

# Introduction

Dear readers,

Another year passed, time flies like it seems to do every year within a more hasty and complex world around us. As I look at my institute, and also from the signals I get from colleagues abroad, National Met services are often and more frequently in the midst of political discussions while the media tend to put a magnifying glass over their performances after any severe event. During last year at KNMI we had many discussions, more or less politically driven, on the false alarm ratio for our severe weather warnings. This was one of the reasons why we did put in a new warning strategy in which the probability threshold on a severe event expected to happen, before issuing the severe weather warning, is lifted. However one should never forget that this change will increase the risk of missed alarms, which is at the end much more tricky than having a false alarm.

The 2009-2010 winter that was dominated in our part of Europe by the shortage of salt, to prevent roads from wintry conditions, makes us look back at a very busy but externally highly appreciated winter season from a meteorological point of view. After this season we expected that our services would get back to normal procedures and activities in the Spring season.

And then the volcanic eruption in Iceland took place. This event really shuttered the whole of Europe. After shutting down more or less the complete European airspace, a next intense effort was asked from the Met services in giving added value to the products of the VAAC services. Together with many experts from the VAAC, the WMO and nearly all the National Met services we succeeded to exchange and share all LIDAR observational data and reconnaissance flight information within Europe. We also managed to highlight the reconnaissance of ash within satellite imagery and were able to define the critical values for ash concentrations in the atmosphere. The combination of improved critical dispersion modelling lead to the VAAC plus product. Together with enhanced observational techniques (as mentioned above), exchanged within the European domain, we are now able to offer a very dedicated and improved service for Airliners, ATCs and National authorities. This volcano event did proof the ability of European NMHSs to react in a very rapid and professional way which had never been possible without multi lateral co operation between our services.

Now we are preparing for the Summer season, new events will certainly happen for which high quality meteorological services are needed. New co operation will be seen, in which our Working Group on Co operation between European Forecasters plays an important role. Our network of operational colleagues that gathers once a year to exchange and share experiences in the "European Forecaster" is also of high importance during real events. It makes it easy to get in touch with colleagues elsewhere when we seek for special knowledge or additional observations.

Again this beautiful coloured edition of the European Forecaster newsletter, the 15th edition lies in front of you. All topics discussed in Toulouse during our last meeting can be read. Again I call up on all of you to recommend this edition to all our colleagues. I also call up on all readers to send in new contributions for the next (16th) edition. Again all articles were reviewed by Will Lang (from the UKMO). Bernard Roulet and Météo France made it possible to present you this high quality printed edition. Many thanks also to André-Charles Letestu (Météo Suisse) who updated our website [www.euroforecaster.org](http://www.euroforecaster.org) with actual information on the Working Group together with website links. Our web archive shows the previous editions of the Newsletter.

I wish you many inspiring reading hours and hope to see you during our next WgCEF meeting in Dublin, Friday 1st October 2010.

**Frank Kroonenberg**  
*Chairperson of WGCEF*