

13th BALTIC SEA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION CONFERENCE

19-21 August 2008 - Rostock, Germany

MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE

A. Opening formalities

A1. Opening of the Conference

Lithuania welcomed all delegates and opened the 13th Baltic Sea Hydrographic Commission Conference. Afterwards it was shortly noticed on the activities taken during the period from the last Conference. It was mentioned that there were 4 WG working on different issues and that there will be a Reports presented in the Conference on the work done. Also it was noted that all Member States i.e. Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, associate member Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden are present in the Conference and therefore there is a quorum and decisions can be taken. Also it was noted that UKHO representative Chris Smith is participating as observer and Captain Robert Ward represents IHB Monaco. In total there were 28 delegates. Chairman invited Members of the BSHC to acknowledge the significant input made to Hydrography during many years by Prof. Peter Ehlers and Mr. Horst Hecht because this is their last BSHC conference before their retirement.

A2. Welcome from the host country

Vice-Chairman Prof. Peter Ehlers, President of Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH), welcomed the delegates of the Conference and wished good cooperation. He also noted that the last BSHC meeting held in Rostock was in 1990 and gave an overview about German Hydrographic Office. It was mentioned that Hydrographic Office is located in Hamburg and Rostock, but Rostock being the centre of Hydrographic activities. Also he noted that there are a lot of important issues to address not only in navigation, but also in the sphere of environment protection and expressed a wish to BSHC to look for new ideas, to become more efficient and consider issues of marine spatial data infrastructure. He also noted that Germany is prepared to play an active role in maritime policy development discussions.

Later Mr. Thomas Dehling gave practical information on Conference arrangements.

A3. Adoption of the Agenda

Agenda was adopted with the additional item proposed by Finland and placed under Miscellaneous H1 – Report of the CHRIS Hydrography and Cartography in Inland Waters working group (HCIWWG).

A4. Minutes and actions of the 12th Conference

First the Conference went on with the review of the List of Actions from the 12th Conference. When reviewing **Action B3** “To contact NHC and NSHC chairmen to initiate discussion on representation in Council from the region” it was agreed that this issue will be discussed during this Conference under Agenda item B4.

When looking at the **Action C1** “*To contact HELCOM investigating whether there are any special conditions and regulations of PSSA in Baltic Sea (with a purpose to display PSSA on charts or NtM)*”, Finland informed that after investigating this issue it was by the commission to abstain from depiction of PSSA in nautical charts by special chart signatures – instead putting written notes in sailing directions and comparable textual publications.

When discussing **Action D1** “*Request BALTICO meeting to include into the Agenda the item on low water warnings*”, Sweden informed that the results of this action are presented in the “National Report of Sweden”. Summarizing the commission noted that regarding “Navigational warnings concerning low sea water level” the **following was decided** in the BALTICO meeting:

- a. A navigational warning shall be issued and transmitted on NAVTEX when the water level is expected to drop ≥ 60 cm below MSL in waters affected by transit traffic, within which the available depth is restricted in relation to the draught of ships normally sailing the waters.
- b. At present the criteria above only affects the Great Belt, the Sound and Western Baltic.
- c. For waters outside the areas described above a navigational warning shall be issued and transmitted on NAVTEX when the water level is expected to drop ≥ 100 cm.
- d. Increasing sizes of ships and new routeing measures may result in other demands on information and warnings about low water levels.
- e. The Baltico Meeting participants were requested to look after arising needs for low water warnings, e.g. at the establishment of new offshore shipping lanes in areas with restricted depth.

When reviewing **Action D2** “*To raise an item on promulgation of Firing exercises via NAVTEX in the next CPRNW meeting in September 2007*”, Sweden informed that the results of this action are presented in the “National Report of Sweden”. It was concluded by the commission, that the result is to add text to IMO Res A.706, which is under revision, about inclusion of reference to national nautical publications in navigational warnings about firings. Any other actions in connection to the recommendations in the Swedish paper were referred to other IHO bodies for further action with regards to chart standards.

When reviewing **Action F4** “*To address IHB requesting to investigate Status of S-49 inclusion of MRG into the publication*” the discussion started clearing the issue whether there is a question if Baltic Sea Routing Guide could be an INT chart and for that reason if there is a need to address it to CHRIS Chart Standardization and Paper Chart Working Group (CSPCWG). It was also admitted that there is a need for such standardization and all members of the commission are invited to participate in this work.

Action 1: to contact CSPCWG requesting to consider whether Baltic Sea MRG can be included in the S-49 publication.

When reviewing **Action H2** “*To poll the possibilities of the BSHC members to participate to a customized hydrographic course starting autumn 2008*”, Finland informed that the results of this issue are that there is some interest for such a course but no binding proposals for the moment from member states. Therefore it was concluded that there is no interest for the moment.

When looking at the **Action K** “*To approve new Statutes of the BSHC, responding to the letter of IHB*”, it was noticed that the new Statutes are approved by all member states but Russia. Russia informed that the decision to approve new Statutes is already made and signed the letter right away. Afterwards, as IHB is the repository of the Statutes, the letter with signatures of all members and associated member signifying their approval of the Statutes was handed over to IHB Director Captain Robert Ward.

All the rest items from the List of Actions from 12th Conference were concluded as done. The Minutes of the 12th Conference were accepted without comments.

Afterwards the Chairman, with the permission of Members and agreement of Germany, because of the difficulty with the English language, from now on handed the chairmanship of the Conference over to Vice-Chairman Prof. Peter Ehlers.

B. Strategic aspects of the further development of IHO

B1. Report of the IHB

IHB reported that the proposed amendments to the Convention on the IHO have now been approved by 20 Member States. The process of approval is slow and at the current rate it will take another ten years before the protocol is ratified. The Directing Committee is concerned about this fact and is available to assist States in whatever way possible to speed up the process.

There are three applications for membership of the Organization in the process of ratification - Cameroon, Montenegro and Sierra Leone. Haiti is in the early stages of applying for membership. Meanwhile Surinam has been reinstated as a full member. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Dominican Republic remain suspended since 1983 with little prospect of reinstatement in the near future.

All decisions of the last International Hydrographic Conference have been implemented or are in the course of implementation. The planning of the 4th Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (4th EIHC) in June 2009 has begun. Principal topics for consideration at the 4th EIHC will be reports from the following working groups:

IHO Strategic Plan WG (ISPWG),
Hydrography in Inland Waters WG (HCIWWG), and
Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure WG (MSDIWG).

Member States will also have the opportunity to propose any other items for the agenda of the 4th EIHC.

The IHO on behalf of its MS has made a commitment to IMO that it will achieve adequate ENC coverage ahead of any general mandatory carriage requirements for ECDIS. The IHO has been asked to report ENC progress annually to the IMO. The IHB is therefore encouraging the RHCs to play a key role in ensuring that the necessary ENC coverage is achieved. The IHB will be seeking annual regional reports. Because of the importance of this subject, a special seminar on the status of ENC availability will be programmed for all MS immediately after the 4th EIHC.

Plans are in hand for the implementation of the Hydrographic Services and Standards Committee (HSSC) and the Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IRCC) on 1 January 2009. The first meeting of the IRCC will take place immediately after the 4th EIHC. The first meeting of the HSSC is expected to take place in Singapore in September 2009 in conjunction with an International Conference on ECDIS, planned by the Singapore maritime authorities.

A revised IHO website will be posted on the WWW by the end of August 2008. Most of its main pages will be in both of the official languages of the IHO.

IHB responded to a question from the Russian Federation regarding the current status and impact of S-100.

In response to a question, IHB indicated that the IHO ENC Information Catalogue requested by IMO would be published at the same time as the revised IHO website was posted on the www.

The IHB responded to an intervention by Germany on the status of S-23 which is reported below.

Discussion on Status of IHO S-23

Germany noted that edition 3 of S-23 is out of date and that the current edition is now 55 years old. Germany asked IHB, in light of the on-going difficulty in publishing an updated 4th edition of S-23, whether it was possible for the information originally intended for edition 4 of S-23 to be published region by region rather than on a global basis. Germany pointed out that in reviewing

the draft edition 4 of S-23, almost all regions of the world had already reached general agreement on the recommended naming of sea areas on charts.

IHB responded by saying that the Directing Committee was becoming concerned that the credibility of the IHO was being drawn into question because there was no definitive, up to date reference for the names to be applied to the world's sea areas. This has been highlighted most recently by requests for a definitive reference from the ISO, IOC Seadatanet and Marine XML Steering Group, and the EU Commission. The IHB also regularly receives requests from Academia, government departments, teaching institutions and the general public to which it cannot satisfactorily respond.

The IHB commented that although the draft edition 4 of S-23 is in fact divided up into regions of the world, the relevant IHO protocol for amending S-23 requires majority IHO MS approval rather than region by region approval.

Further discussion ensued, resulting in agreement that there was now an urgent need to provide up to date information concerning the naming of sea areas, particularly for areas such as the Baltic region and elsewhere. If it was not possible to publish edition 4 of S-23, for whatever reason, then consideration should now be given to the publication of a supplementary IHO document, organised on a regional basis, which listed those names agreed and recommended by the relevant RHC. As long as the supplementary document does not cover all regions, S-23 could serve as the reference document for those regions not contained in the supplementary document. It was suggested that this document might be called "*Recommended Names for Seas and Maritime Regions as Agreed by the Relevant Regional Hydrographic Commissions*".

As a result of the discussions the meeting agreed that the IHB should be invited to investigate this proposal further by seeking the opinion of Member States in other RHCs.

Action 2: IHB to be invited to investigate the publication of a list of recommended names for sea areas based on input from Member States in other RHCs.

B2. Report of the IHO ISPWG work

Document: EN – B2, Finland

The BSHC representative in ISPWG Mr. Juha Korhonen (Finland) gave a review of the ISPWG work. Among other things it was mentioned that so far the Structure of Strategic Plan, Strategic Assumptions and Strategic Directions have been discussed and approved by ISPWG Members. The next issue is to define Ways and means to implement these strategic directions. Finally, the ISPWG will prepare a report for submission to Member States through the IHB by 31st October 2008. After the presentation of the report was finished, the floor was opened for questions and remarks, and Russia was interested to know how often the Council will meet. Mr. Juha Korhonen explained that the Council will meet once a year. Then Germany took the floor and thanked Mr. Juha Korhonen for excellent presentation and expressed an opinion that the presented Ways and Means document looks quite good, but except the definition of Hydrography. There was expressed some doubt if it is necessary to revise the definition of Hydrography, which was agreed in the Convention. Germany raised concerns to the draft revised definition of hydrography which deviate from the version adopted by IHO convention and advises to give clarification if ever needed rather than to create a new definition. In response to this remark, Mr. Juha Korhonen explained that the new version gives wider definition including inland waters. But he agreed that the wording still have to be discussed.

After finishing the discussion it was concluded that BSHC supports the work of ISPWG. And all BSHC members were invited to give proposals and comments to Mr. Juha Korhonen by 30th August, i.e. before the ISPWG meeting on 1 September 2008 in order to reflect our position in the

ISPWG report, which is important for the future of IHO. Finally, the Chairman thanked Mr. Juha Korhonen for representing BSHC in this important work.

B3. Status of Ratification of amended Convention and Pending Membership Applications

Document: EN – B3, Germany

Mr. Horst Hecht (Germany) gave a report on the issue and it was stressed that for the pending membership applications it may be helpful to advise Government authorities that applications from member states of the United Nations should normally be approved, as provided in the revised IHO Convention. Also it was noted that 20 member states have already approved amendments to the Convention and for amendments to enter into force we need about 50 member states quorum.

After the report all members gave information on the status of ratification of amendments to Convention. The situation is as follows: Germany – approved; Latvia – approved; Poland – change of Government in Poland stopped the process; hopefully approval will be done by the end of the year; Russia – not approved, still in consideration and probably will be approved; Sweden – approved; UK – approved; Denmark – approved; Estonia – approved; Finland – approved; Lithuania – not member of IHO. After the review, Germany raised a question asking can there be done anything to aid the approval process. There was expressed a view that this process is probably very slow, because Governments are not aware of the importance of it. And there was a suggestion to look for the possibility to approach the Governments through diplomatic representations in other organizations (e.g. IOC).

B4. Procedure for Selection of BSHC Members to Council

Document: EN – B4, Germany

Mr. Horst Hecht (Germany) gave a report on the issue and it was concluded that for the moment there is no need to discuss this issue in depth now, because no RHC can make its selection before notification of the number of seats allotted by the Secretary General and this will happen only 3 months before the Assembly session. This system opens a variety of solutions to apply. So, the most practical procedure will be to meet during or immediately preceding the Assembly for electing Council representatives. After report Sweden agreed with Germany and expressed opinion, that although maybe it is premature, but this commission should agree on concerted actions.

After discussion it was declared that Conference took a note of the situation, keep in mind the existing possibilities and leave this issue for development.

B5. Submissions to the Capacity Building Committee

Document: EN – B5, Germany

Mr. Thomas Dehling (Germany) gave a report on the issue. Latvia (CBC Vice-Chair) and Germany are currently representing the Baltic Sea within the Capacity Building Committee. The Management Plan of the CBC currently includes one project from the BSHC region (S44 workshop). It was stressed that initiative on the project “Workshop on Port and Shallow Water Surveys, S-44” came from CBC and not from the Region. It was mentioned that now CBC gets more requests than it has funds and the BSHC region will not have the highest support priority, because this region is considered well developed. It was concluded that BSHC will not apply for funding by CBF. The BSHC Chairman will inform the CBC that no support from the CB Fund is needed for an S44 workshop and that it can be removed from the Management Plan of the CBC.

There was raised an idea to think if there is possibility to get assistance from European Commission. During the discussion after presentation it was discovered that nobody is prepared to

organize such a workshop, although there is such an interest in the future. Finland gave an idea to select and nominate a couple of volunteers to bring this workshop and ideas forward. After the discussion it was concluded that we should not apply for assistance from CBC. This region is well developed. And it was admitted that there is an interest for workshop on S-44 in the future.

Action 3: BSHC Chairman to inform the CBC that no support from the CB Fund is needed for an S44 workshop and that this item can be removed from the Management Plan of CBC.

Action 4: Germany, Latvia and Finland to examine the S-44 workshop possibilities and come back with the results at BSHC14.

C. Strategic aspects concerning technical issues of the activities of HOs

C1. National Reports

All Members gave a review of their National Reports. Some after presentation points are mentioned below:

Denmark stressed that there is a need for Faeroes and Greenland charts.

Estonia mentioned that there is a need for improvement of hydrographic services, i.e. the need for money from Government to expand the Service.

Finland pointed out that FMA will probably be reorganized, and the maritime activities will probably be divided into many pieces. Also there was mentioned that new revised hydrographic program was drawn and it was stressed that charts for yachting are important and the production of these will be continued. To the question what was the reason for getting cartography back to Hydrographic Office, Finland explained that the production process was cut in two pieces and it was not possible to run the process smoothly, when the production is cut in two pieces. Denmark asked about non-processed survey data, referring to the Fig4 of the National Report, and Finland explained, that this picture is somehow misleading, because this is mostly single beam surveys. Estonia was interested what kind of state owned company will take over surveying and Finland explained that it will be quite small company for surveys and other fairway tasks probably with budget roughly 30 mill. Euro. Then IHB was interested to know whether this private company will be exposed for competition. Finland explained that it will be opened for competition. Also IHB was interested to know about QA of the surveys and Finland explained that other contractor will be hired for QA.

Germany stressed the importance of resurveys of routes of the Northern Sea.

Lithuania mentioned that in 2007 publication Notices to Mariners started and in 2008 new version of "List of Lithuanian aids to navigation" was issued and that these publications can be found in digital form on the web page. Then IHB was interested to know whether these 6 ENC's mentioned in the Report will be sufficient to cover the requirements of chart carriage for international shipping. Lithuania explained that as these ENC's cover all navigational purpose bands of charts, they are enough for carriage requirements.

After presentation of Poland, IHB asked if these 45 ENC cells mentioned in the Report, that support sea-going trade for inland waters, are enough for carriage requirements, and Poland answered that it is.

Russia outlined that the main focus is on surveying and that there was a new survey vessel put in operation. What regards ENC's, the Baltic Sea is already covered and there are 32 ENC's produced. These ENC's are distributed through Primar Stavanger and IC-ENC. Question remains with the required INT charts passage to Latvia and Estonia, but hopefully this question will be solved. After presentation IHB was interested to know, as Russian ENC coverage for the Baltic Sea is

complete, what is the situation with the ENC coverage for other areas worldwide. Russia explained that only small areas are not covered, but these areas are under responsibility of another institution, and in the future these areas will be covered.

Sweden stressed the importance of buying services on the market. According to the report, already 80 percent of surveys are bought on the market. And these surveys concentrate on the HELCOM routes. Also it was mentioned that in the near future it is hoped to continue business like today. It was also noted that ENCs are distributed through Primar Stavanger, and that there is a project running with the aim of digitizing soundings from archive, which is very important for environmental agencies.

After the presentations ended, there were concluded that general problems are financing, lack of support from the Governments, etc. and Germany raised a question, whether international agreements would help to draw Governments attention. And regarding this question, Denmark expressed full support to Germany, saying that international agreement would help to draw that attention. Afterwards Russia was interested to know does IHB considered to invite private sector for the services. IHB informed that commercial suppliers has already been used by many States, but stated also that responsibility for the provision of official nautical charts and ENCs remains with the government as laid down in SOLAS Chapter 5.

Germany again raised a question regarding Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure – MSDI and asked IHB to consider to put this as a standing item into national report structure. After the discussion it was decided to put this as a standing item on the agenda of next BSHC Conference and MS are invited to make reports.

Action 5: put marine spatial data infrastructure item on the agenda of the next BSHC meeting.

C2. Integration of Editorial and Pre-print Stages for the Production of Nautical Books

Document: EN – C2, Germany

Dr. Mathias Jonas (Germany) explained the basics of the integrated handling of editing and pre-print stages in a specific server based software solution and offered detailed information on individual request. Sweden was interested to know what is the future of the 45 publications maintained. It was explained that there is still a need for printed material, although maybe just the material portfolio will be reduced. IHB asked if there is a checking of editorial work procedures and Germany assured that there are checking procedures implemented. IHB also wondered could Germany consider the possibility to make a bulletin for IHO and Germany assured that if there is an interest, it is possible to do that.

After the discussions ended, it was stated that Conference took note of this development.

C3. Feasibility study converting BSH sailing directions content database solution into print, online and data presentations based on XML – technology

Document: EN – C3, Germany

Dr. Mathias Jonas (Germany) explained the application of the SNPWG model to selected part of a BSH text publication. It was summarized that the main idea of this study is to develop a common database that contains ENC data and data of sailing directions. After the presentation, when discussing compatibility of different any kind of systems, it was noted by IHB that for many HOs there is a worry not to be dependant on proprietary commercial systems, but which is often the case.

After the discussions ended, it was stated that Conference took note of this development.

D. Strategic aspects concerning administrative and marketing activities of HOs

D1. Information about planned new routing measures in the southern part of the Baltic Sea (submitted by Germany and Poland to IMO NAV54)

Document: EN – D1, Germany

Dr. Mathias Jonas (Germany) informed about its joint intentions with Poland to submit a proposal for the introduction of two new traffic separation schemes in the Southern Baltic. Finally it was concluded that Conference took note of this report and approach.

D2. Completion of ENC coverage for HSC by 1 July 2008

Document: EN – D2, Germany

Mr. Horst Hecht (Germany) gave a report on the issue and after the presentation it was stressed that BSHC should firmly establish the fact that areas operated by HSC would be covered by ENCs by July 2010 at the latest. UKHO informed that its new ENC service had been launched and that it included interim ENCs to support States that don't yet have capability to produce their own. It was mentioned that China was still a significant gap in global ENC coverage, but that it was hoped that this would be resolved in the next few months.

Finland asked about who takes the responsibility for produced interim "infill" ENCs. UKHO explained that they take the responsibility for the product and it meets the requirements of SOLAS. But on the other hand UKHO does not take the responsibility for the lack of source data i. e. surveys. Also it was stressed that it is very important to maintain ENCs updated.

During the discussion Germany informed on work of WEND task group, which was established 5 years ago. It was said that WEND TG came up with ENCs coverage assessment for 800 ports by the year 2010. Also it was mentioned that there was a problem identified with WEND Principles. These principles were drawn up in 1993-1997, which reflected idealistic thinking. The principles were revised and submitted to WEND Committee. From next year, because WEND task will be passed to IRCC, this body will decide how it will progress with ENC development. However, IHB very clearly noted, that it is important to be aware whether IHO will be capable to achieve ENC coverage as required by IMO. If there will be gaps in ENC coverage, it will reflect on every MS, not only on those that have gaps. If we won't have ENCs right, our credibility will be damaged, because IMO is looking to IHO to solve the hydrographic issues. Therefore the future of IHO will depend on ENC development and whether IHO satisfy IMO set requirements for ECDIS.

After the discussion it was stated that the Conference shares the view expressed by IHB and confirms, that in the Baltic Sea region adequate ENC coverage will be provided. Also Conference noted that BSHC welcomes the effort by UKHO to support States that have not capability to produce ENCs. The commission welcomed the outcome of NAV54 with regard to ECDIS carriage and confirms availability of adequate coverage, MS also welcomes the offer of UK to support less developed countries in ENC production, MS supports the revision of the WEND principles and the acceleration of the capacity building process.

For the matter of annual celebration of the World Hydrographic day, Germany made the observation that the various presentations to the public may have very limited audience. IHB added that the Directing Committee are likely to propose to celebrate the WHD during the forthcoming 4EIHC.

E. BSHC co-operative projects with other organizations**E1. Marine policy of the European Commission**

Document: EN – E1, Germany

Mr. Thomas Dehling (Germany) presented a report on the issue. It was noticed that the commission should identify the ways in which BSHC should participate in EU marine projects. Also after the presentation there was expressed an opinion by Germany that BSHC members through a Chairman could participate in NSHC sessions sharing the experience. Finland noted that members are heavily occupied already and suggested to view the possibility to distribute the documents of interest. Latvia also expressed support to Finland's suggestion. After the discussion it was concluded that the Chair of BSHC looks for information and distributes information about what is going on to BSHC members.

Action 6: to include BSHC members who are not on the distribution list already of NSHC documents of interest.

F. Report of BSHC WG

F1. Report of the HELCOM Monitoring Working group

Document: EN – F1, Finland

Mr. Juha Korhonen (Finland) presented a report on the issue.

The Conference endorsed the report and approved all the points required, i.e.:

- Approved the revised Re-survey Scheme, Version 2.0.
- Approved the revised TORs and ROPs for the MWG.
- Approved the proposed new name for the Working Group Re-survey Monitoring Working Group.
- Approved the MWG Work Program, Version 5.0.
- Approved the proposed Chair Mr. Juha Korhonen and Vice-Chair Mr. Thomas Dehling.

F2. Report of Baltic Sea International Chart Committee (BSICC)

Document: EN – F2, Finland

Mr. Jarmo Mäkinen (Finland) presented a report on the issue. Russia informed that the pending change of INT 1215, INT 1216 and INT 1217 is confirmed in principle by the Russian administration. Russia asks for a formal letter of the Estonian and Latvian Administration confirming the action. The Commission therefore endorsed the proposed changes of production nations.

It was outlined, that member states are invited to take a careful look if there is a need for such a large No of INT charts and if all requests fulfill requirements for INT charts. After the presentation during discussion Germany shared its' view and said that it is absolutely desirable that States produce not only national charts, but also INT charts and invite international trade into their waters. But IHB explained that the fact is that the committee ran out of Nos for INT charts allocated. Unless the schema is expanded or changed, there are not many available Nos to allocate for charts required. It was also remembered that if a paper chart is declared as an INT chart, it is an obligation also to have an ENC of similar coverage available as well. During the discussion UK expressed its' view that it would be reasonable to take into account the major ports of shipping for world trade when allocating these Nos for INT charts.

After the discussions the Conference decided to:

- Endorse this Report;
- Agree with the proposed changes of the production nations, except the changes between Russia – Latvia and Russia – Estonia. In these two cases there is a need to arrange official documentation from Latvia and Estonia to Russia;
- Endorse the updates to Region E of M-11 (Baltic Sea);
- Discuss INT charting principles.

Action 7: BSICC to send a letter to Sweden and Estonia asking what to do with required charts and whether they satisfy the requirements of M-11 and M-4.

Action 8: Estonian and Latvian Administration to send a formal letter to Russia confirming changes of production nation.

F3. Report on Motorway of the Baltic Sea

Document: EN – F3, Finland

Mr. Jukka Varonen (Finland) presented a report on the issue. After the presentation discussions started and Germany proposed not to develop a new water level information system, but to use Baltic Operational Oceanographic System (BOOS) and develop it further. But Finland expressed concern and noted saying that BOOS system has a drawback, because it is not known which datum is used in which area and how this datum is related to chart datum. But Germany insisted saying that one cannot invest a lot in inventing new system for such a deficiency. Instead, if the existing system does not fully fit to the purpose, we must ask to consider the possibility to develop the system to the level, which satisfies the needs.

After the discussions concluded, it was finalized, that the Conference took a note of the report and took into account the recommendations proposed. Also it was decided to ask Chart Datum WG to investigate the possibility to use BOOS as common water level information system.

Action 9: Chart Datum WG to investigate the possibility to use BOOS as common water level information system.

F4. Report of the Chart Datum WG

Document: EN – F4, Finland

Mr. Jukka Varonen (Finland) gave a review of the report. After the presentation Chairman opened the floor for remarks and invited all members to comment on the issue. Germany stressed the importance of height datums in the Baltic Sea for any kind of investigations. Russia informed that currently they are using Kronstadt zero point system and to convert all charts to new chart datum system is very difficult and that so far Russia is not ready to move forward with this new approach of unifying chart datums. Finland noted that knowing the differences between datums would increase the understanding and thus we can explain a lot of questions. Before decision of unifying datums there is a need to know the differences between those datums. IHB informed that in the coming next years mariners will have the possibility to receive tidal datum information and that's why water level information is very important. Also it was advised to contact and inform Tidal Committee of the IHO.

After discussions finished, Chairman summarized that Conference decided:

- Approve the Report;
- Approve the proposed further actions;
- Approve the revised TORs for the Chart Datum WG;
- Keep close contacts with IHO Tidal Committee.

Action 10: Chart Datum WG to contact, inform and keep close contacts with the IHO Tidal Committee.

F5. Report of BSEHWG

Document: EN – F5, Denmark

Mr. Jens-Peter Hartmann (Denmark) gave a review of the report. After the report Chairman invited to discuss this issue and Russia proposed that this harmonization approach would be

spread to other RHCs. It was proposed IHB to send a letter to other RHCs to invite to follow these Recommendations. In response IHB thanked in general for excellent work done and good efforts and informed that when it comes to implementation, it is the business of CHRIS/TSMAD. So, IHB could not issue a circular letter in advance, and first it should be discussed by technical experts in IRCC.

After discussions it was finalized, that Conference decided:

- To approve the Report and the Recommendations;
- According to Recommendation 6, to establish a Depth information Harmonization WG with Jens-Peter Hartmann as Chairman of this group;
- BSHC to report to CHRIS/20 and WEND meetings;
- HOs to implement those recommendations that require no further studies. These are recommendations 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,15,16.
- BSHC members to report annually to BSHC Conferences on the implementation of these Recommendations.

Action 11: BSHC to report to CHRIS/20 and WEND meetings.

Action 12: all BSHC members to report to 14th BSHC Conference on the implementation of the Recommendations.

G. Status of Hydrographic Surveying and Nautical Charting Worldwide S-55

G1. S-55 and the Resurvey Scheme in the Baltic Sea

Document: EN – G1, Germany

Mr. Thomas Dehling (Germany) presented a report on the issue. It was pointed out that re-survey frequency is an important issue and not all MS have included this quality element in their corresponding re-survey schemes. The Conference decided to task the BSHC Re-survey MWG to investigate whether there is a need for elaboration of regular national re-survey schemes in the Baltic Sea and study on relevant re-survey parameters (e.g. frequencies of re-surveys).

Action 13: BSHC Re-survey MWG to investigate the need for elaboration of regular national re-survey schemes in the Baltic Sea and study on relevant re-survey parameters (e.g. frequencies of re-surveys).

H. Miscellaneous

H1. Report of the CHRIS Hydrography and Cartography in Inland Waters WG

Mr. Juha Korhonen (Finland) presented a report on the issue and it was outlined that the IHO is already implicated in hydrography and cartography in inland waters and that IHO specifications are also applicable for inland waters. According to recommendations of this report the WG invites all MS or RHCs to submit papers for CBC to develop support projects for inland waters. After presentation of the Report, it was agreed that appropriate place to discuss this Report would be next CHRIS meeting. Also it should be mentioned that there was expressed a concern regarding joining inland and traditional sea hydrography and cartography together.

Finally it was stated that the Conference took note of this Report and all MS of BSHC are invited to further participate in consideration of this issue.

I. Unscheduled items

No unscheduled items

J. Closing formalities

J1. Election of the chairman and vice chairman of BSHC

According to the Statutes of the BSHC, Germany will take the chair for the next Conference. So, President of Federal Maritime and Hydrographic Agency (BSH) was approved as Chairman of BSHC for the next period. And Denmark representative Jens-Peter Hartmann was elected as vice-chairman of BSHC for the next period.

J2. Place and time of the next Conference

According to the rotation principle, with the agreement of Denmark, the place for the next 14th BSHC Conference was approved Denmark, Copenhagen. The Conference should take place in mid September 2009. The exact time and place are to be fixed later.

Action 14: to announce the exact date and place for the next Conference in mid September 2009.

J3. Closing ceremony

During closing ceremony, Sweden took the floor and noted that BSHC is 25 years old and for a long time it was positively influenced by Prof. Peter Ehlers and Mr. Horst Hecht. And because of their retirement occasion, all Member States expressed kind words and thanked these for the input to the work of Commission and Hydrography. IHB also took the floor and noted that it was an excellent meeting and that all topics were developed by the members for the benefit of the region. Also IHB expressed thanks and honorably mentioned the importance Prof. Peter Ehlers provided for the IHO community.

Finally, Chairman, Prof. Peter Ehlers, concluded that it was valuable and important meeting and that many important topics were discussed. He responded that the huge real work was done by the WGs and the Commission discussed the results. Also he thanked all participants of the Conference for the work done.

At the end the Conference was declared closed.