



ICPC News Release

25 April 2016

The “Voice of the Global Subsea Cable Critical Infrastructure” resonates in Hamburg at the 2016 ICPC Plenary

LYMINGTON, United Kingdom—*The Case for Cables— Protecting and Enhancing the Global Environment with Power and Communications*, was the central theme to the successful and well-attended [International Cable Protection Committee \(ICPC\)](#) Plenary meeting which was held in Hamburg, Germany from 12-14 April. With 63 Member organisations in attendance and representing 29 countries, the 49th annual ICPC Plenary gathered together influential people from the undersea cable industry to convene and exchange ideas. The success of the 2016 ICPC Plenary is largely attributed to all its Members—from every sector of the industry—joining together, being heard, and cementing the ICPC in its status as the industry’s international “voice” for the protection of undersea telecommunication and power cables.

ICPC is grateful for the support from [Alcatel-Lucent Submarine Networks](#) for hosting the event and sponsoring the Welcome Reception. ICPC acknowledges its appreciation to Mertech Marine for hosting the gala dinner.

In addition to the full agenda of invited papers and presentations, the ICPC is also thankful to both Judge Rüdiger Wolfrum and Professor Robert Beckman for their informative and insightful speeches that were delivered on 13th April at the launch of the open assembly:

- Judge Rüdiger Wolfrum—a distinguished Judge on the International Law of the Sea Tribunal—gave a well-informed talk on the relationship of submarine cables and other activities in the oceans. His remarks included ideas on how submarine cables could better enlist the help of States related to individual cable systems and cable ships that hold the key to enforcing the rights of cable owners to States and the organisations that seek to encroach on the freedom to lay and repair international cables. These ideas were echoed in remarks by Professor Robert Beckman of the Centre of International Law of the National University of Singapore who examined the idea of national registration of cables that hold a genuine link to a State.

Key highlights from the 2016 ICPC Plenary included:

- An informative and professional presentation on the “Regulatory Update on Cable Repair and Laying in Indonesia Waters,” delivered in an excellent lecture by the Ministry of Maritime Coordination from Djakarta and the Transportation Attaché of the Indonesia Embassy in London. The welcome news included the message that the permitting time for cable repairs in Indonesia has been dramatically reduced; cabotage exceptions to allow non-Indonesia flag vessels within territorial and archipelagic waters can be obtained for a one-year period in

advance; and cabotage does not apply to repair of international cables in the Indonesia Exclusive Economic Zone. The cable industry was invited to test these changes and provide feedback to the Ministry of Maritime Coordination. These changes are a welcome reflection on the new emphasis in Indonesia on smart regulatory processes that show Indonesia is a willing partner in expanding submarine cable access to the nation and the region.

- In a conducted interview with Michael Lodge, Legal Counsel & Deputy to the Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the exchange provided a comprehensive and informative summary of the activities of the ISA. In his comments, Mr. Lodge highlighted the joint achievements of the ISA and ICPC under the MoU signed in 2010, the legal context of the 'due regard' obligations of seabed users in the cable and mining arena whose activities in the Area are protected under UNCLOS, and how the ICPC and ISA may set out recommendations for achieving jointly developed goals.
- A series of legal and environmental presentations echoed the current international interest in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). Pursuant to authority granted by the United Nations General Assembly, a Preparatory Commission (Prepcom) has been established to examine the possibility of a binding implementation treaty under the United Nations Law of the Sea Convention concerning biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction. The ICPC is engaged to provide information on the social, economic, and political impact of submarine cables to the world community and the historical benign impact of submarine cables in the marine environment. Several speakers commented on the strong evidentiary basis in science demonstrating the minimal impact of submarine cables and the importance of preserving the freedoms to lay and repair submarine cables on the high seas as a crucial component of the world's critical international and national submarine cable infrastructure.

About ICPC: The [International Cable Protection Committee](http://www.iscpc.org) was formed in 1958 and its primary goal is to promote the safeguarding of international submarine cables against man-made and natural hazards. The organisation provides a forum for the exchange of technical, legal and environmental information about submarine cables and, with 154 members from over 60 nations, including cable operators, owners, manufacturers, industry service providers, as well as governments, it is the World's premier submarine cable organisation. For further information about ICPC, visit: www.iscpc.org or send an e-mail to: secretary@iscpc.org.

Contact:

Keith Schofield

+44 7836 249376

general.manager@iscpc.org