

FESTIVE FIRST STEP TOWARD AN ITALIAN METEOROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Rovereto, a small city surrounded by the beautiful Alps, was the scene of an unprecedented convention on 16–17 October 2015—the first Italian Festival of Meteorology, jointly organized by the city and the University of Trento. Professionals, students, and amateurs from public and private weather services, research institutes, universities, companies, and associations took the opportunity to meet one another and get a feel for the system of meteorology in their country.

Through a series of activities—including talks, exhibits, movies, lectures, and demonstrations of simple experiments for children—a varied community of more than 600 people took an active part in this event.

Fifteen companies operating in various fields connected with meteorology benefitted from the opportunity to display their services and products close to the auditorium. Moreover, about 30 associations of amateur meteorologists, mostly active as chapters at the regional level, presented themselves and their social activities to a broader audience. Their members were able to meet others from similar associations.

Experts from various organizations presented different perspectives on meteorology in Italy and abroad. Their talks covered activities of national and regional weather services, education in meteorology in Italy, expectations from the private sector, and communication of meteorology in mass media and in schools.

Twenty-six distinguished speakers were invited from the Italian National Weather Service, regional weather services, Institutes of the National Research Council (CNR), the Italian Space Agency (ASI), universities, high schools, associations, private and public companies, the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, the World Meteorological Organization, the Italian Geophysical Society, and AMS.

Particularly appreciated was the invited talk given by Franco Einaudi, past AMS President, who offered a stimulating overview of the Society's history, mission, organization, and outreach. In particular, he emphasized the richness deriving from the Society's varied composition, bringing together academics, professionals, and amateurs. He also pointed out the relevant institutional role of AMS in supporting

decision-making at the highest levels of U.S. government through position papers, hearings at legislative assemblies, and advice to governmental bodies.

Einaudi provided many fruitful suggestions for the expected establishment in Italy of a national meteorological society—the Italian Association of Atmospheric Sciences and Meteorology—whose statutes will soon be disclosed. The scope of this society will favor the development in Italy of the atmospheric sciences and meteorology, offering suitable events and resources—such as topical meetings, a biennial plenary conference, and a new scientific journal—to pull together the meteorological community active in Italy and make it tightly connected to ongoing international progress. It will also support the adoption of standards and rules for the acknowledgment of professional meteorologists. As part of this effort the new society will also encourage major Italian universities to establish MSc degrees in meteorology, which have been noticeably absent in Italy.

Finally, in cooperation with the National Professional Journalist Association, a short course on “Communicating the Weather” was offered to more than 40 journalists seeking to learn more on how to appropriately convey news about weather events and weather forecasting capabilities.

More information on the meeting can be found at www.festivalmeteorologia.it.



AMS Past President Franco Einaudi (far left) speaks at the Italian Festival of Meteorology. [Photo credit: Luca Valenzin/©University of Trento]