

Ship's callsign masking scheme as implemented by European Countries participating in E-SURFMAR per Res. 27 (EC-LIX)

As of 1 September 2006, in accordance with Resolution 7 (EC-LVIII) and Resolution 27 (EC-LIX), and in order to protect the identity of Voluntary Observing Ships (VOS) fleets and to assist in resolving real-time monitoring and climate analysis issues, some countries participating in the Surface Marine programme of the Network of European Meteorological Services, EUMETNET (E-SURFMAR) started implementing on a trial basis a common ship's callsign masking scheme for ship reports distributed on GTS in FM-13 SHIP format.

1. Callsign masking

E-SURFMAR *MASK* callsigns (*tttccnn*) are based on the following format: a 3-character prefix (*ttt*) indicating the type of observing station installed onboard the ship; a 2-character string (*cc*) corresponding to the country recruiting the ship; and a 2-character string (*nn*, from 00 to ZZ) allowing to identify up to 1296 VOS for any given type and country. A few prefixes were allocated for the following types of observing stations: TBW for Turbowin conventional VOS stations; AVO, BAR, BAT, MIN, MPD for Avos, Baros, Batos, Minos and Met Pod Automated Weather Stations, respectively; IDD for Iridium Deck Drifters. The country code may be the 2-character ISO country code (ISO 3166-1:2006) but this is not mandatory. The probability to have an E-SURFMAR *MASK* identical to a *REAL* ITU callsign is extremely small. In such a case, the corresponding *MASK* would be frozen. Since September 2006, about 125 such *MASK* callsigns have been allocated to VOS ships participating in the E-SURFMAR programme.

2. Provision of masks

In accordance to the rules proposed by the JCOMM Ship Observations Team (SOT) Task Team on Callsign masking and encoding, the E-SURFMAR Management team regularly provides JCOMMOPS with a cross-reference list of *MASK* vs. *REAL* callsigns. In particular, this list is required by the data centres who are using real-time VOS reports, and need access to the related metadata records from the WMO Publication No. 47. It must be noticed here that, thanks to the knowledge of the country code - included in the *MASK* -, the national focal point for VOS Programmes can be easily identified (i.e. access to WMO Publication No. 47 metadata is not required) and contacted if necessary. For example, this would facilitate feedback from data users to VOS operators in order to undertake corrective actions for ships reporting systematic errors (e.g. through the Quality Information Relay of JCOMMOPS).

3. Provision of WMO Publication No. 47 metadata

WMO Publication No. 47 metadata from VOS participating in the E-SURFMAR programme (half of the world's fleet) are made available on a password protected web site. Metadata from non E-SURFMAR VOS may also be hosted on this website as is already the case.

In addition, the E-SURFMAR Management team is providing the WMO Secretariat on a quarterly basis with WMO Publication No. 47 metadata from E-SURFMAR VOS. Ships are identified through their *REAL* callsigns and their IMO numbers. *MASK* callsigns are not submitted with the WMO Publication No. 47 metadata.
