

WGCEF Task Team on Storm Naming in Europe

Evelyn Cusack/Laura Paterson/Will Lang/Christian Csekits.

WGCEF, the Working Group for the Cooperation between European Forecasters, was established in 1995 and is open to forecasters from all the European National Meteorological Services. At the annual meeting there is usually one forecaster from each country present although in some cases the representative is the Deputy Head or the Head of the Forecasting Division.

Since 2013 WGCEF is part of the EUMETNET Forecasting Program whose manager is Dick Blaauboer (KNMI) and as such reports to the Scientific, Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).

Within WGCEF a Task Team is working on a procedure to harmonize the naming of storms over Europe. This Task Team was set up by WGCEF in 2013 in response to the increasing use by the European media, inter alia, of colloquial names for any meteorological depression with disruptive weather.

Naming storms is not a new practice. For several hundred years many hurricanes in the West Indies were named after the particular saint's day on which the hurricane occurred. Ivan R. Tannehill describes in his book "Hurricanes" the major tropical storms of recorded history and mentions many hurricanes named after saints. For example, there was "Hurricane Santa Ana" which struck Puerto Rico with exceptional violence on July 26, 1825, and "San Felipe" (the first) and "San Felipe" (the second) which hit Puerto Rico on September 13 in both 1876 and 1928.

http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/aboutnames_history.shtml

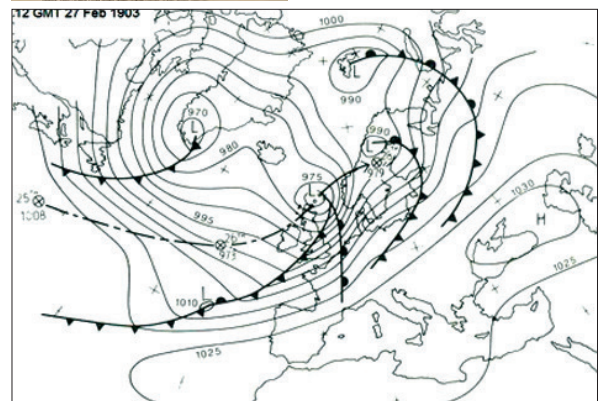


Closer to home, in Ireland, a great storm in February, 1903 is referred to as the Ulysses storm as it is referred to in the great work of literature, Ulysses by James Joyce.

http://www.met.ie/climate-ireland/weather-events/Feb1903_storm.pdf



In November 2002, the Free University of Berlin, started the "Aktion Wetterpate (Adopt-a-Vortex)". The public has



the opportunity to become 'clients' and adopt highs or lows. To adopt a name, a fee has to be paid and this helps maintain "the Students Observation Service" at the Weather Station 10381 (Berlin-Dahlem). The names that are given (= adopted) are published in the 'Berliner Wetterkarte' and are available for use by any weather services or media (newspapers, radio, TV, internet). This practice has been well established for over 50 years and is beloved by the German Weather Service, the media and also by the public. <http://www.met.fu-berlin.de/adopt-a-vortex/historie>

Feedback from users shows that storm-naming can be a very effective way of increasing the influence and reach of the official warnings and advice from NMSs. There are many benefits also to the forecasters by these schemes being conducted as a partnership between NMS's.

Various attempts to stimulate discussion on operational issues, including upcoming high-impact weather, via the Meteoalarm discussion forum, have been met with little success. WGCEF believes it is

vital that European forecasters are encouraged to collaborate between NMSs, and that EUMETNET could play a pivotal role in enabling these collaborations.

The objective of the WGCEF Task Team is to make a unified Storm Naming scheme that will be operated by all the NMS's in Europe and will be used by the media and all other agencies including Civil Protection.

This will require:

- Coordination with existing schemes run by some of the NMSs.
- Coordination with the scheme run by the Free University of Berlin.
- Construction of new local groupings to cover all of Europe.
- Approval by the WMO in analogy with the tropical storm naming schemes in the Atlantic and Pacific etc.

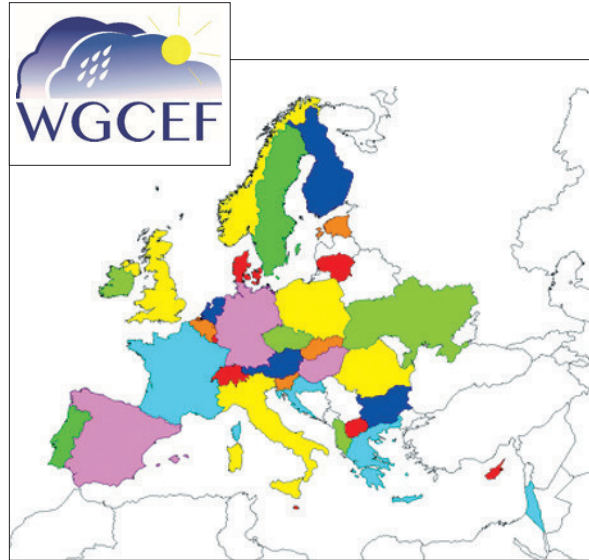
And the ultimate goal is the integration of a storm naming framework/scheme in Europe into the next phase of EMMA in 2019.

The Task Team needs to address a number of scientific, technical and practical issues in order to implement an operational system that works in a way comparable with the one that is in place at WMO for naming tropical cyclones.

Some working partnerships of regional storm naming systems of adjacent NMS's in Europe do already exist:

- Between the UK Met Office and the Irish Met Service, Met Eireann.

- Between the Danish Met Service (DMI), the Swedish Hydrometeorological Service (SMHI) and Met Norway.
- Meteo France, AEMET and IPMA intend to name storms over the south-western parts of Europe with in this year.



The current WGCEF Task Team for Storm Naming in Europe is as follows:

- Chair: **Evelyn Cusack.**
 Western Europe (Ireland & UK): **Laura Paterson.**
 Southwest Europe (Portugal/Spain/France): **Bernard Roulet/Paula Leitao/Lola Olmeda**
 North (Norway/Sweden/Denmark): **Karen-Helen Doublet.**
 East: **Vida Ralien**
 Central: **Robert Hausen**
 Italy & Southeast: **Alessio Canessa**

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Created: 26/04/2012 19:56 CET | 19316 for 1 26/04/2012

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Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Switzerland, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Latvia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, United Kingdom

Much work is needed to make a framework naming system for Europe but as forecasters we share a common goal:

to ensure the protection and safety of life and property by issuing public weather forecasts and warnings.

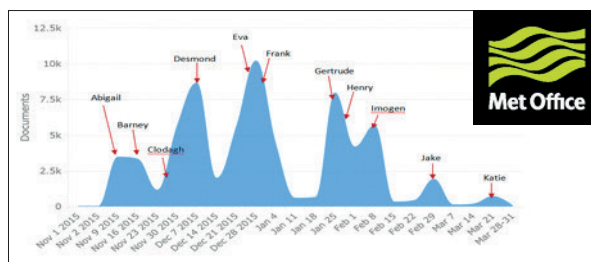
To quote Dr Will Lang from our 2016 Newsletter: *‘As a profession, Meteorologists must place a strong focus in the coming years in maximising and, just as importantly, demonstrating the benefits of our services to our citizens, communities and economies. Our understanding of the Socio-Economic Benefits 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. 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....’*

Regional pilot project between the Met Office (UK) and Met Éireann (Ireland).

In September 2015, the Met Office and Met Éireann began a 2 year pilot scheme to name wind storms that were forecast to impact the UK and the Republic of Ireland. The aims were to provide a single authoritative naming system for the storms that affect the UK and Ireland and to raise the awareness of severe weather before it hits.

The naming scheme used was linked to Met Office and Met Éireann severe weather warnings, for large scale wind events that were expected to cause substantial impacts. The storms were named by operational meteorologists and the names were then communicated to the public through a wide variety of traditional and social media channels.

High engagement from the press with names being referenced thousands of times in the web and printed press. (2015-2016) Italy & Southeast: Alessio Canessa



Analysis shows that there was a huge amount of media and public engagement with the names, and that the 55% of people surveyed changed their behaviour in some way upon hearing about a named storm. The naming scheme is linked to severe weather warnings, primarily for wind events that are expected to cause substantial impacts but also heavy rain has been added.

Overall the pilot so far has been deemed a success, in that it has achieved both of its aims and received great media and public engagement although the 2016-2017 winter has been exceptionally quiet!

It is planned to continue the scheme for the 2017-2018 season in either an extended pilot or operational manner.