

Introduction

It is customary for me to introduce each issue of the 'European Forecaster' with a look back on the notable weather events of the last twelve months. This time, however, my focus is on the humanitarian disaster of the refugee crisis which has unfolded across much of Europe. It is a measure of our professional values, including integrity and concern for the wellbeing of others, that the European forecasting community has worked together, designing and providing new services to communicate and minimise the weather risks to these vulnerable people.

We are also reminded that the financial woes of most European nations, and most European National Met Services, are far from over. Many of us face further constraints on funding and the need to 'do more with less'.

So, as a profession, we should place a strong focus in the coming years in maximising and, just as importantly, demonstrating the benefits of our services to our citizens, communities and economies. Our understanding of the Socio-Economic Benefits of weather services is rapidly evolving, and we should be confident in asserting that money invested in effective, user-focused NMSs is money well spent. Of course, these should not be idle claims, and we must develop means of proving our worth, year by year, season by season, and event-by-event. Cross-national activities such as our response to the refugee crisis might not fall neatly into the obvious categories of money and lives saved for our own nations. But our involvement in such events is not entirely altruistic; our collaborative efforts on behalf of others bring wider benefits such as improved global security and prosperity, which in turn improve conditions in our own countries, even those remote from the main regions affected. In short, as forecasters, it makes sense for us to keep our horizons broad and our hearts and minds open. Of course, encouraging this wider worldview is one of the aims of the WGCEF!

This latest edition of The European Forecaster is typically diverse in content, presenting case studies and new tools and systems for making the best of our considerable skills for the benefit of all. We hope it will be found of interest in the forecasting offices of Europe and beyond.

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