ESSL Newsletter 2026-3

March 2026

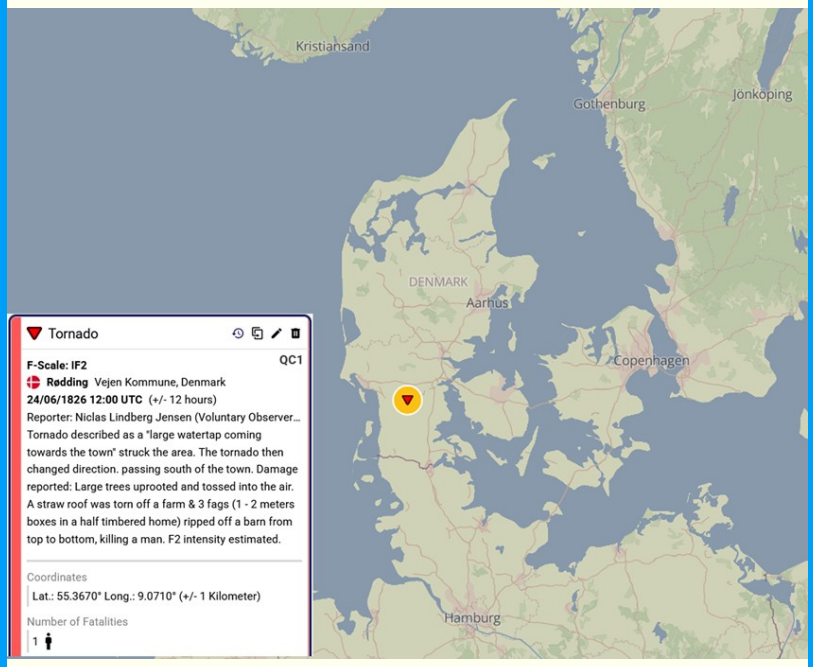
20 years of ESSL – monthly jubilee topic

As part of the celebrations of **20 years of ESSL**, we are publishing a series of monthly jubilee topics highlighting different aspects of our work and community. Each month, we briefly revisit a historical high-impact event featured as the “topic of the month” in the ESSL calendar. This time, we focus on the **tornado report in Rodding, Denmark, in 1826.**

Tornado in Rødding, Denmark

In **1826**, the town of **Rødding in southern Denmark** witnessed a tornado (**classified as IF2**). The event was preserved in local historical records as a story passed down through generations before being committed to writing. Townsfolk described watching a massive “watertap” approaching from the east. For a moment it appeared to be heading directly for the town center. Then, it veered south, reaching the edge of town before moving onto the farm of the local bailiff.
The tornado damage at the farm was significant. Large mature trees were uprooted and thrown into the air and the farm buildings were heavily damaged, with walls partially collapsed. A carpenter named Mads Nissen, who was working inside a barn at the time, was killed by the

collapsing structure. An unidentified man in the farmyard was lifted off the ground by the tornado. He threw himself to the ground and grabbed onto a clump of bushes until the tornado passed. The tornado also swept up approximately 20 meters of linen that had been laid out in the fields for bleaching. When the vortex finally dissipated at the edge of the property, it dropped its contents: water, fish, straw, branches and the linen. The presence of fish might indicate that the tornado had either formed over or passed across a nearby body of water at some point during its track.
Source: Marcussen, A. J. (1912). *Optegnelser fra Rødding by og sogn.* Re-released: *Slægtsforskernes Bibliotek* (PDF), 11 September 2017.



Location of the 1826 Rødding tornado in Denmark (red triangle; source ESWD).

Training highlights: tailored course at BULATSA and first ESSL radar course

With a busy training period ahead, we briefly look back at two recent ESSL training activities: a tailored course at BULATSA and the first edition of our new radar course.

Tailored training at BULATSA, Sofia

In early February, **ESSL** made its third appearance at **BULATSA in Sofia, Bulgaria**, to deliver a course

on forecasting and nowcasting convective storms, with special emphasis on new data from MTG. This time, **Tomáš Púčik** and **Alessandro Marraccini** joined forces as trainers.

While the topic was convection, the atmosphere outside was rather wintry, with snow on the ground on arrival. The course brought together both new participants and several familiar faces from previous ESSL courses and Testbeds. The trainers greatly enjoyed the course atmosphere thanks to the interactions with participants, especially when it came to discussing their favourite topics: *the Lightning Imager, storm-top features, and convective storm archetypes*. Alessandro also highlighted the very high culinary standard of the BULATSA canteen.

First ESSL radar nowcasting course held successfully

From **9 to 13 March**, ESSL organised its first **radar nowcasting course** delivered entirely by ESSL lecturers. Preparing the course required extensive work: reviewing a large body of existing material and publications, developing a completely new slide set, and carefully deciding which aspects of radar meteorology are most important for forecasters in operational practice.

Over five days, participants were guided through topics ranging from basic reflectivity features such as WERs and BWERs, to vertical cross-sections, the interpretation of radial velocity signatures, and the use of polarimetric radar variables. The latter in particular was new to many participants and also one of the more demanding parts of the course for the trainers, **Tomáš Púčik** and **Bram van**

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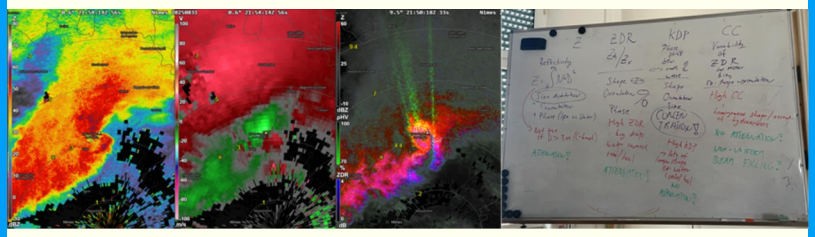

Thanks to the lively interaction with the **15 participants**, the course developed a strong practical focus, helping to identify the main take-home messages for each radar variable and technique. The final part of the week placed these concepts into a broader operational context by showing how radar data can support the nowcasting of specific severe thunderstorm hazards. **Throughout the course, participants worked with real radar data from selected severe weather cases using ESSL’s new radar displayer**.

The first edition of the course was very well received, achieving an average evaluation score of 9.4/10. Participants also provided many helpful suggestions for further improvements, and **a new edition is planned for late autumn 2026 or early spring 2027**.

Border-crossing tornadoes in Europe

Border-crossing tornadoes are rare in Europe, but they pose an interesting challenge for national tornado statistics. In this article, the ESSL team, led by Thilo Kühne, reviews known cases and explains how the ESWD currently handles such events. More details can be found here.

Tornado path of the IF1.5 tornado in the Lithuania-Belarus border area on 05 June 2025 based on satellite data showing forest damage and tree falls (mapping: ESSL, basemap: GoogleMaps)

ESSL training calendar and Testbed 2026

Date	Activity
13 – 17 April 2026	Course: Aviation Forecasting of Severe Convection
4 – 8 May 2026	ESSL-EUMETSAT Forecaster Testbed (MTG focus)
18 – 22 May 2026	ESSL-EUMETSAT Forecaster Testbed (MTG focus)
1 – 2 June 2026	NEW 2-day ONLINE refresher on forecasting severe convection (qualification: at least one prior ESSL course or testbed week)
15 – 19 June 2026	ESSL Testbed 2026 – regular week (focus on radar and NWP)
22 – 26 June 2026	ESSL Testbed 2026 – expert week (on invitation only)
7 – 11 September 2026	EMS Annual Meeting (co-sponsored by ESSL)
14 – 18 September 2026	ESSL-EUMETSAT Forecaster Testbed (MTG focus)
28 September 2026	20th Anniversary of the ESSL – jubilee event
29 September – 1 October 2026	IF Scale and wind damage assessment workshop
5 – 9 October 2026	ESSL-EUMETSAT Forecaster Testbed (MTG focus)
February or March 2027	2nd edition of new radar course – pre-announcement: Optimal use of radar data in severe storm nowcasting

You can find details about all events and registration at

https://www.events.essl.org/.

Unsure which course to attend? Try our online quiz!

For further information about registration, please contact us via email at events@essl.org.

Or contact us for tailored training or forecaster training on the job.

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