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Conference on European Tornadoes and Severe Storms

Tornadoes and severe storms of 90's in the Czech Republic

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Preceding the political changes in the Central and Eastern Europe at the end of 80's, usage of the term "tornado" has been something rather exceptional in that region, at least in the former Czechoslovakia. Therefore, climatological knowledge of severe convective storms has been scanty, even resulting in a lack of Czech terminology for some of the convective weather phenomena. The fall of the "iron curtain" has promoted a much higher information exchange, which has been further enhanced with the onset of the Internet. This "information boom" has reflected itself also in meteorology and a sudden increase of tornado reports is probably one of its impacts.

While tornado reports before 1990 have been very scarce (elsewhere in these proceedings), leading even to conclusions that "tornadoes do not occur in Central Europe" by some local meteorologists, 1994 begins a period of more frequent reports of tornadoes in the Czech Republic. Although some of the tornado reports have turned out to be false (through having done by local surveys), it seems that the average rate of tornadoes is about 1 tornado day (a day with one or more tornadoes) per year. However, since the awareness of tornadoes by the general public remains rather very low, some cases are likely to escape documentation and the actual rate could be somewhat higher. Since CHMI is recently implementing Doppler radar techniques (elsewhere in these proceedings), radar-based detection of supercell storms should be possible in the near future.

This paper gives a brief overview of the known cases from 90's and deals with some of them in detail. Current weaknesses of the damage survey capability and data analysis are discussed; a plan for future national project is introduced.