

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

KNMI, De Bilt, The Netherlands, 17th September 2005

Introduction

The eleventh annual meeting of the WGCEF took place at KNMI in De Bilt, The Netherlands on the Saturday following ECAM 2005. Nick Grahame (Chairperson, United Kingdom) opened the meeting, welcomed the participants and thanked Frank Kroonenberg (Vice Chairperson, The Netherlands) for hosting the meeting. Copies of the draft agenda were circulated and a final agenda agreed. In total, there were 24 participants representing 20 Meteorological Services (see Appendix I) and it was good to welcome back the founder member of the group, Manfred Kurz (Germany). This proves that meteorologists can never really retire completely. It was also pleasing to welcome representatives from Denmark and Cyprus for the first time.



Actions from last meeting

There were no direct actions on specific people but a lasting action on all members to promote the group and EMMA.

Report of the chairperson of the WGCEF

Nick Grahame stated that it had been a good year for co-operation. The storm on 7th/8th January 2005 caused concern for forecasters across northern Europe and the Met Office contacted DMI and Metno to pass on information about forecast winds from the UK 12km mesoscale model. The same storm hit the Baltic states on 9th Jan and we later found out from Merike Merilain that EMHI had received criticism

following flooding in Estonia. Warnings of the storm had been issued well in advance by EMHI and it appeared that the criticisms were unfair. WGCEF members gave support to Merike via e-mail and we were told at the meeting that an apology had been sent to EMHI later.

Vida Raliene (Lithuania) visited the Met Office for the 2nd RSMC workshop in March 2005 (Vida sent her apologies for not being able to attend the meeting). Two Météo-France forecasters, Bernard Roulet and Jean-Marc Barrety, visited the Met Office in June 2005 and both gave presentations relating to their work. Links have been set up between Exeter and Rennes to allow discussion on mutually interesting weather events.

Dirk Heizenreder (Germany) also came to the Met Office in June to attend a NinJo workshop and this presented an opportunity for the Chairperson to introduce Dirk to the English seaside with fish and chips and English beer!

Following the visit of Robert Mureau (KNMI) to the Operations Centre in Exeter, an invitation to the Chairperson to take part in the ECAM Round Table discussion was accepted.

Nick Grahame then handed over to Frank Kroonenberg who provided an update on EMMA. Frank explained that the EUMETNET project had run into funding difficulties but a consortium comprising KNMI and ZAMG was planning to take it over and this was the proposal to be put forward to the EUMETNET council meeting in October 2005.

Discussion of Newsletter No.10 and WGCEF website

Nick Grahame mentioned that the articles had been sent in within the timescales requested but a lack of secretary meant that there was a delay in editing and proof-reading them. All contributions were sent to Bernard Roulet (France) by early June 2005 and many thanks go to Météo-France for publishing the newsletter in time for the meeting. The front cover (chosen by Bernard) was impressive and promotes a positive image for the group. Copies of the finalised newsletter will be distributed to directors of European National Meteorological Services (NMS's), EUMETNET and the EMS.

Andre-Charles Letestu (Switzerland) then provided an update on the status of the WGCEF website. It was agreed at the last meeting that Andre-Charles would investigate if a more flexible arrangement could be achieved via a small payment to a private company. The new site **www.euroforecaster.org** allows Andre-Charles to update information easily and it was agreed that this was and will be beneficial to the group. Nick Grahame thanked Andre-Charles for his hard work.



Contributions from WGCEF members

Once again, it was pleasing that the request for short presentations was taken up in such an enthusiastic manner with a wide range of topics covered. The contributions before lunch were as follows:

Imre Bonta (Hungary) – Performance of the numerical models used at HMS in 2004

Bernard Roulet (France) – Analysis error, diagnostics and sensibility

Antti Pelkonen (Finland) – The Finnish boundary layer in winter

Thomas Krennert (Austria) – News from ZAMG, INCA and its application

Nick Grahame – Tornado in Birmingham, UK

The group broke for a tasty buffet lunch and the 'official' photograph then followed outside the entrance of KNMI (hastily arranged with a shower approaching!).

In the afternoon session, the following contributions were presented:

Dirk Heizenreder (Germany) – Application of PEPS

Kees Blom (The Netherlands) – Weather dependent shift strategy at KNMI

Ludo Van der Auwera (Belgium) – Experiments with EPS and EMMA output

To celebrate 10 years of WGCEF, the group welcomed Manfred Kurz who presented a short history of how WGCEF has developed between 1995 and 2005. This was followed by a celebratory drink and cake. Let us hope that we can do something similar in ten years time.

The details of each presentation can be found on the WGCEF website.

Plan of action for 2006

Nick Grahame reflected on the ECAM Round Table where some forecasters present expressed a feeling of disillusionment following the open discussion on 'Re-engineering the Forecast Process'. However, he emphasised that there were many opportunities for forecasters to use their expertise in a proactive way to develop innovative ideas relating to the application of meteorology. Examples had been given in some of earlier contributions and the Chairperson looked at 2006 as being an exciting year. He also urged forecasters to share information. Links with the European Meteorological Society would also need to be developed further.

Date and place of next meeting

A proposal to hold the 2006 meeting in Athens was put forward by Chryssoula Petrou (Greece). The Chairperson mentioned that it might be possible to link it to the next EMS meeting in Slovenia and that a vote should be taken by members to decide. The Athens option was approved unanimously on this occasion (exact date to be confirmed but will be one weekend in September 2006).

AOB (any other business) and closing of meeting

The Chairperson reminded members that any contributions for the next newsletter would need to be received by 31st December 2005.

Concern was expressed about Liisa Fredrikson (former Chairperson) who had been suffering from bad health and did not attend the meeting. It was agreed that WGCEF members would send their best wishes on a card to be delivered to her by Antti Pelkonen.

Nick Grahame officially closed the meeting and the group proceeded on a tour of the forecast room and observational area on the roof of the KNMI building. A pleasant evening was then spent in the centre of Utrecht where the group met for a drink before taking up the invitation of dinner at the "Het Zuiden" restaurant where glasses were raised again to ten years of the WGCEF.



Nick **Grahame**
Chairperson WGCEF

Appendix 1

List of participants:

Giuseppe Frustaci (Italy),
Antii Pelkonen (Finland),
Nick Grahame (United Kingdom),
Imre Bonta (Hungary),
Sverker Hellström (Sweden),
Bernard Roulet (France),
Andre-Charles Letestu (Switzerland),
Frank Kroonenberg (Netherlands),
Dirk Heizenreder (Germany),
Thomas Krennert (Austria),
Chryssoula Petrou (Greece),
Norvald Bjergene (Norway),

Manfred Kurz (retired),
Ana Casals Carro (Spain),
Michael Walsh (Ireland),
Claude Sales (Luxembourg),
Tomas Halenka (Czech Republic),
Ludo Van der Auwera (Belgium),
Kees Blom (Netherlands),
Janez Markosek (Slovenia),
Merike Merilain (Estonia),
Teresa Abrantes (Portugal),
Silas Chr. Michaelides (Cyprus),
Nikolaj Weber (Denmark).