Monthly and seasonal temperature reconstructions for Central Europe derived from documentary evidence and instrumental records since AD 1500

Petr Dobrovolny
Institute of Geography, Masaryk University, CZ-611 37 Brno, Czech Republic
phone: +420-549-49-1490,
fax: +420-549-49-1491
e-mail: dobro@sci.muni.cz

Anders Moberg
Department of Physical Geography and Quaternary Geology, Stockholm University, Sweden

Christian Pfister
Institute of History, Bern University, Switzerland

Rudolf Brazdil
Institute of Geography, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Rudiger Glaser
Institute for Physical Geography, University of Freiburg, Germany

Rob Wilson
School of Geography & Geosciences, University of St Andrews, Scotland, U.K.

Aryan van Engelen
Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute, De Bilt, the Netherlands

Danuta Limanowka
Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, Kraków, Poland

Andrea Kiss
Department of Physical Geography and Geoinformatics, University of Szeged, Hungary

Monika Haličková
Institute of Geography, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Jarmila Mackova
Institute of Geography, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic

Dirk Riemann
Institute for Physical Geography, University of Freiburg, Germany

Jurg Luterbacher
Oeschger Centre for Climate Change Research and Institute of Geography, Climatology and Meteorology, Bern, Switzerland

Reinhard Böhm
Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics, Vienna, Austria
Abstract

Monthly temperature reconstructions for Central Europe since AD 1500 are developed from documentary index series from Germany, Switzerland and the Czech Republic covering 1500–1854 and instrumental temperature records for 1760–2007. Documentary evidence from the Low Countries, the Carpathian Basin and Poland are used for cross-checking. The instrumental station records are corrected for all known inhomogeneities, including insufficient radiation protection of early thermometers and the urban heat island effect. The documentary data series correlate with instrumental temperatures, most strongly in winter (86% explained variance in January) and least in autumn (56% in September). For annual mean temperatures, 81% of the variance is explained. Verification statistics indicate high reconstruction skill for most months and seasons. The last 20 years (since 1988) stand out as the warmest 20-year period, accounting for the calibration uncertainty and decreases in proxy data quality before the calibration period. The new reconstruction displays a previously unobserved long-term decrease in DJF, MAM and JJA temperature variability over last five centuries. Compiled monthly, seasonal and annual series have a potential to improve the robustness of gridded reconstructions. Further improvement would be achieved if documentary data from other European countries are further developed.

Keywords. Temperature reconstruction, documentary climate evidence, temperature indices, homogenized instrumental series, Central Europe.