

Status Report from the NSHC Marine and Maritime Policies WG (EU2MWG) and the coming IHO-EU Network WG

Background

At the XVIIIth IHO Conference 2012 the IHO and the European Commission (EC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Establishing a Cooperation on Maritime Affairs between the European Commission and the International Hydrographic Organisation. The purpose is to provide a framework ensuring a continuing liaison between these organisations in the specific areas of common interest. The Commission's Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) acts as the contact point on the EC side. From the IHO side the NSHC working group EU2MWG, with participation from the IHB directing committee – Director Gilles Bessero, has acted as the contact point.

At the 5th IRCC meeting a proposal was submitted by Sweden on behalf of the NHC, also supported by France as the chair of the NSHC EU2MWG, to establish an active network of focal points in all the RHCs mainly influenced by EU policies. The network would supersede the current NSHC EU2MWG. France was tasked to suggest ToR for this new IHO-EU Network and these ToR has been presented to all IHO member states and have recently been approved. Thus the IHO-EU Network has now formally been established.

Status of the IHO-EU Network

During the recent months focal points in the respective influenced RHC have been identified. The formal decision to supersede the NSHC EU2MWG will be taken at the coming NSHC meeting in Amsterdam 25 – 27 June 2014. Already at the 18th BSHC meeting in Tallinn 2013 the BSHC decided that Sweden (Magnus Wallhagen) will act as the BSHC representative in the IHO-EU Network. The following member states will represent the influenced RHCs:

- Baltic Sea HC (BSHC) – Sweden
- Eastern Atlantic HC (EAtHC) – France
- Mediterranean and Black Seas HC – Greece
- Nordic HC (NHC) – Norway
- North Sea HC (NSHC) – Germany

A chair for the IHO-EU Network has not yet been appointed. However Sweden appreciates the work done by France as chair of the NSHC EU2MWG and proposes that France would take the chairmanship for the IHO-EU Network and asks the BSHC meeting to endorse this proposal.

Ongoing in the EU2MWG (and in the near future the IHO-EU Network)

Since the 18th BSHC meeting several meetings has been arranged internally within the EU2MWG and some with representatives from the EU Commission DG MARE. Sweden has acted as representative from the BSHC, as well as being a member state of the NSHC. Magnus Wallhagen has participated in all meetings (except from the Expert meeting in Brest) and Hans Öiås in some. Also Germany has been represented at all meetings.

- Expert meeting, SHOM Brest 2 – 3 October 2013, Joint European Coastal Mapping Program (only HOs).
- EU2MWG meeting and meeting with DG MARE, Brussels 24 October 2013.
- EU2MWG meeting, SHOM Paris 3 – 4 January 2014.
- EU2MWG meeting with DG MARE, Oostende 19 February 2014.
- Another meeting is planned with DG MARE back to back with the coming NSHC meeting 25 June 2014 in Amsterdam.

Joint European Coastal Mapping Program (JECMaP)

The European Commission has identified that policy makers and future investors have an increased need for marine data. Having access to marine data is also crucial for protection of the marine environment as well as for physical marine spatial planning. In order to address this need the EC launched the European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet). However, for the time being, EMODnet just makes available already existing data and does not initiate collection of new data, neither offshore nor along the coasts, where there is a strong need for high density data.

The implementation of the future directive on Marine Spatial Planning¹ needs high density data on bathymetry and sedimentology. In addition, the implementation of Integrated Coastal Zone Management needs data on both sides of the coastline. Furthermore, on the landside, coastal areas are amongst the most threatened by the effects of climate change. Coastal areas are also threatened by flooding and marine submersions. Large parts of the European coasts also recede from erosion.

The seriousness of the threat, that is to say, the power of the waves which hit the coast, and the set-up of the sea level which threatens the coastline are highly dependent on the topography of the seafloor. Although bathymetry of the entire basin is needed with a resolution and an accuracy that needs to be properly identified, in order to predict waves and floods with an acceptable quality, one should focus on areas immediately surrounding the coast line until 10 meters depth. The reason is that the near-shore bathymetry has the highest impact on the predictions of how waves and floods hit the coast and that in most sea areas data are available for depth greater than 10 meter.

The EU2MWG has suggested that a design study for a Joint European Coastal Mapping Program should be performed. In the relevant areas, the program should deliver and store safely data sets and metadata of the following data:

1. On the landside:
 - Elevation data, with and without objects above the terrain such as buildings, trees... with a resolution which will allow to building a Digital Terrain Model (DTM) with a resolution appropriate to meeting the needs at a sensible cost.
2. On the intertidal zone:

¹ COM (2013) 133, 12 March 2013

-Elevation data with a resolution which will allow to building a DTM with a resolution appropriate to meeting the needs at a sensible cost. Also sedimentology data with appropriate resolution should be made available.

3. On the seaside:

-Bathymetric data, with a resolution which will allow to building a DTM with a resolution appropriate to meeting the needs at a sensible cost. Also sedimentology data with appropriate resolution should be made available.

Each data set should be accompanied with useful attributes (i.e. metadata) on quality assessment and accuracy, so that they can be used with the appropriate level of confidence. The DG MARE has informed the EU2MWG that a call for tender regarding coastal mapping could be issued by September 2014. It is expected that the scope of this call for tender would be to deliver a program on how a coastal mapping program of the coastal areas of the member states of the EU could be designed. It will most probably not include any actual data deliveries. Any BSHC MS interested to take part of an EU application regarding coastal mapping or are interested on further information on JECMaP are invited to make contact directly with SHOM, Yves-Henri Renhas yves-henri.renhas@shom.fr, or with SMA, Magnus Wallhagen magnus.wallhagen@sjofartsverket.se.

EMODnet phase 3

As mentioned above the EC has launched the EMODnet in order to be able to give easy access to marine data, of the EU member states coastal waters, to the society as a whole in the future. The previous phase 1 and the ongoing phase 2 of the EMODnet project should be seen as tests on how a portal on marine data could be achieved. However the third phase of EMODnet, phase 3, is aimed to achieve a more permanent solution of a portal with high resolution marine data including the appointed themes in EMODnet (see also <http://www.emodnet.eu/>):

- Bathymetry
- Geology (including sedimentology data)
- Seabed Habitats
- Chemistry
- Biology
- Physics
- Human Activities

A call for tender regarding high resolution digital terrain model (EMODnet phase 3) are expected to be issued by January 2015. Given that the HOs are interested in taking an active role in providing the EU with relevant bathymetry data it is now the time for each member state to decide upon their involvement. The suggestion is that the HOs should organize themselves on the basis of the Regional Hydrographic Commission to be ready to respond to a call for tender. For the BSHC it is recommended that this would be coordinated through the BSBDWG and use the already existing Baltic Sea Bathymetry Database (BDSB) as a delivery platform to EMODnet. Even if there are still many unsolved issues such as a suitable business model and the complication for some countries that high resolution bathymetry data is classified within their territorial waters, it is still essential to see that EU HOs have an important role to play when it comes to sustainable quality controlled data deliveries and have updating regimes in place.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the BSHC continues to monitor the ongoing work within the EC through participation in the future IHO-EU Network. Sweden (Magnus Wallhagen) is willing to continue to represent the BSHC. It is also recommended that each and every EU member state consider their involvement in possible future applications when call for tenders are published through DG MARE.

The Commission is invited to

- Endorse the proposal to select France as the chair for the IHO-EU network
- Note that BSHC MS interested to take part of an EU application regarding coastal mapping or are interested on further information on JECMaP are invited to make contact directly with SHOM, Yves-Henri Renhas yves-henri.renhas@shom.fr, or with SMA, Magnus Wallhagen magnus.wallhagen@sjofartsverket.se.
- Recommend each and every member state to decide upon their involvement in the future EMODnet phase 3 and endorse the proposal that BSBDWG would act as a coordinator for the Baltic Sea and that BSBD is used as a delivery platform.