



FLASH: A new EU project related to Mediterranean flash floods

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A new European Union FP6 project titled FLASH will run from 2006-2009 in an attempt to improve our knowledge of historic flash floods in the Mediterranean region, while trying to improve short term (hours) and mid term (days) forecasts of heavy precipitation events. Flash floods are a serious problem in the Mediterranean region in particular, and in Europe in general, resulting from large weather systems with embedded severe thunderstorms that deposit large amounts of rainfall in short periods of time. Since lightning activity can be detected and monitored continuously from thousands of kilometers away, this new EU project will use lightning data, together with other available observations, to better detect and track the location, intensity and timing of heavy convective precipitation events. We plan to develop algorithms to provide on-line nowcasts and forecasts of areas at high-risk of heavy precipitation and flooding across the Mediterranean. Our experimental products will be provided in real time to end-users and stakeholders for use in their planning activities. The societal benefits of such advanced warnings will be investigated, especially in relation to risk management.