

# WORLD MARITIME RESCUE NEWS

*The newsletter of the International Maritime Rescue Federation*

IMRF General Newsletter Volume 1 issue 1

## IMRF Newsletter First Edition



At the World Maritime Rescue Congress in Göteborg, Sweden, held from 4th to 8th June 2007, the transformation of International Lifeboat Federation (ILF) into the new **International Maritime Rescue Federation** (IMRF) was formally completed. To mark this significant event, we are now pleased to announce the launch of our new newsletter "International Maritime Rescue News". This newsletter will be issued electronically to all interested parties who have signed up on our web site and who have elected to receive newsletters. In this new newsletter we hope to highlight the main activities of the IMRF and present an on-going summary of issues and events from across the Maritime Rescue community world-wide.

We also plan to issue a second newsletter, specifically designed for representatives of the member organisations of the IMRF. The Members' Newsletter will contain more focused articles, specific operational and technically oriented information, published papers, updates from IMRF Special Interest and Regional Development Groups, accounts of notable search and rescue operations, exercises and international events, in fact any item which would be of specific interest to search and rescue operators.

Please feel free to share this public newsletter with anyone who you think may be interested. We actively encourage you to refer anyone with an interest in maritime rescue matters to our [Website](#) and to ask them to [signup](#). They can then choose to subscribe to this free email newsletter, or, indeed, to become more involved in our organisation and support our activities.

For more information about joining the IMRF as a member please review our [membership section](#).

## World Maritime Rescue Congress

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The first **World Maritime Rescue Congress**, which incorporated the 20th International Lifeboat Conference (ILC) drew to close on June 8, 2007. The delegates representing the world maritime rescue services committed that their organizations would increase their support and involvement in the work of the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF).



Following a week of interesting presentations and discussions workshops, delegates identified a number of key initiatives and areas for common development. IMRF remains steadfast to the two pillars upon which its predecessor organization - International Lifeboat Federation (ILF) was built.

- Promoting cooperation between the world maritime rescue services
- Assisting new SAR organizations to become established where no rescue services currently exist.

## New Board of Trustees

The members of the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) met in Gothenburg, Sweden on June 8th 2007 for the Quadrennial General Meeting. The World Maritime Rescue Congress, and was the first official gathering of members since the recent re-structuring of the 83 year old International Lifeboat Federation (ILF). At the meeting delegates elected the following new trustees and directors for the organization:

Mr. **Brook Archbold** (New Zealand)  
Capt. **Udo Helge Fox** (Germany)  
Mr. **Hamish McDonald** (United Kingdom)  
Capt. **Jiahui Song** (China)  
Mr. **Michael Vlasto** (United Kingdom)  
Capt. **Rolf Westerstrom** (Sweden)

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Mr. **Sip Wiebenga** (The Netherlands)

## June 2007 - A Month To Remember



June 2007 will certainly be a month which our outgoing IMRF Chairman, Capt Rolf Westerstrom, will not forget easily. Acting both as chairman of International Council and more recently as Chairman of the IMRF Board of Trustees, Rolf has capably navigated our organisation from its formal incorporation through the transformation process, which concluded at the official launch during World Maritime Rescue Congress in Gothenburg. Of course, as Chief Executive Officer of the Swedish Sea Rescue Society, our Congress' host organisation, Rolf also led the teams which prepared so well for this magnificent event.

While all of this was happening, other SSRS teams were busy planning and building their brand new facility at Langedrag, overlooking the beautiful Gothenburg Archipelago. Indeed, preparations for the Congress had to be temporarily halted, just some eight weeks before the event, to allow the office move to take place.

As if this was not enough to take on, 1st of June 2007, marked the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Swedish Sea Rescue Society. This was celebrated in style with a centenary dinner for almost 600 guests, held in the presence of Their Majesties, King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia, of Sweden. Over 70 visiting search and rescue craft turned up to participate in action packed weekend celebrations.

Great credit is due to Rolf and to the each and every member of all of the SSRS teams who made the event such a success and who warmly welcomed their visitors with typical Swedish hospitality. Indeed we could fill three newsletters if we were to thank everyone individually, as is truly deserved. A very special thanks is also due to Betsy and the Westerstrom family who has been firmly at Rolfs side through all of the preparations, and through the event itself. Of course, on top of thi significant additional workload, SSRS had to continue to its core business - to provide its vital life saving services along the

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Swedish Coastline. Not bad for a small but very efficient organisation. As they say - If you want to get something done, ask a busy person.

Words can not properly express the gratitude due to Rolf, to his team, to his family and to the Board of SSRS for their phenomenal contribution to the success of the new IMRF and the first World Maritime Rescue Congress. We are certainly delighted that Rolf will continue as a member of the new Board of Trustees and will take up specific responsibility for external fundraising activities. - WELL DONE!

## Our New Chairman

Mr Michael Vlasto, Operations Director of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and a Trustee of IMRF since 2006, now takes over as the new Chairman of the Board of Trustees, with effect from 8th June 2007. Having qualified as a master mariner, with commercial seagoing experience on merchant and passenger vessels, Michael, has dedicated much of his subsequent career to the development of search and rescue. Following many years of operational experience at the "wet end" he now has direct responsibility for over 230 rescue stations and over 5,000 rescue volunteers. He has been active in ILF and IMRF affairs for many years and has represented the Organisation at many international events. As one of the two continuing Trustees from the previous Board, Michael is well positioned to take over the "watch" for the next four years of IMRF's development.



### **A MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW CHAIRMAN**

Friends,

I am honoured and proud to have been elected as the new Chairman of the International Maritime Rescue Federation. Having been associated with the International Lifeboat Federation for many years, I am delighted to be entrusted with the responsibility of taking IMRF through the next important phase in its development.

As you all know, we have just returned from a very successful World Maritime Rescue Congress at Gothenburg, Sweden at which we concluded the

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transformation of the International Lifeboat Federation into the new International Maritime Rescue Federation. I would like to pay tribute to the great work of our colleagues on the International Council whom you elected to oversee this transformation process and to design our new organisation structure and constitution. This has been a difficult task and the Council members have worked hard to ensure that a proper balance was achieved between the many sensitive issues involved. The fact that their proposals were given unanimous support of member delegates at the Quadrennial General Meeting and indeed the fact that so many of our traditional ILF member organisations have now enrolled under the new formal IMRF membership scheme speaks volumes for the success of their work.

We owe a great debt of gratitude to our Congress hosts, the Swedish Sea Rescue Society. The World Maritime Rescue Congress was a very memorable and significant event, at which we were treated to the best of Swedish hospitality. The large attendance at the Congress and particularly the great turnout of so many rescue craft was a fitting international tribute to our colleagues in SSRS in the week of their 100th anniversary celebrations. On behalf of IMRF, I would like to re-echo our heartiest congratulations to SSRS on achieving this great milestone and to wish them every success for the coming 100 years.

I am also proud to take over the helm, as Chairman, from my good friend Captain Rolf Westerstrom. Having worked closely with Rolf, as an IMRF Trustee, over the last few years, I am deeply aware of his enormous personal contribution in leading the International Council through its difficult decisions and more recently taking over as Chairman of the Board of Trustees. His enthusiasm and vision, which are firmly rooted in his deep personal belief in what IMRF stands for, have been key factors in moving IMRF successfully forward through its formative phase. I am pleased that he will continue to serve IMRF as a Trustee and I look forward to working with closely with him.

The election of our new board of Trustees by the member organisations at the recent Quadrennial General Meeting was also a significant developmental milestone for our organisation. Our new Trustees have all served on the International Council and are all familiar with the challenges and opportunities facing our organisation. They come from many different regions and career backgrounds and each brings significant experience to the new Board. I look forward to working with the new board and, on your behalf, I congratulate them on their election.

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There is a lot of work to be done and the trustees will be meeting regularly to review progress and ensure that we are making the best use of the resources we have. Priorities discussed at the Congress include the ongoing development of the Regional Groups, website improvements and better communication to the membership and these are all on the work list. Increasing our membership and further developing our fundraising activity are also very necessary. The opportunities for us to make a difference are there and I am sure that working together we can achieve success.

**Michael Vlasto**  
Chairman

The ***International Maritime Rescue Federation*** (IMRF) unites the world's foremost maritime search and rescue organizations in one truly global body. Our member organizations openly share their life saving expertise and technology and freely cooperate with one another to achieve a common humanitarian aim: *Preventing loss of life on the world's waters.*

To learn more about the benefits of membership in the IMRF view our [membership details](#) page.

[IMRF Membership](#)

Please feel free to [contact the IMRF Secretariat](#) for more information.