

Deutscher Bundestag,

Die 108. Sitzung des Ausschusses für Verkehr und Infrastruktur,

Mittwoch, dem 26. April 2017, 8:30 Uhr – 9:30 Uhr

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Entwurf eines Ersten Gesetzes zur Änderung des Gesetzes über den Deutschen Wetterdienst

Statement on the first draft bill on the amendment of the Law on the Deutscher Wetterdienst; at the request of Deutscher Bundestag, Ausschuss für Verkehr und Digitale Infrastruktur.

Prof. Anton Eliassen, past Director General of the Norwegian Meteorological Institute (MET Norway) from 1999 to the end of 2016, and presently Chair of the EUMETSAT Council.

I refer to the first draft bill on the amendment:

The most significant change seems to be the change invoked by § 6 (2a) 2 together with § 4(1) and § 4(6).

This will allow DWD to provide services, based on information acquired through its legally defined tasks, targeted at the general public free of charge. I strongly support this amendment, for the following reasons:

In 2007 MET Norway made all its meteorological data free of charge, and with no conditions on their further use. (In this connection, "meteorological data" means historical meteorological observations and observations in real time; as well as forecasts from our numerical weather prediction activity.)

As a consequence, MET Norway could provide the general public with daily modern weather forecasts, free of charge, on the internet, to a large extent in graphical form. The forecasts are designed to suit the needs of the general public.

The general public gives a large contribution to the budget of MET Norway through their taxes. In return, it should get a modern weather service, meeting its typical needs. Up 2007, only general text forecasts were available free of charge. The text forecasts contained far less information than MET Norway had available, and which was relevant for the general public.

The internet weather service, which MET Norway started in 2007 (together with the national broadcasting company NRK), now (2016) has around 9 million unique users per week, in weeks with high weather interest. This can be compared with the population of Norway, which is 5 million. The weather warnings are also issued on this site. *The general public in Norway now has a weather service consistent with the present state-of-the-art of modern meteorology.*

At the same time, the commercial meteorological sector does no longer have to buy the data from MET Norway, and are free to use them in whichever way they wish. There is one large commercial meteorological operator based in Norway, namely Storm Geo. Storm Geo has grown significantly

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**Ausschuss für Verkehr
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since 2007, and now operates worldwide. It provides a variety of specialized high-quality products and services.

This shows that it is quite possible to provide modern meteorological forecasts to the general public free of charge, and at the same time have a prospering commercial meteorological sector. The commercial meteorological sector earns its revenue by providing advanced products, services and advice to users that need meteorological information to suit their particular needs. Much of the activities in the society are weather- or climate dependent, so the market is there.

Before 2007, MET Norway sold its meteorological data. However, to purchase weather data is generally not a high priority for commercial businesses, and neither for the general public. The selling of meteorological data gave very little revenue to the institute compared to the total institute budget. The high-quality data that MET Norway possessed was not used very much in society. Price reduction did not help, it seemed that the actual purchasing act was a major obstacle.

The situation was therefore sub-optimal since the investment and operating costs of MET Norway were not efficiently utilized to the benefit of society. At present, with free data, the data of MET Norway are widely used by society, and the investment and operating costs of MET Norway give much more benefit to our society.

Other changes in § 4:

I support the inclusion of “climate” and “climatology” in various subparagraphs of § 4. Climate change is becoming more and more visible, and is already impacting society.

I also support the extension of § 4 (1) 2 extending the duty of DWD to encompass more than shipping, i.e. “traffic routes and vital infrastructures”. This seems very reasonable from a safety and security perspective.

Other changes in § 6:

I support the formulation of § 6 (2a) 1. It seems reasonable, also from a safety and security point of view, that DWD can provide services free of charge to cities, in addition to the Federal Government and the Federal States. It is important to ensure that the world-class high quality data of DWD is used as efficiently as possible to safeguard the municipalities.

Concerning the change proposed in § 6 (2a) 3, I assume that this is a result of implementing the Inspire directive I German law.



Anton Eliassen

Oslo, Monday 24 April 2017