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Spatial variability of seasonal precipitation over Europe using gridded data set from 1951 to 2000

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Variability of the amounts of seasonal precipitation in European land areas (25°W 45°E, 35N 75N) from 1951 to 2000 is assessed. The analysis is based on 0.5° longitude/latitude gridded data. The Variability Analysis of Surface Climate Observations (VASClimO) version 1.1 data set is used. Precipitation variability is examined through the anomaly of the coefficient of variation. It is defined as the departure of the actual coefficient of variation from the valuethat could be expected 'on average', conditioned on the total seasonal amount of precipitation. The analysis revealed diverse areas of larger-than-normal, smaller-than-normal and close-to-normal variability. Negative anomalies occur more often but have, on an average, lower values than do positive anomalies. This general picture is modified by various local factors, such as cold and warm ocean currents. Global modes of climate variability affect the variability of precipitation either directly or by modifying other relevant atmospheric and oceanic processes.