographic and charting program (conclusion 90).

→ As it could be of great interest for other RHCs, the NSHC will be happy to report on this issue at IRCC05.

Element 2.12 Tidal and Water Level Working Group

Task 2.12.1: NSHC tasked the NSHC Tidal Working Group with the formulation of recommendations on the ways forward, to create common and unique vertical reference surface for the whole North Sea area (conclusion 87). The NSHC also approved the NSHC TWG Terms Of Reference and Work Plan according to the recommendations made at the IHO TWG level. It is worth noting that this WG is to be playing an important role in the European-funded BLAST project

IHO Work Programme 3 - "Inter Regional Coordination and Support"

Element 3.1 Co-operation with Member States and attendance at relevant meetings Inter Regional Coordination Committee Hydrographic Commissions

Task 3.1.0: The IRCC Chair participated in the last meeting of the NSHC and provided important updates. The NSHC was represented by FR (acting Chair) at the IRCC3 meeting.

Task 3.1.x¹: The Commission met once since the EIHC4, all Member States were represented in the meeting held in Brest. The NSHC agreed to amend its statutes (conclusion 82) to include a new paragraph 3 of article 19 as follows *"The Commission shall lay down its decisions in the form of conclusions, to be annexed to the summary; reports to be numbered consecutively and to consist of a preamble containing the main considerations, followed by one or more operative paragraphs containing the actions decided upon and taking into account the provision in paragraph 2 of article 19, of the Statutes of the North Sea Hydrographic Commission."*

This list of conclusions is an interesting way for keeping record of the main decisions within a Regional Hydrographic Commission and to monitor the progress made in the development of co-operation.

→ The amended NSHC statutes and the list of conclusions have been posted on the IHO website.

Task 3.1.1: a proposal was made at IRCC3, by the NSHC for the consideration of the ARHC for the definition of the adjacent limits between the two regions. It was also suggested to create a new INT charting area "N" (see action IRCC03/08, and document ARHC02/03B). At the ARHC meeting in September 2011, NO was tasked to take the necessary steps to formalize the establishment of the new region "N" and the 69°N proposal, for the border limit between the ARHC and the NSHC in the North Atlantic was accepted and adopted.

Task 3.1.12: The participation of representatives of the industrial sector and of the European Commission at the 30th meeting of the NSHC in 2012 will be proposed to the NSHC Member States.

Element 3.3 Capacity Building Management

Task 3.3.1: There is no real capacity building initiatives currently carried out within the NSHC. However, it is worth noting that a number of NSHC HOs are involved in the IHO capacity building activities (DE who chairs the CBSC, NO, UK, FR). NO currently represents the NSHC at the CBSC meetings.

Element 3.6 WEND WG, Coordination of Global Surveying and Charting

Tasks 3.6.1, 3.6.2: The NSHC established the NS ENC Harmonisation WG (conclusions 83, 84) and was represented in the WEND-WG meeting held in Wollongong 13-14 Oct. 2011.

→ The TOR for the NS ENC Harmonization has been prepared by UK and approved.

A proposal for the consideration of the WEND-WG, supported by the NSHC, was made by DE and FR on behalf of the Joint Distribution WG of the IC-ENC-PRIMAR Co-operation to promote the WEND principles through the distribution of ENCs under a new brand name,

¹ It seems that the NSHC is missing in the list.

namely “IHO-WEND”, provided these ENC are integrated into the Joint ENC Database through the RENCs.

A second proposal was also made by DE and FR, that Regional International Charting Coordination Groups within RHCs should conduct systematic and periodic ENC overlaps and gaps analysis in their areas of responsibility, and report to WEND-WG (conclusion 84).

→ These recommendations were considered at the WEND-WG meeting hosted in Wollongong (AU) 14-15 Oct. 2011.

Task 3.6.3: Two NSHC working groups are respectively responsible for the revision of the Dover Strait/*Pas de Calais* Survey Strategy and the NSHC Re-survey Strategy (including re-surveying of critical areas). The work conducted by the NSHC Re-survey (conclusions 89 and 88) is of great importance for the revision of C-55 (see action IRCC03/09).

Task 3.6.4: The NSHC, at its 28th meeting, stressed the importance of M-3 TR 1/1992 (former B5.5) that it is the role of the IHB to monitor new INT chart publication and to provide the concerned Member States with comments on any point of non-compliance with IHO INT Charts Specification standards. One of the actions raised was also for the IHB to investigate the use and implications (incl. liability) of freely-available satellite imagery.

5. Conclusions:

The main conclusions and recommendations from the NSHC are as follows:

Through the activities carried out by the relevant working groups, it is acknowledged that the NSHC is actually committed to implicitly developing a risk assessment programme (re-survey plan, charting, comparison of governance principles, etc.). However, due to other important national commitments and budget constraints, the NSHC admit that progress made by the different WGs are not as quick as expected.

Meanwhile, the European Commission is playing an increasing role that impacts national HO activities, directly or through the mandatory derived national obligations (for some members). It is therefore important to remain pro-active and to emphasize the role of the IHO as the relevant technical and consultative organization in order to avoid duplication of efforts and also as leverage for improving national EU and non-EU HOs responsibilities.

The development of e-navigation (including S-100) together with the ECDIS carriage requirement implementation plan is an important step forward that the NSHC member states take into consideration. Time has come to a faster pace in improving the ENC coverage, consistency, and quality in order to meet IMO and users' requirements.