

BSHC 12th Conference

INT Status for MRG Baltic Sea

12 June 2007

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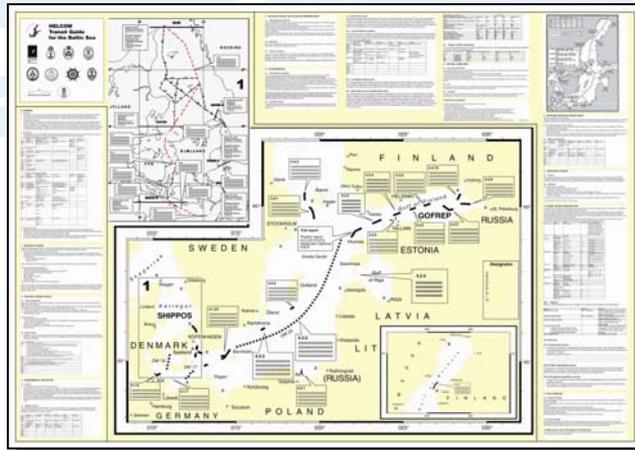
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Background:

The **Mariner's Routeing Guide Baltic Sea** has been prepared by the HELCOM Expert Working Group on Transit Routeing (HELCOM Transit Route EWG) and printed by Germany.



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EWG proposal:

The EWG had in their 10th meeting in Helsinki 9-10 May 2007. Following is an extract of the Draft Minutes of the Meeting.

"The meeting discussed the possibilities of obtaining an INT status for the HELCOM Transit Guide for the Baltic Sea and observed that this is not in line with the existing IHO recommendation. The meeting agreed that there is a need to revise the IHO recommendation and invited the Contracting Parties to contact the national representatives in the Baltic regional offices of IHO with this respect. Additionally, the Meeting invited Finland to address this issue at the Exhibition during the IHO XVIIth Conference in May 2007 in Monaco, where the Guide will be presented."

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Discussion:

The EWG meeting refers to the IHO publication S-49 (published 1985). In the Chapter 2.2.5 there is a statement that the MRG is not recommended to be an "INT" series of product. Any clear reason for that is not given.

This issue has been discussed via e-mail about one year ago between the chair of BSICC, the secretary of CSPCWG and some experts. Some conclusion seems to be that there is only a little advantage in allocating INT numbers for MRG.

The reasons for not to have an INT number have been listed in the table below.

At the EWG meeting above there were opinions that INT status would be useful for this kind on official charts. There are listed some counter arguments relevant especially for the Baltic Sea.

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Discussion (cont.):

Arguments <u>not</u> to have INT number	Counter arguments (discussed at the EWG meeting)
INT charting is mainly about producing harmonized schemes of overlapping charts over wide areas, for SOLAS vessels trading internationally. By their nature, MRG are limited to specific, comparatively small geographical areas.	Baltic Sea is larger than a "small geographic area".
The MRG do not form schemes and are not part of SOLAS carriage requirements.	INT number does not itself indicate mandatory carriage requirement. These charts may however be included to the national lists of required charts.
They include a lot of text that does not make them suitable for bi-lingual versions. Consequently, an adoption of a MRG will need extensive alteration between different producers with different languages.	This Baltic MRG is intended to be published only in English language.
The text is generally derived from the producer's own non-INT (national) publications. Consequently, an adoption of a MRG will need extensive alteration between different producers due to the different national publications being referenced.	In this case it has been agreed that Germany will coordinate all updates. The EWG has nominated responsible members who will deliver their updates to Germany.

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Discussion (cont.):

Arguments <u>not</u> to have INT number	Counter arguments (discussed at the EWG meeting)
S-49 (or its successor) will help to harmonize styles; however, because of the different nature of the areas, there would always need to be scope for some inventiveness in how to portray particular situations as clearly as possible.	There are local differences on different sea areas which may have effects to the layout of different MRGs. However, this should not be an obstacle to have common recommendations on the content and lay-out of the MRGs.
Being non-INT is not likely to be any impediment to exchange of reformat, as it is common place for HOs to exchange non-INT reformat by bilateral arrangement.	Are there any copyright or other problems with the Baltic Sea MRG?
MRG are a part of the non-essential products which HOs add to their range of nautical publications (such as leisure products, routing charts, etc). As such, too strict a specification may not be welcome.	Especially the EWG believes this as a service to the mariners. The situation at the Baltic Sea has been changed during the past years; new systems and co-operation (VTS, AIS, SRS, routing systems, ice navigation co-operation) has been introduced. It is important to pass this kind of new information reliably and efficiently and cheaply to the users. The MRG is seen as a useful means for this.

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Proposal:

Finland is asking for a clarification if the IHO recommendations should be revised to allow this kind of chart to have an INT number.

If yes then the IHB may be asked to initiate the revision of the S-49.

Perhaps it may be feasible to establish a special number series for this kind of charts.