

Thanks, Farewell and Welcome



The biggest change in hydrography in recent years occurred last week at the International Hydrographic Bureau in Monaco. Boxes were probably packed, they were brought in and out, briefings were held for the staff, introductions prepared and interviews held. All because the keys to the highest office in hydrography were handed over to the next Secretary-General Mathias Jonas by Captain Robert Ward. The new Secretary-General was elected earlier this year and officially took office on 1 September 2017. He replaced Robert Ward who had held the position of President and Secretary-General for the last five years. Robert Ward looks back on the ten years he served the International Hydrographic Organisation at the harbour of Monaco – and on the many, many places he visited all over the world - in the [Insiders View feature](#).

It's from this place that I want to salute Captain Ward and thank him on behalf of the hydrographic community, and therefore many of our readers, for all the good work that he has done for the industry. Robert Ward has been instrumental in creating the positive and thriving atmosphere that surrounds the outlook on hydrography these days. Robert Ward saw the big picture of hydrography and was able to put a dot on the horizon, trying at the same time to steer the tanker of the IHO toward the right course while never losing sight of all the dangers and opportunities around the ship called hydrography. He combined that with an ability to go to the right places at the right time and talking to the right influencers. That resulted in awareness among a group much bigger than our own little global community about how hydrography is way more than making charts for safe seafaring.

One of his last achievements was the establishment, together with NOAA and members of the US delegation, of the Working Group on Marine Geospatial Information during the last session of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information (UN-GGIM) in New York, this August. This new Working Group is the exponent of a repeated hammering on the importance of the oceans in the whole of the geospatial frame and, therefore, the importance of hydrography.

Is there nothing left to do? Oh sure, there's more awareness to create, there's more effort to be put in outreach and there's room for even more influence. But rest assured, with Mathias Jonas we have a new Secretary-General who has a very clear, down-to-earth view on the practice of hydrography and a very amicable way of interacting at all levels, reaching his goals through his knowledge and personality. We will carry an interview with the new Secretary-General soon in *Hydro International* to inform you of everything that he has already planned. But for now, suffice to say thank you once more to Robert Ward for his enduring efforts for hydrography. I really hope that the community will be able to benefit – in whatever capacity- from his knowledge and vision for many years to come! A warm welcome to Mathias Jonas and I wish him all the best with his endeavours for the coming years!