

Introduction



Dear Readers and Colleagues,

It's a great pleasure to introduce the 23rd edition of our newsletter 'The European Forecaster'. The publication is only possible due to the great work and generosity of Meteo-France, thus we want to express our warmest gratitude to Mr. Bernard Roulet and his colleagues. We kindly thank all the authors for submitting articles, particularly as they all work in operational forecasting roles and thus have only limited time for writing an article. Many thanks go to Mrs. Stephanie Jameson, Dr. Will Lang, Mrs. Evelyn Cusack and Ms. Laura Paterson for reviewing the incoming articles. Last, but not least, we want to thank Dr. Andre-Charles Letestu for updating our WGCEF website www.euroforecaster.org regularly.

During recent months, the weather has been quite exciting. A strong zonal flow during late autumn and early winter brought many storms to western and north-western Europe (e.g. storms Caroline, Dylan and Carmen) and to south-western Europe (storms Ana and Bruno) as well. Some storms also affected central Europe, like storms Eleanor or David. Most of these weather events were associated with strong wind gusts, but some were associated with high precipitation amounts too - especially in the higher parts of the Alps, where new snow records were observed. By the end of January, the weather regime changed; during February and March cold continental air from the north-east influenced many parts of Europe. Whereas in central and eastern parts of Europe these air masses were often dry, over the United Kingdom and Ireland, blizzard-like snowfall conditions were observed (referred to as the 'Beast from the East' by the media).

During April the winter conditions turned rapidly into summer ones. Very warm air masses from the south, and later on from the east, covered central and eastern Europe and even some parts of Scandinavia and the UK. This air was unstable, especially over central Europe, and therefore many thunderstorms occurred. As a result of the weak flow, these thunderstorms moved very slowly or even stayed over the same region for many hours, therefore accumulating more than 100mm of rain within a short period. This led to many flash floods and landslides in those areas.

As forecasters we are taking a leading role in supporting people, decision-makers and civil protection agencies in being prepared for these severe weather events - to minimise, or even avoid, damage to humans and infrastructure. To keep, or even improve, the high quality of our forecasts, cooperation and scientific exchange between the different NMSs is essential, which is one important goal of our working group.

Finally, we want to send many thanks to Mrs. Julianna Drozdzyńska, Mr. Piotr Manczak and their colleagues who organised and hosted our excellent 2017 meeting in Warsaw.

We hope you find this newsletter enjoyable and informative.

Best regards,

Christian Csekits and Jos Diepeveen
Chairpersons WGCEF

