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Conference on European Tornadoes and Severe Storms

European tornado climatology, 1960-1989

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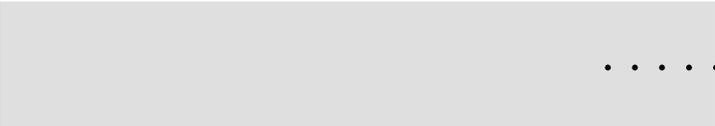
Abstract: Although there have been earlier attempts at collating reports of European tornadoes and waterspouts over differing time periods and with varying degrees of success, the following tornado and waterspout climatology is believed to be the first comprehensive investigation at the European continental level; previous studies have been at national or regional levels only.

While TORRO was originally only primarily interested in British whirlwinds, reports of any elsewhere in Europe were also kept with a file containing European reports being officially established when TORRO was founded in October 1974 (Meaden, 1985). Although even in 1985 TORRO was not actively seeking European reports, the foundations of a European tornado database originated from that year when Meaden (1985) proposed that "TORRO could in future act as a clearing house for all known European tornado events".

This paper is based on research - undertaken at the University College Swansea throughout the 1990s - which helps to fulfil that proposal, as well as extending it to include waterspouts. It has now been some 10 years since TORRO started to actively pursue European reports, a process which has accelerated in the past few years with the on-going appointment of European Representatives in each nation. Such people act as points of contact who are in a better position to collate and forward reports from their own nations. Already the expansion of TORRO from a British organisation into a continental-wide one is bearing fruit, with the last few years seeing a rapid increase in the number of reports reaching the organisation. The more recent events lie outside the period of under study here but, as with the United Kingdom tornado climatology, TORRO will update the European version at regular intervals.

However that the United Kingdom has vastly more reported tornadoes than the rest of Europe put together clearly indicates that there is much more work to be done - this also hints at what TORRO believes to be an exceedingly tornadic continent. Furthermore, tornadoes have not even been reported to TORRO from several nations. So while many aspects of this climatology are based on a relatively small data-set, some useful conclusions can be drawn. At the very least, the existence of this work

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alone will serve to bring more European tornado (and indeed other severe weather) reports to TORRO.

Reference:

MEADEN, G.T. (1985): TORRO, the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation - the main objectives and scope of the network. Part A - its formation and expansion. *Journal of Meteorology*, 10, 182-185.