



Climate Watch in RA VI – a joint Climate Service of the Regional Climate Centre Network (RCC)

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A Climate Watch System is an early warning system, which uses climate monitoring information and results from long-range forecasts (weekly to seasonal) to detect long-lasting extreme weather periods like heat waves, cold spells, and floods or droughts. It is thus an example of a climate service, which can be important for saving lives and avoiding disasters and economical losses. Such an activity requires a good co-operation between climate monitoring and long-range forecast experts, operational authorities, stakeholders and decision makers.

The Climate Watch System has been suggested by the WMO to be implemented in all Regions as a mandatory function of Regional Climate Centres (RCCs). In Europe, the WMO RCC Network (RA VI) Offenbach Node on Climate Monitoring (RCC-CM) is responsible for issuing Climate Watch Advisories, in coordination with the partners of the RA VI RCC Network.

If a warning situation is expected on the basis of the assessment of the state of climate, the long-term monitoring and results from long-range forecasts, a Climate Watch Advisory will be issued and sent to the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs). It is the responsibility of the NMHSs to evaluate the situation and decide on if and how to provide their national users with further information on the expected event.

After a pilot phase the Climate Watch System is now implemented within the RA VI RCC Network on an operational basis and first experience has been gained. In February 2014, Climate Watch Advisories were issued for two climate events in Europe (which were not independent from each other): Heavy precipitation, storm and flooding in Western Europe, and heavy snowfall and avalanches in the southern Alpine region.

The presentation describes the full process of issuing Climate Watch Advisories: the evaluation of the material, the co-ordination and decision process and the distribution of climate watch bulletins. Examples for making use of the advisories will be given.