

Hydrographic Society Benelux

HSB and Flemish Hydrography at Nieuwpoort (Belgium)

In order for the Hydrographic Society Benelux (HSB) to celebrate the international Hydrographic Day (21 June 2008), a workshop was held on 20 June by the HSB in Belgium in cooperation with the Flemish Hydrography department of the Agency for Maritime Services and Coast of the Flemish region in Belgium. The Flemish Hydrography department provided logistical support for this celebration. The workshop was hosted in the port of Nieuwpoort at the Belgium coast (WGS84: N 51.08.15, E 02.44.50). After a welcome word from the HSB president Rob Van Luijnenburg, Professor Alain De Wulf (the HSB chairman for the day) opened the event with Dr Nathalie Balcaen, adjunct-head of the Flemish Hydrography.

The program began with a lunch trip onboard the *Seastar* in the port of Nieuwpoort, which coincided with the opening event of the exhibition *Water-Wind-Walking* in the city of Nieuwpoort. Information on port maintenance and expansion investments made by the department of Flemish Hydrography was also provided.

The scientific program of the workshop consisted of four lectures. The Belgian embedding of the Flemish Hydrography by Dr Nathalie Balcaen, Adjunct-head of the Department of Flemish Hydrography. Flemish Hydrography is responsible for gathering data for shipping and other marine purposes, offshore activities, research, environmental protection, tide and weather and climate forecasts (Web Reference 1).

Sand and sludge transport on the Belgian Continental Shelf by Dries Van den Eynde of the Management Unit of North Sea Mathematical Models (MUMM) (Web Reference 2). The 'triple M' strategy includes: modelling ecosystems of the North Sea; monitoring or collecting marine information required to validate models; and management, representing Belgium in a number of inter-governmental conventions dealing with the protection of the marine environment.

Hydrographic and geophysical applications on Belgian waterways by Geert Moerkerke, Head of the Business Unit, Flanders of the private company G-tec NV (Web Reference 3). The recently founded Business Unit Flanders cell is executing different projects in Belgium consisting of specialized surveying and geophysical studies.

Belgian Hydrography abroad: Survey on environmental aspects of the project Koniombo Nickel Processing Plant - Dredging works by Alex Steffen, Head of the Survey Department of dredging company Jan De Nul (Web Reference 4). Jan De Nul Group, operating worldwide, is specialised in dredging and land reclamation, rock placing, trenching, rock dumping, quay walls, marine-related civil engineering and large-scale environmental remediation projects.

The journey ended with a reception provided by Flemish Hydrography. More than 50 people, most of them HSB members, attended this successful event.