



# Press Release

## IMO RATIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC CHART MANDATE BY 2012 SIGNALS NEW ERA OF SAFER AND MORE EFFICIENT NAVIGATION SAYS UKHO

Tuesday 09 June 2009

The International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) decision to introduce a carriage requirement for Electronic Chart Display and Information Systems (ECDIS) beginning in 2012 will promote efficient voyage planning and safer conduct of navigation, according to UK National Hydrographer and Deputy Chief Executive of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office, Rear Admiral Ian Moncrieff.

In a statement following the recent meeting of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) where this amendment to SOLAS Chapter V was formally adopted, Admiral Moncrieff said;

"Elements supporting this milestone decision include the comprehensive DNV report of 2007 on the risk reduction benefits of ECDIS and the IHO commitment by all its member states to deliver adequate global ENC coverage by 2010. Both these elements were recognised by the IMO at NAV54 last year and the MSC has now endorsed their recommendation to introduce a carriage requirement and adopted the necessary changes to the SOLAS regulations"

"Importantly, the maritime community now has certainty over timescales for implementation and any ambiguities between what is official and unofficial data, and can or can't be used to fulfil the SOLAS carriage requirement for charts and publications, will now be cleared up. The IHO is in the process of adopting a useful reference document (to be published as S-66) based on the publication "Facts about electronic charts and carriage requirements" which has been jointly produced by both RENCs. This document gives clear and unequivocal guidance to anyone seeking to understand the rules and terminology associated with ECDIS and ENCs.



The Admiral added, "70% of navigation is preparation, and the ability to reliably plan routes electronically and in the most optimal way and to readily maintain an up-to-date official all vector electronic chart outfit with minimal user-maintenance will dramatically reduce the workload of seafarers. In the all important remaining 30% of navigation, that is its conduct and execution, ECDIS, in tandem with Radar and other NAVAIDS, sensors and application tools, will give the mariner real-time situational awareness of how much safe water he has at any time and enable optimal routeing for safe and efficient passage."

"We believe the timing is right to harness fully the technology that has been available for some time and we have been working with our colleagues within the hydrographic community to ensure that there is comprehensive, SOLAS carriage-compliant, digital vector chart coverage of major shipping routes and ports in an integrated offering that also meets the international mariners' stated requirements for service and updating. Evidence for this comes from our existing wide-ranging SOLAS users and the take-up of subscriptions from trial licences in our services."

"With regard to ENCs, the UKHO has been supporting the IHO in delivering on its promise to have adequate coverage to support a mandatory official carriage requirement. Since NAV54, AVCS has been constantly upgraded and since its launch in April 08 now comprises more than 9,500 ENCs; a number that is growing monthly. These cover all the world's major trade lanes and over 1,700 of the world's biggest, busiest ports and routes. AVCS is now the most comprehensive and complete ENC service on the market."

"The timescales for implementation of mandation are practical and allow for the increased training in the use of ECDIS, something that we believe is now the most critical issue to be considered. Accordingly, between now and 2012, there are a number of steps and considerations to be made by users to ensure that there is a smooth transition from paper to digital navigation."

Besides being the UK National Hydrographer, the Admiral comes first and foremost from a user perspective with over 20 years of actual seagoing Bridge experience and he is keen that HO support to users considers all their needs beyond solely the provision of chart display. He added that "While we have worked to reproduce the 'look and feel' of our traditional paper charts, using electronic charts requires a subtly different understanding and approach to paper charts. For this reason, and in



response to user feedback and marine reports, the UKHO has developed a training package to teach mariners how to read an ENC and its features in comparison to a standard nautical paper chart. This has been successfully trialled with a user group of Southampton Port Pilots, and further trials are underway. This offering is seen as complimentary to the IMO STCW ECDIS package and more details will be published soon."

**Ends**

#### **Notes to Editors**

1. UKHO, which is part of the Ministry of Defence, has been charting the world's oceans for more than 200 years with the primary aim of providing navigational services for the Royal Navy and merchant mariners to save and protect lives at sea. In addition it also serves the small craft and leisure mariners and provides a range of consultancy services.
2. UKHO produces a worldwide series of some 3,300 paper nautical charts and 160 publications under the Admiralty brand and has a growing portfolio of Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs). These charts are sold globally and used by nearly 70 per cent of international shipping.
3. UKHO is a Trading Fund which means it is a government agency owned by the MoD with the freedom to trade commercially to generate revenue and cover running costs.
4. UKHO also plays a central role, in support of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, in discharging the navigation element of the UK's Safety of Life at Sea Treaty obligations for waters of UK national responsibility.
5. RENCs (Regional Electronic Navigational Centres) are based on the principles of the IHO/IMO and WEND. A RENC is a governmental body whose role is to collect all official ENC information into a seamless database. Currently two RENCs exist in Europe. Primar - based in Stavanger, Norway and IC-ENC based in the UK. Combined, the two RENCs have access to most of the worlds ENCs, actively participate in international standard bodies and general strive to increase the take-up of ENCs worldwide.
6. AVCS brings together Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) from national hydrographic offices around the world and new ENC coverage produced by UKHO in co-operation with Foreign Governments to provide comprehensive, official, worldwide coverage.

[www.ukho.gov.uk](http://www.ukho.gov.uk)

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For further information please contact:

Neil McDonald  
[neil.mcdonald@beattiegrou.com](mailto:neil.mcdonald@beattiegrou.com)

01698 787855 / 07725 466737

Kimberley Hamilton  
[kimberley.hamilton@beattiegrou.com](mailto:kimberley.hamilton@beattiegrou.com)

01698 78 78 58/ 07525 855 422

