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ATMO-ACCESS: Why Do We Need a Sustainable Access Program for Atmospheric Research?

Paolo Laj¹ and Sabine Philippin²

¹World Meteorological Organization, Atmospheric Environment Research Division, Geneva, Switzerland (plaj@wmo.int)

²Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Clermont-Auvergne, Laboratoire de Météorologie Physique, Clermont-Ferrand, France

ATMO-ACCESS is a pilot project funded under the Horizon 2020 program (April 2021–October 2025) that addresses the needs of distributed atmospheric research infrastructures (RIs), including ICOS (Integrated Carbon Observing System), ACTRIS (Aerosol, Clouds, and Trace Gases Research Infrastructure), and IAGOS (In-flight Global Observing System). The project provides effective and convenient access to leading European atmospheric research facilities, including fixed monitoring stations, mobile observation platforms, simulation chambers, and central laboratories. It also offers virtual access to innovative cross-RI digital and training services.

These access opportunities are utilized by research communities worldwide to conduct experiments, evaluate instruments, and analyze data, ultimately advancing scientific knowledge and technological development.

Now in its final stage, ATMO-ACCESS is reviewing its main outcomes. The presentation will highlight how demand for access to atmospheric research facilities is shifting—from physical access to more hybrid and virtual modes. It will also discuss how transnational access projects can support both research and innovation and illustrate how access programs are used by the private sector or by international organization outside the academics.

Historically, access projects have been funded through short-term EU initiatives. However, findings from ATMO-ACCESS underscore the need for greater collaboration among funding agencies across Europe and beyond. Such cooperation within Europe and extended at international level is essential to establish more sustainable access programs that benefit the broader research community.