

Press Release

Accession agreement between Slovenia and the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts signed

On 8 April 2011, Mr Roko Žarnić, Slovenian Minister for Environment and Spatial Planning, and Mr Dominique Marbouty, Director-General of the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), signed the "Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Slovenia and ECMWF on the accession of the Republic of Slovenia to the ECMWF Convention and related terms and conditions" in Ljubljana. Mr Silvo Žlebirić, Director General of Slovenian Environment Agency, and Mr Klemen Bergant, Director of Slovenian Meteorological Office and Permanent Representative of Slovenia with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), also attended the ceremony. On the basis of the signed accession agreement, Slovenia will become ECMWF's twentieth Member State. The agreement will enter into force on the first day of the second month following the deposit of its instrument of accession.

The original Convention restricted ECMWF's membership to the founding Member States. Amendments to the Convention entered into force on 6 June 2010, allowing more States to accede to the Convention. Following Iceland, Slovenia is the second State acceding the Convention after the amendments entered into force.

Minister Roko Žarnić stated: "I would like to thank the ECMWF Council for having unanimously adopted the Resolution on the accession of Slovenia to the ECMWF Convention on 31 March 2011. It is an honour for me to sign the accession agreement with the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts. This is an important milestone for Slovenia. Establishing closer links to European centres of excellence, such as ECMWF, is one of the key strategic goals of the government of the Republic of Slovenia."

Mr Silvo Žlebirić said: "ECMWF is the world's leading centre in global medium-range weather prediction. Since Slovenia became a Co-operating State in 1997, the Slovenian Meteorological Office has been able to make good use of ECMWF's data and products, which helped to significantly improve our forecasts. The Centre's forecasts of extreme weather events, such as wind storms and heavy precipitation, are vital to enable us to prepare for and respond to those events."

Mr Klemen Bergant added: "The benefits of using ECMWF products for early warnings were clearly evident in recent extreme weather events such as the strong Bora winds in March 2010 and March 2011, as well as the floods in December 2009 and September 2010. Based on ECMWF products, early warnings were issued to the Slovenian Administration for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief as well as to the public. Civil protection units were well prepared and the public was informed about the threat in advance. Therefore, material damage was reduced and lives were saved despite the severity of these events."

Mr Dominique Marbouty said: "I am pleased that Slovenia will soon accede to the ECMWF Convention. As a full Member State, Slovenia will acquire full voting rights

at the ECMWF Council from the date of the enforcement of the agreement. Also a portion of the Centre's computer and archive resources will be allocated to Slovenia for its own use and access to all ECMWF products and tools will be granted. We will continue close collaboration with our colleagues at the Slovenian Meteorological Office.”

ECMWF is an independent intergovernmental organisation now supported by 34 States. Its brief is to provide meteorological services in its supporting States with forecasts of global weather conditions and ocean waves. Forecasts are for the medium range (to 15 days ahead) as well as seasonal (to 6 months ahead). ECMWF has one of the most powerful computer systems for meteorology in the world and holds the largest archive of numerical weather prediction data. It runs the world's most sophisticated medium-range prediction model of the global atmosphere and oceans. ECMWF's supercomputer complex is linked by high-speed telecommunication lines to the computer systems of the national weather services in its supporting States.