Different Destiny

Hydrography is en route to different destinies in different fields. It’s an exciting journey that originates from less poetic causes. The low oil price, for instance, is having quite some consequences for the hydrographic sector. Because of the low price the search for new oil & gas fields is not a priority, resulting in a lot less work for survey companies for exploration purposes. No one knows what the oil price will do, as today more factors than ever weigh in establishing the oil price compared to years ago. This is a reason why the oil & gas may stay volatile from quite some time. Also, from 2009 on, when the global economic crisis started, governments have slashed budgets throughout the public sector, leaving fewer funds for surveying and resurveying for nautical charting. And although economies seem to be recovering throughout Europe, the United States and other parts of the world, it’s not very likely that budgets will increase dramatically soon.

Still, spring is on its way in this part of the world and that is always a time of optimism– and I already mentioned that it is an exciting journey for hydrography. Spring is also traditionally the time of conferences and tradeshows. At a large offshore wind conference in Denmark I met many hydrographic companies that were reasonably optimistic about the entrepreneurial opportunities in the field of renewable energy in general and offshore wind specifically. Despite the crisis, this field of application has seen major growth over the past few years. Offshore wind has reached an installed capacity of 7GW in Europe and according to Ernst & Young forecasts in their report Offshore Wind in Europe – Walking the tightrope to success of March 2015, the capacity will triple to 23.5GW in the coming decade. This will surely be a task that will have great impact on all separate parts of the value chain in offshore wind projects. It looks like surveying is creating a major role for itself in that chain: not just for the initial surveys to identify the best possible site, but also for resurveying in maintenance and monitoring of that 7GW (and fast growing) capacity of wind energy.

This issue of *Hydro International* contains a preview of the Ocean Business event that will be held from 14-16 April at the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton, UK. Ocean Business has already grown into a key marketing point on the two-yearly calendar of tradeshows in the field of hydrography and oceanography. I am sure that during Ocean Business – on the show floor – and during Offshore Survey – the conference part – many of the discussions will focus on new opportunities and new destinies for hydrography. We would very much like to be included in those discussions. During the Ocean Business event there will be ample opportunity to meet up with the team of Hydro International, so please give us your feedback, remarks and suggestions or just stop by at Stand R4 to catch up. And of course if you’re not in Southampton this year, there’s always the open invite to email me at durk.haarsma@geomares.nl to let me know what you think the destiny of hydrography will be!

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