

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

Fenix Hotel, Athens, Hellas, 29th September 2006

Introduction

The twelfth annual meeting of the WGCEF took place in Athens, Hellas on Friday 29th September 2006 at the Fenix Hotel. In a beautifully laid out room, each representative found that they had a personalised key ring to remind them of this meeting in Greece. The meeting was opened by Nick Grahame (Chairperson, WGCEF) who welcomed everyone and then handed over the chair to the Deputy Director of HNMS, Dr. Maria Refene who stated how honoured she was to have the WGCEF come to Hellas and hoped that the meeting would be successful. Nick Grahame expressed his gratitude to the HNMS for hosting the meeting and thanked Chryssoula and Adamantia in particular for their help in organising the meeting. Copies of the agenda were circulated and a final agenda agreed. In total, there were 19 participants representing 13 Meteorological Services across Europe. Jean Quiby from EUMETNET was an invited guest and Manfred Kurz (Germany and founder member of the group) was welcomed back. Apologies and best wishes from those who couldn't attend the meeting were read out (e.g. Theresa Abrantes (Portugal)).



Two talks then followed by members of HNMS to highlight the work that was being done in Hellas. Dr. Ioannis Papageorgiou gave a talk on numerical forecasting activities in HNMS followed by Dimitrius Ziako-poulos who presented an overview of the HNMS.

Actions from last meeting

Dirk Heizenreder (Germany) to provide members with additional information on PEPS – completed.

Nick Grahame to contact the Polish meteorological service to see if they could send a representative to WGCEF meetings – ongoing.

Report of the chairperson of the WGCEF

The chairperson mentioned the visit of Claude Sales (Luxembourg) to the Met Office in November 2005 to sit in with forecasters for a couple of days. A short visit of two Met Office forecasters to the Meteo-France regional office in Rennes in March 2006 marked the start of developing stronger links between the two centres. The chairperson attended a WMO CBS ET PWS DPM meeting in Beijing in June 2006 where EMMA/Meteoalarm was promoted and integration into the Severe Weather Information Centre (SWIC) discussed. It was also noted that Gerald Fleming had sent out a survey on severe weather warning systems to WMO members and had asked the chairperson to remind European NMS's to complete the survey if they had not done so already. In that survey, it was interesting to note that 35% of respondents in RA VI were concerned about model accuracy relating to heavy rainfall events in the early part of the forecast. This highlights that

there is a definite need for a greater understanding of the characteristics of high-resolution models and for forecasters and researchers to work together.

It was reported that Saviour Porter has become a new member of WGCEF, representing Malta. Saviour expressed regret at not being able to attend this meeting but hopes to meet members in the future. Other enquiries about membership of WGCEF have been received via contacts of HNMS. The Working Group now has representatives from 32 countries.

The track of ex-hurricane Gordon in September 2006 caused concern for some European NMS's. Information and views were exchanged between the Portuguese Met Service, Met Eireann and the Met Office.

Finally the chair updated the group on changes that were taking place in the Met Office. Forecast production had been centralised at Exeter and Aberdeen, with all other weather centres closed. Local contacts with customers were achieved via advisors or consultants around the UK. The defence network remains unchanged.

Discussion of Newsletter No.11 and WGCEF website

Nick Grahame mentioned that the articles had been sent in within the timescales requested but the lack of a 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) continues as webmaster for our site www.euroforecaster.org. The current format 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.

Invited speaker – Jean Quiby (EUMETNET)

Jean presented a talk entitled: 'A EUMETNET idea: Exchange of a set of forecasts of common format for the benefit of forecasters'. At present, there are many sources of forecast model data available in various formats but no general adherence to WMO GRIB file policy. The proposal put forward is to agree a common format for forecast data (e.g. same projection, same coastline/border definition). Jean wanted to seek approval from WGCEF members and develop a user requirement. It was made clear that these would be supplementary products to what is already available.

In an around the table discussion, all agreed that standardisation of product is a good idea in principle and would benefit European forecasters (and their customers). A few issues were raised such as timeliness, security of data sharing, duplication of effort, identification of the optimum point of chart production (centrally or locally) and potential difficulties in standardisation of output to suite varying needs. Dirk Heizenreder (Germany) pointed out that the NINJO system already has the capability of displaying GRIB files in any format. Jean thanked the group for general approval of the idea and would take these points forward when reporting back to EUMETNET.

Contributions from WGCEF members

The enthusiastic response to contributions was again noted and highlights the importance of the meeting to provide the opportunity for sharing information.

Herbert Gmoser (Austria) - Satrep Online - A new concept to train satellite meteorology in combination with NWP

Herbert Gmoser (Austria) – The Warning System of ZAMG for Austria; Concept and Applications

Antii Pelkonen (Finland) – TAF/Auto-TAF production at FMI

Ana Casals (Spain)– SIGTAF: TAF automated generation system developed in Spain

Dr Ioannis Pytharoulis (Greece) – An exceptional snowfall over Hellas in January 2006

Photos from lunch and excursion to Delphi

Frank Kroonenberg (Netherlands) – update on EMMA/Meteoalarm

Frank Kroonenberg (Netherlands) – Towards a new and better balanced systematic in assigning weather alarms in the Netherlands

Bernard Roulet (France) - Examples of arpège ensemble forecast use

Will Lang (United Kingdom) - Exploiting Ensemble members: Forecaster-Driven EPS Applications

Dirk Heizenreder (Germany) – Fore-casting Severe Thunderstorms at DWD

Tomas Halenka (Czech Republic) – EMS Distance Learning Packages

Details of most of the above presentations can be found on the WGCEF website.



Listed actions from this meeting

- 12.1 Polish Met Service to be contacted to see if they can be represented in WGCEF (Nick Grahame)
- 12.2 Liaise with European Meteorological Society (EMS) to see how many other remaining European NMS's are interested in providing a representative for WGCEF (Nick Grahame/Tomas Halenka)
- 12.3 Develop a password protected operational forecaster database (Nick Grahame/Frank Kroonenberg)
- 12.4 Copy of latest WGCEF newsletter to be sent to WMO representative (Bernard Roulet)
- 12.5 Provide links to WMO and Meteoalarm from WGCEF website (Andre-Charles Letestu)
- 12.6 Group members to propose extension of PEPS to 48 hours (All/Dirk Heizenreder)
- 12.7 Updates to members on progress with EUMETNET proposal for common format of forecasts (Jean Quiby)
- 12.8 Group members to provide user requirement for above proposal (All)
- 12.9 Exchange of AutoTAF software (Dirk Heizenreder/Antii Pelkonen)
- 12.10 Propose topics on 'Probability Forecasting' and 'Fore-casting Impacts' at the 2007 meeting (Nick Grahame)

Plan of action for 2007

- 1) Members to provide full support for Meteoalarm.
- 2) Close liaison with EUMETNET on 'common format forecast information'.
- 3) Develop closer links with EMS.



- 4) Push boundaries of where value can be added by forecasters and investigate opportunities (e.g. innovative products, focus on customer requirements, expanding ensemble product base).
- 5) Include more scientific explanation in presentations at next meeting.

Date and place of next meeting

The next meeting is planned to follow ECAM2007, to be held at El Estorial in Spain from 1st to 5th October. Ana Casals kindly agreed to make the necessary arrangements. Further details will be put on the website.

AOB (any other business) and closing of meeting

Enquiries were made about how Liisa Fredrikson (ex-Chairperson) was progressing following a period of ill health. Antii Pelkonen (Finland) stated that he would pass on best wishes from the group. The Chairperson officially closed the meeting just in time for members to be transported to HNMS for a tour of the forecast room.

Other related events

A very pleasant get-together was spent at an outdoor restaurant in the centre of Athens (just below the Acropolis) on Friday evening. The meal was accompanied by traditional Greek music.

The following day (Saturday), an excursion to the historic site of Delphi had been arranged by HNMS. The group had a guided tour of this stunning archaeological city in beautiful weather. A truly wonderful experience.

On the way back, Chryssoula had arranged for the group to stop off at the country home of one of her relations to experience a very traditional Greek

meal. This was enjoyed by everyone but was then followed by the added bonus of spontaneous Greek dancing from members of Chryssoula's family (with many of the group members also joining in). A truly special experience.

The chairperson and vice-chairperson (Frank Kroonenberg) presented Chryssoula and Adamantia with a bouquet of flowers on return to Hotel Fenix on Saturday evening to thank them for everything on behalf of WGCEF representatives.

Nick Grahame
Chairperson WGCEF

Appendix 1

List of participants:

Jean Nemeghaire (Belgium),
Konstantina Zeini (Greece),
Panagiotis Giannopoulos (Greece),
Will Lang (United Kingdom),
Antii Pelkonen (Finland),
Nick Grahame (United Kingdom),
Bernard Roulet (France),
Andre-Charles Letestu (Switzerland),
Herbert Gmoser (Austria),

Ole O Kristensen (Denmark),
Frank Kroonenberg (Netherlands),
Jean Quiby (EUMETNET),
Dirk Heizenreder (Germany),
Chryssoula Petrou (Greece),
Manfred Kurz (retired),
Ana Casals (Spain),
Claude Sales (Luxembourg),
Tomas Halenka (Czech Republic),
Nikolaj Weber (Denmark).