

Minutes of the 19th WGCEF 2013 Annual Meeting

Luxembourg, 4th October 2013



Members Present:

Will Lang (UK, Chair), Evelyn Cusack (Ireland, Vice-Chair)

Klaus Baenke (Germany), Brice Biere (Luxembourg), Christian Csekits (Austria), Jos Diepeveen (Netherlands), Karen-Helen Doublet (Norway), Tessy Eiffener (Luxembourg), Panos Giannopoulos (Greece), Frank Kroonerberg (Netherlands), André-Charles Letestu (Switzerland), Natasa Strelec Mahovic (Croatia), Janez Markosek (Slovenia), Jean Néméghaire (Belgium), Taimi Paljak (Estonia), Antti Pelkonen (Finland), Vida Raliene (Lithuania), Bernard Roulet (France), Knud Jacob Simonsen (Denmark)

Apologies were received from Lola Olmeda (Spain), Andris Viksna (Latvia) and Alessandro Fucello (Italy). Dr Helge Knut (Norway) joined us as an observer. Mr Dick Blaauboer (EUMETNET Forecasting Programme) also joined us as an observer and gave a presentation.

Chairperson's Introduction

The chairman, Dr Will Lang, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking MeteLux for hosting this 2013 meeting. Will noted that an impressive 18 countries were represented at the current meeting. The agenda was agreed, and minutes from the Vilnius 2012 meeting were judged to have been completed.

He invited Ms Martina Reckwerth, Acting Head of Meteolux, to tell us about the Luxembourg National Met Service and some of its activities.

Martina welcomed the group to Luxembourg and hoped that we would have a successful meeting. She described the Luxembourg Met Service and her full presentation is attached. As in all NMSs the full-time observers are being phased out and now all new forecasters will also be observers on their shift in the Airport. Meteolux has 9 full-time and 2 part-time forecasters. There are 5 consultant meteorologists of which 2 are in climatology and 3 in forecasting.

Chairperson's report.

1) Will opened with a brief description of the significant weather across Britain/Europe since our last meeting and the fact that many times through the year the weather was the leading story in all media.

Spring 2013 in Europe saw our normal weather pattern reversed with a blocking high making it one of the driest springs on record in northwest Europe (this would have a significant effect on growth). March had plenty of snow in NW Europe and blizzard conditions in France. May was very warm in Scandinavia and very cold in Spain.

June: Central Europe had the worst flooding in living memory from continuous heavy rain and the Danube in particular bursting its banks in several locations. Will pointed out that on the positive meteorological side the rain etc was well forecast and there was considerable cross-border cooperation between the relevant NMSs'.

July: A heat-wave at last after six consecutive cold/wet summers for Ireland/Britain/Low Countries/France.....(three years too late for the UK 'media' BarBQ summer!).

2) Will thanked Alessandro for initiating 'cross-border' discussions within this group and urged us to think about how we could effect (day to day) real-time communication between bench forecasters. This would benefit the forecasters, the forecasts and the citizens whom we serve.

3) Will looked forward to Mr Dick Blaauboer's presentation in the afternoon. He briefly summarised the main merits of WGCEF joining EUMETNET. Our main contribution would be to offer our knowledge and expertise as forecasters as the authoritative voice of forecasting in Europe.

4) Climate Science is a very important field of meteorology not only for mankind but for the possible future of planet Earth itself. Will urged forecasters to read and understand the IPCC (summary) reports and suggestions. He said we have a responsibility to brief ourselves and to be able to discuss climate science in the media and to understand the possible impacts of anthropogenic climate change. (Since the recession it has slipped from being the media hot topic but has not lost its importance).

Will then invited each participant, as has become usual at our meetings, to briefly summarise any key

developments at their organisation during the last year. He said that this was the part of our annual meetings he most looked forward to and personally found the most interesting and useful.

Round Table Update

(in the consecutive order of where people were sitting).

Ireland (Evelyn)

- Met Éireann and its forecasters have been plagued by media reporting of spurious seasonal forecasts by 'weather gurus'. Unfortunately one of them had said, inter alia, there was going to be a heat wave this summer and now that is all that is being reported....now general perception is Met É can't do seasonal forecasting but he can!

- September 2013, Met Éireann published a major study on the future of Ireland's climate - "Ireland's climate: the road ahead".

- A large interdepartmental group is currently developing a password controlled website for the delivery of tailored met

Germany (Klaus)

- Reduction in staff numbers continues

Lithuania (Vida)

- Creation of advanced electronic services to enable receiving online customer services of the Lithuanian NWS under Ministry of Environment. This is expected to renew their workstation.

- Have completed a project to advertise and promote the LMHS web site www.meteo.lt

- LMHS held two international training events:

- 1) NOMEKfor Nordic countries
- 2) Satrep for Baltic countries

Estonia (Taimi)

- Estonian Met is investing in new workstations at the end of the year and Taimi looked for suggestions/input based on forecasters' experience.

- They do not have sufficient numbers/two inexperienced young forecasters on radio/TV on Monday & Tuesday explaining the weather.

Denmark (Simon)

- Airspace between Sweden and Denmark has joined together. This has reduced Aviation forecasting staff by 15%.

- Problems in Denmark with independent companies producing forecasts.

- Only one third of income by 2020 will come from Government; two thirds must come from commercial interests. Very challenging for DMI.

Finland (Antti)

- FMI has implemented an open data policy.
- There has been considerable work undertaken on forecaster competencies.

Croatia (Natasa)

- Serious problems with false warnings from amateur 'forecasters' and unfortunately the media are broadcasting these erroneous 'warnings'.
- Down 3 forecasters so very tight scheduling for rosters etc. However at least one maternity leave has been covered.

Austria (Christian)

- ZAMG now has 7 different visual weather systems. Need to streamline!ware, in addition to the Finnish HIRLAM model.
- New forecasters only get a contract for 2 years and must spend 1 year in research.
- Only 1 forecaster for all of Austria at night.
- Interesting weather in Austria in 2013: Broke snow records/even Vienna had 2m snow/6 Mediterranean lows.....Driest summer on record/no ppt in July/first 40degC.

UK (Will)

- Embedded advisor positions established which forecasters give tailored advice to commercial customers.

Luxembourg (Brice)

- Changed name to Meteolux and hosted a large conference on Meteorology and thus became more visible to the public and international meteorological community.
- Have started WMO competency in Aviation/single European Sky
- Have just implemented new model/ the German FeWis system.

Netherlands (Frank)

- Public debate about privatising KNMI eagerly promoted by private companies....but the private companies did not succeed.
- KNMI have to submit to tender from Government.
- Discussion is ongoing on the future of KNMI's aeronautical services, but they are likely to keep them for at least 4-5 years.

France (Bernard)

- Thanks to DWD for ensemble use
- New supercomputer to be set up between September 2013 and March 2014. Ranking 54 in top 500 in world/will be upgraded in 2016.

- Three red alerts this year: Blizzard in Normandy/ Avalanche in Pyrenees/Flooding in Pyrenees.

Switzerland (André-Charles)

- Two new radars have been established in Switzerland to cover some of the valleys/should be an enormous aid in forecasting orographic ppt.
- Three Departments: Hydrology/Weather/Snow.
- One million downloading for weather app.
- Free data policy to be implemented in 2016
- TWMO accessment implemented for forecasters/observers.
- Forecasters move to Zurich in centralisation/do 28 TAFS.

Greece (Panos)

- COSMO project
- Some new people from the army have become forecasters.

Norway (Karen-Helen)

- New model EROM/updated 4 times a day
- Meteorologists add value by editing winds.
- Ability of forecasters to comment on their forecasts/use Twitter/geolocated/interesting new way to comment to public.
- All forecasters are educated in Climate Change (see will's intro...Evelyn)

Belgium (Jean)

- RMI celebrated its 100th anniversary this year (2013)
- New radar has been installed at Jabekecies.
- There continues to be increasing emphasis on nowcasting and are now delivering nowcasting warnings/WV to detect/notice developing CBs.
- Developing GPS network in Belgium.
- Starting LIDARs/4 planned for Belgium
- Multimodel ensemble/probability forecasts/ GLAMEPS.

Newsletter

Bernard apologised to the group that the printed version of the newsletter was inadvertently delayed and was happy to report that the hard-copies were on the way.

All group members expressed their sincere appreciation for all the work done by Bernard, Will and Meteo France in producing the 18th edition of the WGCEF

newsletter. Bernard confirmed that Meteo France would continue to publish the newsletter on behalf of the group. This offer of continued support was warmly accepted.

Website (www.euroforecaster.org)

The main item this year was choosing the new logo. Will thanked Brice's wife for designing three possible options and the group adopted Logo 2 and 3.

Alessandro's suggestion from last year was revisited ie that the site could become a forum for 'real-time' case studies, and the group once again agreed to try using the site for this purpose. The links to other sites and the maps were examined and discussed.

Andre-Charles was thanked for his efforts and enthusiasm in maintaining the website.

Eumetnet Proposals

Will explained the background to the proposal for the group to officially become a Eumetnet Working Group and formally welcomed Dick to our meeting who then gave a very interesting and comprehensive overview of EUMETNET and outlined the role of WGCEF as an official working group for a trial period of two years.

Group Membership

- Like last year we had a brief discussion about expanding the WGCEF membership. Our aim is to get each nation to join the group and in as far as possible to participate in the annual meetings. Will and Evelyn agreed to continue the effort to make contact. In particular Iceland was mentioned by Evelyn, and Will wondered should we ask The Channel Islands and The Isle of Man to send a representative to a meeting. We hope to progress on this during the coming year.
- Evelyn also agreed to try and re-establish contact with the quieter members of the group.
- Will spoke about his efforts to create a WGCEF group on LinkedIn and all agreed it would be worthwhile.
- Frank posed the question 'would we like/consider using commercials on our site? There was a unanimous reply in the negative.

Presentations 2013

Klaus Baehnke (DWD, Germany) – Flooding in Germany in June 2013

Jean Nemeghaire (RMIB, Belgium) – On a Potential Use of Conceptual Models Combined with NWP Data

and Nowcasting Tools for Convective Event Forecasts
Jos Diepeveen (KNMI, Netherlands) – Tricky Winter Weather Situations

Antii Pelkonen (FMI, Finland) – Developing Forecaster Competences: The FMI TopMet Programme
Bernard Roulet (Meteo France) – PCMT New Parametrization of Convection

Tessy Eiffener (MeteoLux, Luxembourg) - Case Study of the Advantages of Non-Hydrostatic vs Hydrostatic Model

Panos Giannopoulos (HNMS, Greece) - Communication of Daily and Seasonal Forecasts in Greece

Christian Csekits (ZAMG, Austria) – The Importance of Conceptual Models in Forecasting Severe Weather

Frank Kroonenberg (KNMI, Netherlands) – Forecasting Tools Made by Forecasters

Date and Place of Next Meeting

André-Charles on behalf of MeteoSuisse has kindly offered to host the 2014 meeting in Geneva (either the 3rd or the 10th October depending on the EUMET-SAT meeting).

Christian suggested that the meeting be held on Day 1 afternoon, Evening discussions at dinner and Day 2 morning. This suggestion was enthusiastically greeted and the meeting voted to consider this proposal in a very favourable light.

Topics for Next Meeting

The time ran out and we were unable to give this serious consideration so the group agreed to conduct the discussion of possible topics for 2014 via email and the website.

Close of the Meeting

The Chair and Vice-Chair once more thanked MeteoLux and also thanked the group members for their participation at the meeting. They then wished all present good luck in both forecasting and weather in the coming year and brought the 2013 meeting to a close.

The general feeling was that we had another excellent meeting with plenty of food for thought and plenty of new ideas to take home. Well done comrades in meteorology!