

Report on the Tenth Meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation between European Forecasters (WGCEF)

Madrid, Spain, 13th November 2004

Introduction

The tenth annual meeting of the WGCEF was arranged by Ana Casals Carro of the Instituto Nacional de Meteorología (INM) in Madrid, Spain and took place at the Hotel Alberto Aguilera in the heart of the city. Nick Grahame (Chairperson, United Kingdom) opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and extended thanks to Ana Casals and the INM for hosting the meeting. In total, there were 27 participants representing 16 Meteorological Services (see Appendix I) with many new faces. Also for the first time we welcomed a colleague from the United States, Robert Johns. Apologies were received from 8 members.

Official welcome by the Deputy Director of INM

The Deputy Director stated that the INM was honoured to be hosting the WGCEF meeting and wished for it to be successful. He explained his ideas about the role of the forecaster in the future with improved training needed to embrace new techniques and developments.

Report of the chairperson of the WGCEF

Nick Grahame announced that Otilia Diaconu had decided to retire as secretary of the group due to changing work commitments. Following discussion, it was agreed that the chairperson would take on the responsibility through the coming year if the workload remained manageable.

The group thanked Meteo-France for taking on the responsibility of publishing the newsletter on a semi-permanent basis. There were also plans for developing the website (discussed later).

Stronger links between WGCEF and the EMS were sought during the year and the chairperson was asked to chair a forecasting session at the EGS/EMS meeting in Nice in September 2004. Unfortunately the session had to be cancelled due to a lack of contributions.

It was noted that there was still no representative from the Danish Meteorological Service despite efforts from Liisa Fredrikson (Finland) and others to persuade them to supply a contact name.

Discussion of Newsletter No.8 and WGCEF website

Uncertainties about the funding and publication of the newsletter hindered progress initially but Bernard Roulet (France) eventually came to the rescue and set up an arrangement with Météo-France. Some of the articles from last years meeting were received rather later than planned but Newsletter No. 9 was finally distributed to members in September. The new style had been well received (being more in line with other 21st Century publications!). Bernard Roulet was hopeful that Météo-France would be able to print Newsletter No. 10 and asked members to provide him with photographs for the front cover.

André-Charles Letestu (Switzerland) explained that he was still having problems when updating the WGCEF website, mainly due to server problems in Finland. He suggested that perhaps a private company should take over the day-to-day running of the site and took an action to investigate if Meteo-Suisse would be happy to fund this venture. Members were encouraged to suggest a new name for the website and think about whether the name of the newsletter should be updated.

EMMA update

Frank Kroonenberg (Vice-chairperson, Netherlands) expressed concerns that the next planned phase of the EMMA project had become too complex and that the original aims of the system were being swamped. He suggested that the WGCEF should, as originators of the concept, make a positive statement to urge the project managers to set up a more basic operational system on a much shorter timescale so that it could at least deliver some fundamental objectives. All members agreed that this was important and a statement was drafted by the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson as the meeting proceeded.

Contributions

Nick Grahame reported that there had been an excellent response to a call for contributions. One of the aims of the group has always been to provide an informal atmosphere where members can present a short case study or report on recent work. The following subjects were presented:

Ana Casals and Fermin Elizaga (Spain) – Forecasting Systems at INM and future plans

Jenni Teittinen (Finland) – Exchange program between FMI and NSSL

Claude Sales (Luxembourg) – Weather and ballooning in Australia

Bernard Roulet (France) – Thunderstorm Forecast Verification over the Pyrenees

Jean Nemeghaire (Belgium) – Hail detection using radar observations

Thomas Krennert (Austria) – Convective storm developments

Ana Casals (Spain) – Nowcasting and MSG cloud products

Frank Kroonenberg (Netherlands) – Regional Satrep in the Netherlands as a guidance tool

Dimitris Ziakopoulos (Greece) – Weather forecasting during the Athens 2004 Olympic Games

Dirk Heizenreder (Germany) – Ninjo workstation project

All of the presentations generated some interesting questions and discussion. Those in powerpoint format have been subsequently copied on to a CD by Ana Casals (available on request) and some have been written up and included in this newsletter.

The group broke for lunch following Ana's second presentation with some excellent food served.

Plan of action for 2005

Nick Grahame stated that the deadline for receiving articles for the 2005 newsletter should be set as 31st January with a view to publishing by 31st May 2005.

All members of the group should aim to promote WGCEF activities and strengthen links with the EMS where possible. There should be opportunities in 2005 with the forthcoming ECAM conference. Also, the group must retain an influence on EMMA project strategy and presenting a unified front via an agreed statement would be the best way forward. A copy of the statement can be found in Appendix 2 and Frank Kroonenberg took an action to distribute this to all members and the EMMA project managers.

Date and place of next meeting

Frank Kroonenberg announced that KNMI would be delighted to host the next meeting on Saturday 17th September 2005 following ECAM2005 in Utrecht, Holland. This invitation was accepted by all members of the group. Further details will be put on the website and communicated to members by e-mail.

Any other business and closing of meeting

Liisa Fredrikson (Finland and ex-chairperson) told the group that she would be standing down as the Finnish representative due to other commitments. Nick Grahame thanked Liisa on behalf of the group for all of the hard work that she has put in over the last few years but suggested that she would always be welcome at future meetings.

Finally, Nick Grahame thanked Ana Casals once again for hosting a successful meeting. The group were then transported to the Instituto Nacional de Meteorologia to meet the operational staff on shift in the forecast room. The Instituto has a long and varied history and is set in lovely surroundings near to the centre of Madrid with stunning views of the city and distant mountains from the roof terrace. Before returning, the traditional group photograph was taken.

A very pleasant evening was then spent at a traditional Spanish restaurant where new and original members of the group plus our American guest enjoyed good food and wine

Nick **Grahame**
Chairperson of WGCEF

Appendix 1

List of participants:

Ana Casals (Spain),
Nick Grahame (United Kingdom),
Frank Kroonenberg (Netherlands),
Dimitris Ziakopoulos (Greece),
Edmond Van Loock (Belgium),
Jenni Teittinen (Finland),
Aurora Stan-Sion (Romania),
Claude Sales (Luxembourg),
Bernard Roulet (France),
Ángel Rivera (Spain),
Antti Pelkonen (Finland),
Jesús Patán (Spain),
Manuel Palomares (Spain),
Jean Nemeghaire (Belgium),
Janez Markosek (Slovenia),
Izolda Marcioniene (Lithuania),
André-Charles Letestu (Switzerland),

Teodoro la Rocca (Italy),
Thomas Krennert (Austria),
Mateja Irsic-Zibert (Slovenia),
Sverker Hellström (Sweden),
Dirk Heizenreder (Germany),
Panagiotis Giannopoulos (Greece),
Liisa Fredrikson (Finland),
José Antonio Fernández (Spain),
Fermín Elizaga (Spain),
Robert Johns (USA).



Appendix 2

Statement from the WGCEF meeting 2004 on the implementation of the European Multiservice Meteorological Awareness system (EMMA)



The Working Group on Cooperation between European Forecasters (WGCEF) at its annual meeting in Madrid on 13th November 2004 wants to make the following statement on the EMMA programme.

The first initiative for European exchange of weather warnings was taken by the WGCEF in 2000. The EMMA programme resulted from this initiative. The WGCEF is very happy with the specifications and the pilot-system that came out as the result from this EMMA programme.

We are very grateful and impressed by the new EUMETNET-proposal that was made by the UK Met Office. This thorough proposal gives a very extensive number of actions to be taken before operational implementation can be set. It is this extensiveness of the actions in this proposal that worries the WGCEF. We want to stress that according to our opinion the actions in the next phase should only be limited and aimed towards the final operational implementation of the awareness system. Getting an operational European awareness system should be possible and aimed by the end of 2005 in our opinion.

Taking too much time before implementation might give the risk that this important initiative could be taken away from us by third parties.