

REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE EMS ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

For period September 2004 to August 2005

Following the paper presented to the EMS Council at its 11th Council Session in Nice, September 2004, the Chairman made a presentation as part of the EMS Annual Meeting on the subject of “Professional Qualifications and Accreditation in the UK and Europe as a whole”.

As follow-up, he also arranged a side meeting of the Committee on 29 September 2004 at which 10 EMS members attended. The current UK/RMS Scheme was the main interest, in particular the question of its possible extension to other European countries. The Minutes of this meeting are attached as Annexe A.

The outcome of the meeting was the production of a letter, prepared by the Chairman in collaboration with the President, which was sent to all EMS Society Members by the President on 13 December 2004. (See Annexe B). So far there were responses from Belgium and France.

After the Council meeting in Athens the Chairman e-mailed all Committee Members regarding their opinion on the need for and type of discussion meeting on Accreditation in Europe during the EMS Annual Meeting in Utrecht. Positive responses came to the President only from Belgium, Hungary and Germany although there was also some interest from the UK. There was only one direct response from a Committee Member, so it has been suggested that a relatively short discussion meeting will be fitted in within the Annual Meeting Programme along the same lines as that in Nice, 2004.

The current membership of the Accreditation Committee is attached as Annexe C.

ANNEXE A

Accreditation Committee Meeting, 29 September 2004

Minutes as of 10 October 2004

Location: Acropolis Conference Center, Nice

Participants: David Axford (RMS, Bracknell, Chair of the Accreditation Committee), Constanta Boroneant (SMR, Bucharest), Stan Cornford (RMS, Bracknell), Tomas Halenka (CeMS, Prague), René Morin (SMF, Paris), Heleen ter Pelkwijk (NVBM, de Bilt), Richard Pettifer (RMS, Bracknell), Werner Wehry (DMG, Berlin), Jon Wieringa (NVBM, de Bilt)

In attendance: Arne Spekat (EMS, Berlin)

Beginning: 17:30 End: 18:30

The meeting was called by the Chair of the EMS Accreditation Committee. There was no specific agenda set out beforehand.

As the Accreditation Committee Chair explained the material with respect to the Europe-wide qualification scheme is now available, but there is not much response and yet there seem to be many open questions. It could be argued that the term "vocation" is complicated and maybe "certification" would be better.

He explained that for a vocation, no formal training is required – passing a test or the proof of pre-knowledge is all it takes. Applicants with a degree can receive the *Chartered Meteorologist* status. A minimum of five years of practical work is required, yet for those who have made their PhD this time can be shortened. A mentor and a test is required. It should be pointed out that RMS had been instrumental in advancing this qualification.

Question: From which professional fields do the Chartered Meteorologists come?

Answer: Qualification has nothing to do with schools but with certifying excellence. There is good support from the UK MetOffice, for example, to achieve this status. Most applicants continue in their old jobs. Since the qualification a EU-directive it is valid in all EU countries.

Question: How is renewing dealt with?

Answer: Every two years the certified meteorologists have to prove that they kept their level. The systems of RMS and AMS are rather similar. In the United States, however, renewal has been a matter of much discussion, since it was originally not foreseen. With considerable effort, AMS will introduce a new scheme which will require renewal.

Question: How can one prove the quality as a good forecaster?

Answer: Attending courses is mandatory. Conference attendance may also contribute to the assessment. For the renewal, the candidate is given one year to prove that she/he took the necessary formation steps, if not, the certification is withdrawn.

Question/Remark: This seems to be difficult in many countries, since no courses are offered. However, the pressure to educate oneself is a good step forward. The current German path is to certify only companies, which have to prove that they employ qualified personnel.

David Axford pointed out that one of the main purposes is flexibility of movement, although, admittedly, the market is not very open. It should be noted that this is a government decision given the right to determine the criteria to the Meteorological Society.

Question: How can one convince meteorologists to take tests?

Answer: One motivation is pride, followed by improved chances for promotions.

Question: Are there fundings available for a European survey?

Answer: These fundings are not any more available. There seemed to have been a lack of interest in several countries.

Question: Is the UK-scheme, as it is introduced by the EU-directive, mandatory?

Answer: No. Other schemes may exist in parallel.

Question (rhetorical)/Remarks: How can interest in the scheme, for example within the Services, be generated? For the Weather Services it sure would be beneficial if the Heads of Services would be in favour of it. But they have no real joint forum. Here the Meteorological Societies may be helpful since many have well-developed contacts to the Heads of Services.

Remark: On the level of individuals there are mental problems to be overcome: Those who work for a long time in a field assume that they *are* competent. However, it must be asked if that competence can be sustained. Any body which is assessing this level should take into account the attitude of the applicant towards formation. An indicator can be if she/he subscribes to a journal.

According to the RMS Executive Director, the scheme is rooted in a system of trust. There is a Code of Conduct which marks the ethical basis, augmented by the will to keep up the competence. The applicant is monitored over time with respect to these prerequisites. As to the implementation of *national schemes* in other countries: National Meteorological Societies have a good understanding of their legal and linguistic system. A good basis for the introduction of a national scheme might be the one developed in the UK, with some fine tuning.

Question: Is the qualification scheme only applicable to EU countries?

Answer: Owing to EU regulations, language is not allowed to become a problem. If one applies for CMet in the UK and does not speak English, but has gone through a national qualification scheme (an applicant with such a qualification would be termed a "finished article") a mentor is selected and the applicant is monitored.

Question: Could EMS organize this system in Europe?

Answer: One would have to take the example of the AMS and organize training courses, perhaps in conjunction with Annual Meetings.

It was proposed to have an accreditation-related meeting with the directors of the Met Services in Utrecht during the EMS5/ECAM7, since traditionally, several directors attend ECAM conferences.

As for training courses, it would be feasible to launch such a training opportunity, maybe on Satellite Meteorology, for the Annual Meeting 2005. RMS recommended attendance in its lecture series.

Whatever is done, the national authorities need to be convinced. The Accreditation Committee Chair is therefore asked to draft a short letter to all presidents of the Meteorological Societies, and the directors of the Services, explaining the situation. Since there might be national particularities, the right persons to receive this letter need to be identified. It was proposed to approach the Societies first, asking them for the most favourable further approach. Furthermore a collection of available training material (web addresses of resources) would be desirable.



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Berlin, 13 December 2004

Ref: Professional Meteorological Qualifications and Accreditation in the European Union

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

You will be aware that the European Meteorological Society (EMS) has a Committee charged with considering the question of meteorological qualifications and professional accreditation amongst all of the Member Nations. I attach a list of the current members of that Committee at Annex A.

The EMS first considered these matters at a side meeting during the Royal Meteorological Society (RMetS) Conference at St. Johns College, Cambridge in 2000, and the Committee on Accreditation was set up shortly afterwards. The initial activity was to conduct a Questionnaire amongst the Committee members to evaluate the range of requirements for professional qualifications and accreditation in their particular states. The replies made it clear that there is a very wide range across Europe at present from nations with quite well defined requirements (such as France, Germany and the UK) to some of the newer Eastern European nations where there are few or no such standards.

An attempt to obtain funding for a European wide study of these matters during 2002 to 2003 did not succeed. The UK Chairman of the "EMS Accreditation Committee has since been engaged in obtaining EU recognition for the existing UK National Vocational (NVQ) and RMetS Professional (CMet) Qualifications and further activity on the wider issues was allowed to await the outcome of this work. A brief description of the UK Scheme of Professional and Vocational Qualifications is attached at Annex B. Further details can be obtained from the Royal Meteorological Society web site as indicated in the Annex B.

These Standards are now recognised throughout the EU, and during the recent EMS Annual Meeting in Nice the Accreditation Committee had a further meeting (Accreditation Committee Meeting, Nice, 29 September 2004 at which this new recognition, and its implications, were described.

- *National Meteorological Services need to be convinced at top levels of the need for and the value of formal vocational qualifications and professional accreditation.*
- *An accreditation-related meeting of directors of Met Services is proposed, to be held during the EMS5/ECAM7 in Utrecht in September 2005.*
- *The Chairman of the EMS Accreditation Committee was tasked to draft a short letter to all presidents of member Societies of the EMS and directors of National Meteorological Services in EMS members' states to appraise them of progress to date, including details of the UK schemes and the plans for the meeting. In order to establish the correct protocol for contacting the NMS, it was agreed to approach the society presidents first.*

It is believed that there is a need for some harmonisation of Standards in this field across the EMS Nations. The EMS Accreditation Committee would therefore like to engage both the EMS Societies and the EMS National Meteorological Services in new discussions on this matter using the UK experience as a starting-off point. I am approaching you, Mr/Mrs President to ask for your reactions to the above ideas and activities, and for your suggestions as to the correct person to approach within the NMHS in your particular country.

Sincerely

(Werner Wehry, EMS President)

ANNEXE C

EMS Accreditation Committee Members as at July 2005

<u>Country</u>	<u>Members Name</u>	<u>E-Mail</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Austria	VACANT	VACANT	ÖGM/(Austrian Meteorological Society)
Croatia	Mr Tomislav Kovacic	kovacic@cirus.dhz.hr	HMD/(Croatian Meteorological Society) /Meteorological and Hydrological Service of Croatia
France	VACANT	VACANT	Société Météorologique de France
Germany	VACANT	VACANT	DMG/(German Meteorological Society)
Hungary	Pal Ambrosy	ambrozy.p@met.hu	Hungarian Meteorological Society
Italy	Marcello Pagliari	mpagliari@srd.it	UNIMET/(Unione Italiana di Meteorologia)
Netherlands	VACANT	VACANT	NVBM/(Dutch Meteorological Society)
Portugal	Dr. Sérgio Barbosa	sergio.barbosa@meteo.pt	"Associação Portuguesa de Meteorologia e Geofisica" (APMG)
Serbia	Mr. Dragan Radovanovic	radragan@eunet.yu	MDS/(Serbian Meteorological Society)
Spain	Manuel Palomares	palomares@inm.es	AME(Asociacion Meteorologica Española)
Switzerland	Peter Rauh	peter.rauh@meteoswiss.ch	IACETH, SGM/(Swiss Meteorological Society)
United Kingdom	Dr D. N. Axford	david.axford@dial.pipex.com	RMS/(Royal Meteorological Society)
KNMI	Heleen ter Pelkwijk	Heleen.ter.Pelkwijk@knmi.nl	KNMI
WNI	David Selway	daves@wni.com	UK Commercial Sector (WNI)
Met. Office/EMS Pubs	Bob Riddaway	Bob.Riddaway@metoffice.com	UK National Met Service