



European Flood Awareness System - now operational

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The European Commission's Communication "Towards a Stronger European Union Disaster Response" adopted and endorsed by the Council in 2010, underpins the importance of strengthening concerted actions for natural disasters including floods, which are amongst the costliest natural disasters in the EU. The European Flood Awareness System (EFAS) contributes in the case of major flood events, to better protection of the European Citizen, the environment, property and cultural heritage. The disastrous floods in Elbe and Danube rivers in 2002 confronted the European Commission with non-coherent flood warning information from different sources and of variable quality, complicating planning and organisation of aid. Thus, the Commission initiated the development of a European Flood Awareness System (EFAS) which is now going operational.

EFAS has been developed and tested at the Joint Research Centre, the Commission's in house science service, in close collaboration with the National hydrological and meteorological services, European Civil Protection through the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and other research institutes. EFAS provides Pan-European overview maps of flood probabilities up to 10 days in advance as well as detailed forecasts at stations where the National services are providing real time data. More than 30 hydrological services and civil protection services in Europe are part of the EFAS network.

Since 2011, EFAS is part of the COPERNICUS Emergency Management Service, (EMS) and is now an operational service since 2012.

The Operational EFAS is being executed by several consortia dealing with different operational aspects:

- EFAS Hydrological data collection centre —REDIAM and ELIMCO- will be collecting historic and realtime discharge and water levels data in support to EFAS
- EFAS Meteorological data collection centre —outsourced but running onsite of JRC Ispra. Will be collecting historic and realtime meteorological data in support to EFAS
- EFAS Computational centre - European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts - will be running the forecasts, post-processing and operating the EFAS-Information System platform
- EFAS Dissemination centre—Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, Slovak Hydrometeorological Institute and Rijkswaterstaat Waterdienst (the Netherlands)—analyse the results on a daily basis, assess the situation, and disseminate information to the EFAS partners

The European Commission is responsible for contract management. The Joint Research Centre further provides support for EFAS through research and development.

Aims of EFAS operational

- added value early flood forecasting products to hydrological services
- unique overview products of ongoing and forecast floods in Europe more than 3 days in advance
- create a European network of operational hydrological services