

Draft Minutes of the 20th Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Co-operation Between European Forecasters (WGCEF)

Friday 3rd October 2014, WMO Building, Geneva, Switzerland



List of Participants

Members: Will Lang (UK, Chair), Andre-Charles Letestu (Switzerland, Host), Klaus Baehnke (Germany), Dick Blaauboer (EUMETNET FP), Christian Csekits (Austria), Jos Diepeveen (Netherlands), Karen-Helen Doublet (Norway), Tessy Eiffener (Luxembourg), Alessandro Fucello (Italy), Bruno Gillet-Chaulet (France), Tim Hewson (ECWMF), Cecilia Karlsson (Finland), Piotr

Manczak (Poland), Janez Markosek (Slovenia), Jean Nemeghaire (Belgium), Lola Olmeda (Spain), Taimi Paljak (Estonia), Antii Pelkonen (Finland), Chryssoula Petrou (Greece), Vida Raliene (Lithuania), Natasa Strelec-Mahovic (Croatia)

Observers and Guests: Daniel Cattani (Switzerland), Pierre Eckert (Switzerland), Knut-Helge Midtboe (Norway), Marcel van Schaik (Netherlands),

Apologies

Evelyn Cusack (Ireland, Vice-Chair), Bernard Roulet (France), Knut-Jacob Simonsen (Denmark)

1. Will opened the meeting and welcomed the participants, with each member then introducing themselves.

2. The agenda was agreed, and actions from the last meeting (newsletter production, arrangement of the next meeting) were judged complete aside from the standing actions to look to increase membership of the group and promote our work.

3. Pierre Eckert, Meteo Suisse Head of Regional Centre, West Switzerland then warmly welcomed the WG to Geneva. He gave an overview of Meteo Suisse's structure, responsibilities and operations. He then made a plea for more forecaster involvement into science and NWP activities, particularly within European working groups. He recognised that

WGCEF involvement in EUMETNET was a positive step towards this goal, but urged group members and their colleagues to do more to engage with other groups.

4. Will then gave his Chairman's address. Looking back on another year of eventful weather across Europe, he noted that forecasters are now increasingly influential outside the meteorological community and routinely involved in big decisions within our governments. So the importance of expressing ourselves correctly and making sure our advice is understood continues to grow. He then noted that Geneva was the home of CERN, and noted some parallels and differences between meteorology and particle physics. In particular, the discovery of the Higgs Boson had achieved great public awareness,

despite the complexity of ideas involved. Meteorology is a more mature and well-understood science, with very tangible outcomes, and we should be able to gain similar understanding of, and support for, our work.

5. There was a discussion around the latest (19th) issue of our Newsletter, 'The European Forecaster', led by Bruno. We agreed that this issue had been the best, and certainly the biggest, yet, and passed on many thanks to Bernard and the publishing team and management at Meteo France for their support. Bruno announced that Meteo France would be able to produce the next three issues of the newsletter. This offer was very gratefully accepted by the group. It was also acknowledged that there should be some planning to find alternative arrangements for the publishing of the 23rd and subsequent newsletters. Tim stated that, as a new member, he thought the Newsletter could have wider distribution and more publicity, to which the group agreed.

6. Andre-Charles gave an update on our website www.euroforecaster.org and we thanked him for his continued maintenance of the site. It was agreed that the site would remain autonomous from EUMETNET sites, but that we would work to strengthen the mutual links between WGCEF and EUMETNET sites. Will mentioned that a WGCEF LinkedIn page had been created, and that he would look to expand membership of this in the next year.

7. Group members then gave short summaries of developments at their respective NMSs in the last year. These summaries are outlines in Annex A below.

8. Dick gave an update on EUMETNET activities, especially within the Forecasting Programme. He explained the structure of the working groups and expert teams and outlined further potential for WGCEF involvement in wider activities.

9. Christian described our strong involvement in, and his leadership of, a EUMETNET Task Team to investigate options for collaboration in the naming of European windstorms. The Team had produced a number of recommendations for the EUMETNET STAC based on substantial input from WGCEF members. A lively discussion followed, demonstrating that there are both pros and cons for not just the collaborative aspects, but whether storms should be named at all. There was a collective feeling, however, that NMSs needed to assert their authority on this issue, else

others will name storms for us and perhaps confuse our severe weather messaging.

10. Members of the Group then gave 10-15 minute presentations on a wide range of relevant topics, including case studies of recent weather, new systems and tools for forecasters, and use of social media. The content of these presentations is available on our website, at www.euroforecaster.org/gpeasy/gpEasy_CMS/Presentations_2014

11. The meeting concluded with a decision on the location and date of the next meeting. Jean Nemeghaire offered to host the 2015 meeting in Belgium, which would appropriately commemorate his retirement from both our group and from RMIB. This offer was unanimously accepted, and the 21st WGCEF is therefore scheduled for early October 2015 in Brussels.

12. Will declared the meeting to have been successfully completed, and the group adjourned to the Meteo Suisse office for refreshments.

Actions

All: Promote, and increase circulation of, The European Forecaster.

All: Send presentations to Andre-Charles for the website

All: Send articles for next newsletter to Will between January and March 2015

All: Discuss possible topics for next meeting via email

Will, Evelyn and Jean: Organise next year's meeting

Will, Bernard: Produce next issue of The European Forecaster

Christian: Report back on Storm-Naming task at next meeting.

Annex A: Summary of NMS Developments

Andre-Charles (Switzerland)

- A new radar has been installed in Vallee
- A new web platform has been designed to warn the public of dangerous conditions, including pollen forecasts.

Klaus (Germany)

- DWD is installing a new Cray HPC
- The DWD global model will have 13km resolution and 90 vertical levels. Within this is nested a European model, and a 2.2km resolution model covering Germany.

- Some stations are now closed overnight, with an increasing reliance on auto observations.

Christian (Austria)

- No dramatic changes at ZAMG in the last year, and no big reductions in numbers of staff, though some merging of departments is planned.
- Automatic observations are being used more frequently, especially at night.
- They are running at 2.5km version of AROME
- They are unifying their forecast production systems.

Natasa (Croatia)

- The office in Rijeka has been closed due to staff shortages, so in addition to the HQ in Zagreb, there is only one regional office, in Split. This has caused some issues due to some locations now being served by offices further away and with different dialects.
- ALADIN is run 4x per day, with a version of ALARO running at 2km resolution.
- 2 new forecasters have been recruited at the Zagreb office.

Tim (ECWMF)

- The move to the new ECMWF website is 90% complete, and feedback is very much encouraged.
- The website includes a facility to submit and discuss case studies, along with known problems with the models.
- The global model will move to 8-10km resolution next year.
- In the medium term, the next computer upgrade will also see a move to a new building.

Alessandro (Italy)

- A project to reorganise Met activities is underway. Currently warnings are issued at Regional level, though a new procedure for severe weather warnings is being devised.
- New systems are being developed, and there is a culture of real-time feedback between operations and developers.

Taimi (Estonia)

- The weather service continues to operate six manned observation stations.
- The HIRLAM model is being developed, moving to a new computer and also using HARMONIE.
- Since June there has been a new webpage with better visualisation of warnings.

Bruno (France)

- ARPEGE is moving to 7km resolution with 105 layers, and a new DA system.
- The new PCMT convection scheme has been delayed.
- The domain of AROME is being widened, incorporating an hourly DA cycle.
- Staff reductions continue.
- New Exec Director is seeking a reorganisation of forecasting, with a focus on higher quality prediction processes which require less human input.

Lola (Spain)

- The ongoing reorganisation of the service results in reduction of personnel and greater use of automated products, based on the Global Forecast Editor (GFE) approach.
- Closer links with media are being developed.
- Work is underway to improve marine forecasts.
- A renewal of the HPC is expected early in 2015.

Chryssoula (Greece)

The service has financial difficulties, and when forecasters retire they are not being replaced. Observing stations are being automated, especially at night, with only the international airports retaining manual observations. A colour-coded warning system has been developed, aligned with MeteoAlarm. The COSMO model is used. Performance can fluctuate, particularly for wind forecasts between the islands.

Karen (Norway)

- They are cooperating with Sweden to run local AROME model.
- There is increased cooperation between forecasters and R&D, with forecasters now expected to take part in project work.
- There is emphasis on the development of marine services, especially for the Arctic.

Vida (Lithuania)

- No significant staff reductions this year.
 - A new workstation for aviation has been developed, and general forecasting is moving onto IBL workstations.
 - They are moving into a new, better equipped, forecast room.
- There has been a decision to join MeteoAlarm.

Janez (Slovenia)

- No staff changes in the last year.
- There is further automation of the monitoring network.
- A new radar is operational in western Slovenia
- Forecasters use 3 hr'ly ALADIN at 5km along with EC models.
- The Met Service has a developing Twitter presence.

Antii (Finland)

- FMI celebrated 90 years of aviation weather services this year.
- A reorganisation is underway, which should allow greater cooperation between operations and research.

Piotr (Poland)

- There will be further automation of the observing network, and this process is becoming faster, with staff reductions likely.
- A new provider for aviation weather services is to be selected later this year.
- During the last storm season, a special team supported the regional centres.

Jos (Netherlands)

- The KNMI reorganisation continues, with a new financial model and a flatter management structure.
- There should be better integration between research and development.
- Staff are used flexibly, depending on the weather situation.

Tessy (Luxembourg)

- There are 22 staff at MeteoLux, but 3 new forecasters will increase that number to 25.
- Its funding model has changed, with half provided by the airport and now half by the state.
- A new warnings system has been developed with stronger emphasis on collaboration with civil protection and on publication of impact-based alerts which push information towards the media and public.
- Flood warnings are now available on Meteoalarm, in partnership with the hydrological agency.

Jean (Belgium)

- There is a new dual polarisation radar at Maastricht, and 3 new lidars for aerosol measurement.
- There is discussion of longer range forecasts, eg up to 2 weeks.

UK (Will)

- Meteorologists are being trained in a '5 Facet Model' of modern forecasting which includes emphasis on customer needs, 'soft' skills and involvement in development.
- UKMO makes extensive and two-way use of social media.
- A 24/7 Space Weather centre has recently become operational