

Introduction

Dear readers,

Writing this short introduction always makes me reflect on the year passed. Trying to reconstruct all events that happened makes me a little dizzy. Most striking of course was the Japanese earthquake 10th of March 2011, and - from a meteorological perspective - the Fukushima nuclear accident that followed. It was not only RSMC Toulouse and Exeter who were intensively involved in the incident. Many, perhaps most, of the European NMSs were very active in performing dispersion model calculations in order to serve their National Civil Protection agencies or their national airlines with risk assessments for scheduled flights to Japan.

In May 2010 central Europe - especially the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary - suffered from severe river flooding, causing enormous damage. During the summer, eastern parts of Europe in particular suffered from severe heat waves, and we all remember the immense fires caused by the heat in Russia last summer. Again the winter of 2010-2011 was quite remarkable in many parts of Europe. December was extremely cold over a large area, and parts of western Europe received a remarkable amount of fresh snow during the early winter. December snow in western Europe seems to have become a trend since 2009 ! Immediately we again ran into shortage of road salt, luckily solved by a milder and less active weather regime during January and February 2011. And then we should not forget the remarkable flooding events over Australia in December and January.

Many of these events were very well forecast by European meteorologists, though some were probably more difficult to foresee. We do notice that by means of further numerical weather model improvements and with help of better forecast tools we are able to make more accurate forecasts nowadays. But forecasters noticing severe weather upstream in Europe are given advance warning of developments that may affect their area of responsibility within the coming period. I even remember Nick Grahame, using the Meteoalarm website, contacting his colleagues in France and Italy to discuss the possible impact of a severe rain event expected on the border of Italy and France in mid-June. Forecasters who are able to contact each other in this manner because they feel part of a European meteorological community sharing their knowledge on the potential evolution of the weather situation are a great example within our discipline. The good work done sharing warnings within the Meteoalarm European meteorological community, and the activities of our own Working Group on Co-operation between European Forecasters (WgCEF) both contribute to sharing of knowledge and in lowering the communication barriers between forecasters of European Weather Services.

This edition of the European Forecaster's newsletter reflects all the topics discussed in Dublin during our last meeting. I call on you all to recommend this edition to your colleagues. I also call on all readers to send in new contributions for the next 17th edition. All articles were reviewed by Will Lang (from UKMO). Bernard Roulet and Météo-France made it again possible to publish the high quality edited and printed edition. Thanks to André-Charles Letestu (Météo Suisse) our website www.euroforecaster.org is kept up-to-date with information on the Working Group, and our web archive shows the previous editions of the Newsletter.

I wish you inspiring reading hours and hope to see you during our next WgCEF meeting in Bergen, Norway, on Friday 7th October 2011.

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Chairperson of WGCEF