

Building a New National Hydrographic Service: the Italian-Lebanese Collaboration

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SUMMARY

The history of nautical documentation can be traced back to the earliest days of navigation. Such information used to be passed by word of mouth from generation to another. Usually, it was kept secret and was certainly been interwoven with tales of adventure and unusual encounters.

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) defines Hydrography as the description of the physical features of the navigable portion of the earth's surface, with special reference to their use for the safety of navigation. A crucial date is the 1st of July 2002, when the revised Chapter V of the Annex to Safety of Life at Sea International Convention (SOLAS) entered into force, thus rooting the hydrographic services into International Legislation, in recognition to their importance for safety of navigation. Considering hydrography's long history and its importance, this recent development really deserves some attention.

The importance of the marine sector will mount in Lebanon over the next decades. The Institutions will be the critical enablers in order to achieve sustainable marine management. Hence, the need to strengthen the marine base knowledge, skills and capacities of individuals and organizations is becoming a priority.

The capacity building project of the Lebanese Hydrographic Service was created by Italy, with the Italian Hydrographic Institute as the main technical actor, in order to support Lebanon and guide it through the creation of an independent National Hydrographic Service within the international standards and become the Primary Nautical Chart Authority (PCA) for Lebanon.

Giving to the nation of Lebanon an independent hydrographic capacity ensuring the necessary safety of navigation is essential for all institutional development, enabling the future growing of the

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maritime business and encouraging tourism.

The work wants to highlight the activity performed and the future plans between Lebanon and Italy in order to build an independent Lebanese Hydrographic Service.

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