EUROPEAN AVALANCHE WARNING SERVICES

Summary

21st EAWS General Assembly 2022

Davos, Switzerland

On 15th – 17th June 2022 a total of 83 participants from 15 countries and 27 individual avalanche warning services met for the 21st EAWS General Assembly at the Congress Center in Davos hosted by the WSL Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research SLF.

Chairman report

Rune Engeset (NVE, NO) summarized the past three years as challenging due to the pandemic. Hence, the General Assembly had to be postponed from 2021 to 2022. However, the virtual meeting to share information, hosted in 2021 by the SLF, was a success and similar formats will take place in future. EAWS managed to show fatalities on the website. Standards: mainly Finland has work to do. Recommendations: quite a few warning services have potential to improve.

TAB coordinator report

Thomas Stucki, (SLF, CH) reported on the activity in the TAB since the GA in Oslo in 2019. The main work in the TAB has been on the glossary, the avalanche problems and the avalanche fatalities on the website. Future topics from the TAB perspective are to create more visibility for avalanches.org, a format for data exchange, common publication times of forecasts, a color scheme for danger scale and the review of existing standards.

Membership committee

Jürg Schweizer (SLF, CH) reported from the membership committee:

- A LURTE: if they sign MoU they can join (still need to discuss voting rights within Spain), no action needed by GA

The GA accepted the following warning services as EAWS members after qualifying period of maximum 3 years, starting 2022:

- Ukrainian Avalanche Warning Service
- Swedish Avalanche Warning Service

Working group *site-specific services*

Christian Jaedicke (NGI, NO) summarized the results. The final document provides definitions of terms defining site-specific avalanche warning, difference to regional forecasting and recommendations to warning services. It can be seen as a manageable best-practice guideline for site-specific warning services.

The GA discussed that site-specific services can share and discuss ideas with EAWS but should at the moment not be included in EAWS as members. Maybe at a later stage different types of memberships may be possible.

The GA accepted the results of the working group site-specific services as an EAWS recommendation.

Working group *EAWS funding*

The working group EAWS funding, as led by Christoph Mitterer (AWS Tyrol, AT) evaluated possibilities to bring EAWS into an organization form which is able to apply for funding. This decision hardly challenged most of the EAWS members. In the end a 2/3 majority agreed to have a change and decided to further investigate of the possibility of the financing concept European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC).

However, it should be kept in mind that it was a close decision and there exists some sceptic. Overall the friendly and very informal manner of EAWS collaboration is rated as very important and should not be affected.

Glossary update

Marc Diggins (SAIS, UK) summarized the TAB activity on the snow and avalanche glossary. The glossary objects have been re-defined as following:

- That the glossary should display the most 'common' terms that are used in most member avalanche warning services.
- That the priority is to display terms that are used most frequently in EAWS members national avalanche bulletins and information.
- That the terms and descriptions are biased toward the user not technicians and forecasters.

Further, a guidance on terms has been defined and responsibilities for the different glossary languages/translations have been defined.

Avalanche problems 2.0

Benjamin Zweifel (SLF, CH) presented the work which has been done by the TAB on the avalanche problem definition.

The GA accepted the *updated version of the five core problems* as well as the two new optional avalanche problems *cornices* and *no distinct avalanche problem*.

It has to be kept in mind that the *no distinct avalanche problem* was accepted with a close decision and attention has to be given especially on the user understanding of this.

Working group Matrix & Scale

Karsten Müller (NVE, NO) presented the consensus of the working group Matrix & Scale on the terminology and the included workflow. His explanations have been deepened within language specific groups.

The GA accepted clearly the Definitions, Workflow and Matrix from the work group Matrix and Scale as an EAWS standard with a qualifying period until the next general assembly.

Avalanche services are highly encouraged to use the matrix in the next years and share their experiences with the working group. The Matrix should be mandatory after some years.

Elections

The elections have taken place including the voting rights and 2/3 majority rule as defined in the MoU. All decisions have taken place in the first voting round.

Chairs

Christine Pielmeier and Arnold Studeregger

Coordinator

Thomas Feistl

TAB

Montserrat Bacardit, Emma Barfod, Igor Chiambretti, Mark Diggins, Anne Dufour, Norbert Lanzanasto, Christoph Mitterer, Benjamin Zweifel

Membership Committee

Rudi Mair, Gloria Marti, Ales Poredos, Vincenzo Romeo, Jürg Schweizer

Future working groups

The GA approved following working groups for the next period:

- **Common alerting protocol (CAP)**: definitions, workflow and standardize processes. Leader: Norbert Lanzanasto
- **Avalanche accidents**: bring fatalities online, work on standardization and improve data presentation. Leader: Emma Barfod
- **Funding**: Implementation of 2022 decision by GA. Leader: Christoph Mitterer
- **Matrix and Scale**: collect and incorporate feedback to the presented definitions, workflow, and matrix. Adjust the danger scale accordingly. Leader: Karsten Müller
- **Risk Communication**. Leader: Mark Diggins

Next general assembly

2025 in Styria, AT