



ECMWF Press notice 9 December 2020

Bonn to host new ECMWF premises in 2021

Whilst ECMWF headquarters are remaining in the UK, the Centre is expanding some of its activities across other Member States. The development of the new data centre in Bologna, Italy, is progressing. It will open in 2021 and become fully operational in 2022. New offices, to be located in Bonn, Germany, and with a focus on activities that ECMWF conducts in partnership with the EU, will start to welcome staff around summer 2021. To ensure that the scientific and technical synergies which have been key to ECMWF's success over the years continue to flourish, it is planned that some staff from the Centre's core activities will also move to the new facility. Whilst the first wave of staff to move around mid-2021 will be accommodated in temporary offices, it is expected that the new and permanent ECMWF offices will become available in Bonn in 2026. This move to a multi-site operation aims to foster even more collaboration across Europe.

The new offices to open in Bonn will provide ECMWF with a very favourable central location in Europe as well as a high density of world-class scientific institutions in the immediate surroundings, not only in Germany. Whilst the actual building will not be available until 2026, ECMWF will have access from 2021 to a close-by temporary facility meeting all of the Centre's requirements.

“Germany is committed to science and technology – and Europe,” said Minister Scheuer. ***“A commitment made evident through our unwavering support of ECMWF and EU programmes like Copernicus. This significant investment is not just in ECMWF, but in the future of meteorological science and collaboration in Europe – a critical necessity in the face of climate change.”***

“We take our responsibility for ECMWF's ongoing success seriously. Our primary objective is to strengthen the Centre's ability as a key stakeholder for EU programmes and to secure its position as world leader. We are convinced that ECMWF's new location in Bonn will contribute to its ongoing success.”

In addition, the ECMWF Council will be investigating the optional German-Finnish offer of an ECMWF Activity Node (EANodes) concept, which includes the setting up of an EANode in Helsinki, Finland. The EANode concept explores the wider scientific expertise in the Member States to strengthen the science in areas of strategic importance for ECMWF science development.

The decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union does not affect ECMWF's core activities, and its status as an intergovernmental organisation allows the Centre to deliver its activities from any of its Member States. However, with ECMWF's partnership with the European Union growing over the years, and especially with its role in the EU's ground-breaking Copernicus Programme, it has become necessary to move the associated activities to a location compatible with EU funding policies relevant to them.

The selection of the new location was undertaken through an international competition within the Centre's Member States, and an evaluation conducted by a panel made of representatives of non-bidding Member States, and experts. Selection criteria included financial aspects of the proposal, but also and importantly, its environmental credentials and how it would enable scientific collaboration.

Marianne Thyrring, Director General of the Danish Meteorological Institute, who had the responsibility of chairing the Evaluation Panel overseeing the assessment of each proposal, praised the high standards of the Member States' responses. ***"I want to praise the high quality of all proposals received by ECMWF as part of this international competition,"*** she stated. ***"It was a humbling and inspiring experience to assess each of them. The amount of effort, enthusiasm and financial investment that they each represent made it abundantly clear how committed our community is to the future of weather and climate sciences, and to ECMWF as a lynchpin for the critical collaboration that is required for us to continue to progress. Our community should take pride that so many nations responded to the call and provided proposals of such high standards. It is a good omen for our future as a community."***

Florence Rabier, Director-General of ECMWF, expressed her thanks to all involved in such a smooth process. She stated: ***"We are extremely grateful to our Member States for their constant and unshakable support to ECMWF. Becoming a multi-site operation will have its challenges, but will present great opportunities for collaboration, as we are already seeing in Bologna where our new data centre is being developed. We are looking forward to working with our colleagues in Germany and across the Member States to make this invitation a reality. Our two poles in Italy and Germany, together with our Headquarters in the UK, make a perfect distribution to ensure the best possible knowledge sharing across Europe."***

[Further details: Bonn, Germany](#) (PDF)

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Notes to editors

ECMWF is the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts.

ECMWF is an intergovernmental organisation, acting as both a research institute and a 24/7 operational service, producing global numerical weather predictions and other data for its 34 Member and Co-operating States and the broader community. The Centre has one of the largest supercomputer facilities and meteorological data archives in the world. Currently co-located in Reading, UK, with the rest of ECMWF's facilities, the data centre is moving to Bologna, Italy, with opening planned to take place in June 2021. Other strategic activities include delivering advanced training and assisting the WMO in implementing its programmes.

Over the years, and whilst remaining independent, ECMWF has built and developed a partnership with the European Union, first in the field of research projects, evolving over the past few years into becoming an entrusted entity for the Climate Change and Atmosphere Monitoring Services of its ground-breaking Copernicus programme. Whilst the location of ECMWF in the UK is not directly challenged by Brexit, due to its status as an intergovernmental organisation supporting its Member States, it could affect its ability to act on behalf of the EU for its large-scale programmes, such as Copernicus. To mitigate this impact, ECMWF has been seeking to open a new facility in a location compatible with all key European Union funding policies relevant to ECMWF.

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