

18th International Weather and Climate Forum: a successful 100% online edition of the Media Workshop.

Organised within the 18th edition of the International Weather and Climate Forum, the Media Workshop 2021 occurred on June 17th and 18th. Initially planned to occur in the headquarters of the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) in Darmstadt (Germany), the event eventually exclusively took place online, given the covid pandemic sanitary situation. Co-constructed with EUMETSAT and with the support of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), the European Space Agency (ESA), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), this workshop represented, this year again, a unique occasion for international weather forecasters to exchange with meteorology and climate experts about “good practices” for international communication about climate change.

Let’s not forget that the Media Workshop brings together each year, within the International Weather and Climate Forum, meteorologists, and weather forecasters from all around the world along with representatives from international organisations working within meteorological, climate, environmental or Earth-observation fields. It aims to create connections and enable discussion between communicators and scientists to reinforce weather forecasters’ role in terms of informing their audiences and decision-makers about climate challenges.

Never had a Media Workshop gathered so many experts, meteorologists, and weather forecasters from so many different countries to exchange on good practices in terms of “international communication on climate change” in the media.



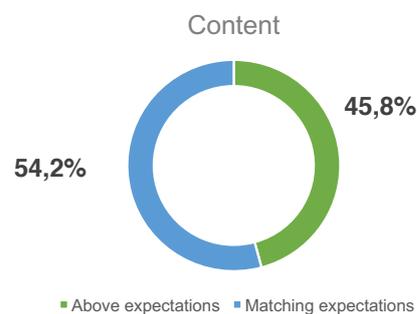
Attendance exceeded expectations, with 478 attendees coming from more than 90 countries on both days of the event.

The post-event satisfaction survey testified to the participants' enthusiasm with 100% of respondents saying they were "satisfied" with the interventions' quality and more than 50% of them assessing the quality of the content as "excellent".

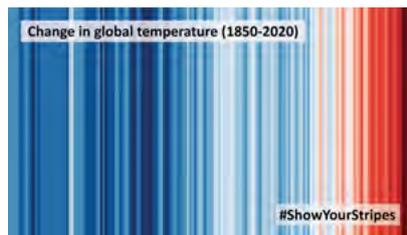
Those two days of exchanges, simultaneously translated in French and English, were hosted by Helga Van Leur, Dutch climate communication specialist, and were articulated through presentations, discussions, and roundtables.

The opening speech, given by the climatologist Jean Jouzel, president of Météo and Climat (the French Meteorological Society) and Phil Evans EUMETSAT General Director, set the tone of this newest edition of the Media Workshop. Both experts reminded attendees of the climate emergency causing extreme meteorological events. *"The next five years will be decisive for future generations,"* Jean Jouzel emphasised on this matter. The fundamental role that weather presenters have to play with the general public in the prevention of the effects of climate change, beyond weather reports alone, was also emphasised.

Furthermore, participants had the opportunity to discover new-generation satellite programmes which will be deployed by EUMETSAT and also the *Decade for Sustainable Ocean* programme launched by the United Nations for the 2021-2030 period, or the tools available for forecasters,



notably by ESA or ECMWF to fuel their weather and news reporting. The stakes of the next international meetings in the fight against climate change, such as COP26, were also underlined.



Exchange on major international meetings tackling the climate challenge

On June 21st, the social media profiles of many international weather presenters were adorned with blue, white, and red stripes. This image

symbolised the "Warming Stripes" international public awareness campaign on climate change. Initiated by climate scientist Ed Hawkins (University of Reading), the concept uses climate data to generate a projection of long-term temperature trends thus highlighting the effects of climate change. In a dedicated session, Ed Hawkins, together with Michael Seckler (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change - UNFCCC), explained the importance of this campaign, which many presenters subsequently echoed on their social media profiles.

The international commitment to fight against climate change will also be a great part of the COP26 discussions to be held from November 1st to November 12th in Glasgow (United- King dom).





After an introduction by Petteri Taalas, WMO Secretary General, who insisted weather forecasters have an essential role, the stakes of the next COP were presented during a roundtable hosted by Bernadette Woods-Placky (Climate Central) with John Hay (UNFCCC) and Jonathan Lynn (IPCC) as guests. The exchanges pointed a lack of engagement from stakeholders despite the global step forward made by governments towards more intense action against climate change at the COP21. Jonathan Lynn highlighted that we were, from a purely scientific point of view, at a turning point in terms of climatic change: *“Every fraction matters. Every year matters.”*

Each voice and each action carry their own significance, notably social media campaigns. For several years now, weather forecasters have had a real influence on social media since some of them have more than 500,000 followers. Their commitment eases the access to information and forms part of their awareness mission.

The role of weather forecasters in climate change communication

If the occupation of weather forecasters is bound to change with the Internet and social media boom, their role as scientific information popularisers for the public remains indisputable. The Media Workshop gave voice to four of them during a roundtable moderated by Karine Durand, specialist environment journalist:

“This roundtable aimed to share experiences, points of view and advice from four international weather forecasters about climate change in the media (TV, web, and social media).

Ada Monzon (WKAQ – Puerto Rico), Anika De Beer (Restore Africa Funds, South Africa), Alex Deakin (UK Met Office, the United Kingdom) and Anju Singh (Doordarshan, India) reflected on the following question: How to generate the

people’s interest, encourage them to take action and avoid rejection of commentary about climate change? Despite the inherent differences among the media for which they all work (news channel, governmental agency, specialist agriculture media, etc.), the speakers all agreed on the best approach to good communication about climate change: do not talk solely about the climate threat but also about the possible solutions, know your audience’s needs, avoid passing a message that is too global and favour local messages, be honest about the uncertainties and avoid using terms that are too technical so that everyone can understand. Danish journalist, Jesper Theilgaard presented the synthesis of this discussion, reiterating the fact that weather forecasters are, first and foremost, a “link” between scientists and the general public and that they thus had to play a messenger role between these two populations whilst also keeping a positive attitude about the challenges that climate change is demanding we address.”



Within the course of a session offered by the EU’s Copernicus Climate Change service (C3S) hosted by ECMWF, the attendees also had the chance to discover how CNN and Euronews (media partners of ECMWF) inform their viewers

about climate change. The speakers, Brandon Miller and Jeremy Wilks, presented the key elements to passing on scientific information about the climate, notably the ones coming from the C3S on climate change which are available to journalists in order to underpin their reports.



Earth-observation systems as a communication tool on climate emergency

The European Space Agency (ESA) proposed a dedicated session on Earth observation. In the introduction, Robert Meisner (ESA) provided an overview of resources available to the media, from raw data to more sophisticated animations. Sophie Hebden (seconded to the ESA Climate Office by Future Earth) presented ESA climate-related Earth observations from space giving some perspective to extreme events and observed global changes. She also took stock of the agency's newest and upcoming missions and presented its new web application which will allow users to interact directly with climate data. Finally, Daniel Mesples (ESA) invited participants to a virtual visit of the control room at ESOC, providing a behind-the-scenes look at how the European agency manages its Earth observation missions.



New satellite programmes

After a virtual visit of its headquarters, EUMETSAT presented the Weather+ session dedicated to new-generation satellites which the organisation will deploy in the coming decade. Hosted by meteorologists and specialists from both EUMETSAT and the ECMWF, this session showed that observations had to be more numerous and of better quality to allow progress in terms of forecasting and to meet

both societal and economic demands. Stephan Bojinski (EUMETSAT) presented the contribution the MTG geostationary satellite system, planned for 2023-2040, will make to weather forecasting. MTG will provide vertical temperature and humidity profiles every 30 minutes over Europe. In addition, the EUMETview software, an online mapping device developed by EUMETSAT which allows satellite data visualisation through a customisable web-user interface, was also shown to the attendees.

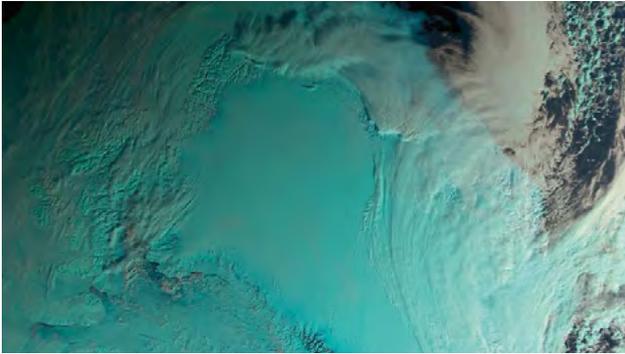
Beyond the contribution allowed by those advancements for weather forecasting and the fight against global warming, the programmes will also improve developing countries inhabitants' lives which, as EUMETSAT General Director, Phil Evans, pointed out, are more impacted by the consequences of climate change.

Vincent Gabaglio (EUMETSAT) and Lee-Ann Simpson (South African Weather Services) hosted a session focused on EUMETSAT's extensive support for Africa over the past 20 years. This support has not only strengthened defences against global warming on the continent but has also helped improve the daily lives of citizens by avoiding, as much as possible, the meteorological and health risks caused by sandstorms or cyclones, thus protecting lives and infrastructure. Also mentioned were the challenges EUMETSAT faces in transmitting, using and adding value to their satellite data and how the group is anticipating these potential complications. The deployment of the satellite systems will allow significant improved understanding of atmospheric composition, terrestrial, oceanic, and sea-ice surface analyses, operational hydrology and water management. This information will make possible more accurate warnings about weather events to authorities or the public, via television, and will thus help protect lives and economies.



Finally, the advancements in terms of Earth observation allow experts to provide better contributions to the development of international programmes in terms of preservation of natural heritage, such as the *Decade for Sustainable Oceans* launched this year by the United Nations. It aims to support sustainable development of the oceans. For this purpose, decision makers rely more and more on satellite data. More than 70% of the Earth's

surface is covered by oceans, which play an essential role in both meteorology and climate forecasting and are a driver of the global economy and sustainable development.



The United Nations has proclaimed this the *Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development* in order to support the efforts to reverse the decline of the oceans' health. EUMETSAT, which provides an integrated stream of marine data to users, is deeply committed to the deve-

lopment of operational oceanography in order to advance the understanding and modelling of the entire Earth system for the benefit of all people. It makes a major contribution to the development of marine information services in Europe.

Two experts on the subject, Jörg Schulz (EUMETSAT) and Thomas Lavergne (Norwegian Meteorological Institute) showed, during a dedicated session, how EUMETSAT's technology allows different countries to improve their ocean observations. They both stressed that the data EUMETSAT collects are used as the backbone of international reports written by the WMO or the IPCC.

They also revealed how satellites are being used to measure the way sea-ice freezes, moves and shrinks in the Arctic Sea where climate change effects are highly tangible. They also reminded the audience that these data are available to make visible to the general public the effects of climate change.

The Media-Workshop replays are available on the Forum website:

<https://forumeteoclimat.com/en/program/media-workshop-en-2021/media-workshop-2021-replays-en>

Thanks to all the speakers, facilitators, attendees, and all working teams who got involved in this most recent edition of the Media Workshop (Paul, Clémence, Isabelle, Natalie, Nadège, Pauline, Irina, Clare, Helga, Grace, Chiara, Linda, Melissa, Annabel, Marina, Gaia, Patricia, Ayoub...) and to our loyal partners who made this success possible. Thanks to all.



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