

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 20th edition of “The European Forecaster”, a newsletter which has always sought to offer something a little different to academic journals or trade publications, with its focus firmly on the forecasting profession itself. Once more the WGCEF kindly thanks Meteo France for their support in publishing this edition. We hope it will find a home in forecast offices across Europe, and that our forecasting colleagues find plenty to interest them within its pages in some of the all-too-brief quieter moments during their operational duties!

As we all know, the modern operational meteorologist is multi-skilled – not just a scientist but an expert decision-maker and communicator who can offer excellent service to our “customers”. We are involved with the latest developments in technology and making use of new sources of information. And we understand that our participation in training, strategic and business matters, and research can be as beneficial as our traditional operational roles. I am very pleased, therefore, to see that the articles in this edition are equally wide-ranging in scope. As ever, we have some excellent case-studies, here concerning a freezing rain event, the “Saint Nicolas” storm, and the catastrophic Balkan floods of May 2014. We have a summary of current thinking around “bow echo” convective phenomena, and presentation of a sophisticated new verification scheme. There are also articles outlining simulation training for forecasters, and our increasing reliance on social media.

Looking back on the last twelve months, it is encouraging to see the WGCEF gaining greater influence and recognition within the European meteorological circles, largely through our involvement in EUMETNET, but also through the dedication of our members. Increasingly our advice and experience is being sought, and the cross-border networks we have formed have allowed us to share knowledge, data and discussions around warnings to the mutual benefit of our organisations and nations, and for Europe as a whole. I am sure that in the coming years, the modest efforts and resources of the WGCEF will continue to clearly demonstrate the merits of collaboration in operational meteorology and in continued development of our forecasting capabilities and skills.

Will Lang
*Chair, WGCEF
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