



Organisation météorologique mondiale
World Meteorological Organization

Statement on the Occasion of the 120th Anniversary of the Bulgarian Hydrometeorological Service

M. Jarraud
Secretary-General

(Sofia, Bulgaria, 8-9 November 2010)





SG 9/2010

**STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE 120TH ANNIVERSARY OF
THE BULGARIAN HYDROMETEOROLOGICAL SERVICE**

by

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Excellency,

Dr Georgi Kortchev, Director-General of the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (NIMH) and Permanent Representative of Bulgaria with WMO,

Distinguished Colleagues and Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the international meteorological community and on my own behalf, I wish to thank Dr Georgi Kortchev, Director-General of the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (NIMH) and Permanent Representative of Bulgaria with WMO, for the kind invitation to be present at this ceremony marking the 120th anniversary of Bulgaria's Hydrometeorological Service. On this auspicious occasion I would like to congratulate all NIMH staff for the outstanding collaboration with WMO since Bulgaria became a Member of our Organization on 12 March 1952.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It may not be straightforward to appraise the significance of the event we are commemorating today, unless we consider it in its full historic context. Allow me to recall that the First International Meteorological Conference was held in Brussels, in August 1853, as a consequence of the growth in international trade and the increasing concern for safety in marine transportation. Twenty years later, in September 1873, the first International Meteorological Congress met in Vienna to establish the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was thereafter responsible for international cooperation in meteorology until the IMO became WMO on 23 March 1950, a date celebrated today as the World Meteorological Day.

It is noteworthy how fast our forefathers reacted to the creation of IMO and the establishment of meteorological networks, since the world was at that time far from globalized, your region was in the process of a major political transition and in fact it generally took most countries longer to establish their operational meteorological infrastructures.

Archived records show that meteorological observations in your country commenced in 1860 on the premises of the Austrian consulate in the Danube city of Ruse, where hydrological observations also began 10 years later. A second meteorological station was established at another Austrian consulate, this time in Sofia, where observations began on a regular basis from September 1880 and, by 1887, they were regularly telegraphed to Vienna.

However, once the Principality of Bulgaria regained its autonomy following the 1878 Treaty of San Stefano, the Minister of Education M. K. Irechek established five meteorological stations to perform regular observations, in particular at Sofia. These data supported the first publications on the climate of the region, including the extensive manual compiled in 1888 by the Sofia Station Director Spas Vatzov (1856–1928), who in 1890 assumed responsibility for the unified direction of the entire Bulgarian observing network. It is also interesting to recall Vatzov's partnership with two other well-known contemporary meteorologists: Ivan Stožir (1834–1908), founder of the Zagreb Meteorological Observatory and his successor Andrija Mohorovičić (1857–1936).

The following year, in Munich, Bulgaria participated in the first IMO Conference of Directors of Meteorological Services. By 1892 fourteen stations were operating in Bulgaria and so on 1st January 1894 the Direction of Meteorology was established at the Ministry of Education by a Decree of Prince Ferdinand I who in 1910, as Bulgaria's Tsar, would become known as the first head of state to be transported by an airplane.

Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the years elapsed since the event that we are commemorating today, Bulgaria's National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology as well as its predecessor agencies have efficiently contributed to the socio-economic needs of your country. In the context of WMO, Bulgaria is today an active Member of Regional Association VI (Europe) and I would like to seize this opportunity to express my appreciation for the personal contributions of numerous Bulgarian meteorologists to WMO, including some who have served with distinction in the WMO Secretariat, like your Director-General Dr Georgi Kortchev.

As has been the case since the beginning of the modern era of societal and environmental management, knowledge of weather and climate is indeed vital to all human endeavours. It is within this framework that National Meteorological Services are best positioned to identify and to deal with a wide range of challenges to the safety of human life and socio-economic development. In particular, with regard to natural hazards, the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services are normally tasked with providing the appropriate early warnings about individual risks and they represent the authoritative voice on weather-related warnings in their respective countries.

Their efficiently coordinated operation is also a key contribution which nations make to the needs of the international community, which has been calling in particular for the strengthening of systematic observations required to monitor climate change and its impacts, as well as to assist developing countries in the implementation of the most appropriate adaptation strategies to climate variability and climate change. This fact provides additional justification for the need to cooperate even more closely at the regional level in meteorology, a crosscutting discipline that knows neither political nor economic boundaries.

Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the approval by the WMO co-sponsored Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) of its Fourth Assessment Report, which at the end of 2007 received the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize, there has been much higher awareness of climate change and the associated risks and vulnerabilities.

In 2009 the third World Climate Conference-3 (WCC-3), held in Geneva, unanimously approved the establishment of a Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS), under the main theme "*climate prediction and information for decision-making*", in particular to strengthen science-based climate predictions and services, for which a High-level Taskforce (HLT) is actively developing proposals to be submitted to the Sixteenth World Meteorological Congress next year.

In this context, I can envision there will be outstanding opportunities over the next years for the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and its National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology to contribute to GFCS development and to participate in its benefits.

On the occasion of this new anniversary of coordinated meteorological observations in Bulgaria, I would like to conclude by thanking the National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology (NIMH) for its exemplary collaboration with WMO and the international meteorological community.

Thank you.

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