

H.S.H. Prince Rainier III of Monaco

By Rear Admiral Giuseppe Angrisano, retired President of the IHB,
on behalf of the Directing Committee

His Serene Highness Prince Rainier III of Monaco passed away in Monaco on 6 April 2005 at 06:35 after a reign lasting 56 years. He is now buried in the Cathedral of Monaco next to his wife, Princess Grace. The President of the Directing Committee of the IHB, Vice Admiral Maratos, sent to his successor H.S.H. Prince Albert II and to the Prince's family most sincere condolences on behalf of the IHB and of the entire international hydrographic community, which was present in Monaco at the time of this mourning period for the 3rd Extraordinary International Hydrographic Conference (11-15 April). The IHB Directing Committee, representing the IHO, attended the State funeral on Friday 15 April.

H.S.H. Prince Rainier III deserves the sincere gratitude of Hydrographers for having so well and so carefully supported the International Hydrographic Organisation in a logical continuation of the intentions of Prince Albert I, his marine scientist forefather who invited the Organisation to establish its headquarters in Monaco in 1921 and of H.S.H. Prince Louis II (his grandfather)

who provided the IHB with brand new premises in 1931.

Prince Rainier's main objectives were to make Monaco an independent, prosperous and modern State. He successfully attained these objectives by promoting industry, tourism, culture, and sciences at home and by enhancing the



membership of Monaco in international organisations. Among these, the marine sciences organisations took a paramount place. It is sufficient to recall: Monaco's participation in the activities of the Oceanographic Institute that operates within the prestigious Oceanographic Museum, the success of the International Commission for the Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean (CIESM) of which the Prince of Monaco is the President, the establishment in 1976 of a tripartite agreement with France and Italy called RAMOGE for the preservation of the marine environment, the initiative of the Convention of the Marine Mammals Sanctuary in the Mediterranean, the hospitality offered to the Marine Laboratory of the International Atomic Energy Agency and many others. From the beginning H.S.H. Prince Rainier always showed a keen interest in the IHO, the intergovernmental, worldwide organisation of which Monaco is the Host Country and the Depositary of its Convention.

H.S.H. Prince Rainier III was a great developer and in his country he was called '*Le Prince Bâtisseur*' (the builder Prince). During his reign the face of Monaco changed several times: almost one third more of its territory was reclaimed from the sea, the railway was put entirely underground and the station was rebuilt twice, an Olympic stadium and a commercial centre were created, factories, offices, new hotels and banks were built as well as a new Forum for Congresses in 2001. Eventually, in 2002, the Port of Monaco was considerably enlarged by the addition of a floating breakwater, a solution that has been admired by the many port developers who have come to see it. Among the new constructions in 1997 (the year of the celebration of the 700 years of presence of the Grimaldi family as Princes of Monaco), the Prince inaugurated the new premises of the International Hydrographic Bureau, located at Quai Antoine I, which

has 1,300 square metres office space and a terrace of about 250 square metres on the 4th floor. These premises have proved to be perfect for the needs of the IHO.

H.S.H. Prince Rainier always participated in the opening ceremonies of the IHO Conferences and did so from 1937 when he was a 14-year old Hereditary Prince and he continued to be present amongst the hydrographers on those occasions until the 2002 Conference. In his opening speech at that Conference, which unfortunately was the last one where he was present, he expressed his satisfaction on the increase in size of the IHO (71 Members), for the IHO's contribution to the GEBCO, for the liaison that the IHO had established with CIESM and RAMOGE. He added that Monaco deeply valued the recognition given by the United Nations Organisation that granted the IHO Observer Status at its General Assembly. (*Indeed that recognition was obtained thanks to the initiative of the Government of the Principality of Monaco and the work of its Permanent Mission at the UNO*). He also praised the IHO for the implementation of technical co-operation programmes and for having accepted the challenge to undertake an in-depth study into strategic planning. He encouraged the IHO to develop solutions to make the use of electronic charts operational in all the waters of the planet. And finally he recommended that the IHO continue to contribute to safeguard human life at sea and to protect the marine environment.

That speech, which reflected interest, pride and a deep attachment to an Organisation which has been present in Monaco for 83 years, can be considered the hydrographic *will* of a great Prince who will be for ever remembered by hydrographers and oceanographers worldwide as the man who helped the IHO to grow in size and importance.