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Comparison of three different methods of perturbing the potential vorticity field in mesoscale forecasts of Mediterranean heavy precipitation events: 10 June 2000 and 9 October 2002

Maria-del-Mar Vich (1), Romualdo Romero (1), Evelyne Richard (2), Philippe Arbogast (3), and Karine Maynard (3)

(1) Meteorology Grup, Dpt. Física, Universitat Illes Balears, Palma de Mallorca, Spain (mar.vich@uib.es), (2) Laboratoire d'Aérologie CNRS UMR 5560, Université de Toulouse, Toulouse, France, (3) Météo-France, Toulouse, France

Heavy precipitation events occur regularly in the western Mediterranean region. These events often have a high impact on the society due to economic and personal losses. The improvement of the mesoscale numerical forecasts of these events can be used to prevent or minimize their impact on the society. In previous studies, two ensemble prediction systems (EPSs) based on perturbing the model initial and boundary conditions were developed and tested for a collection of high-impact MEDEX cyclonic episodes. These EPSs perturb the initial and boundary potential vorticity (PV) field through a PV inversion algorithm. This technique ensures modifications of all the meteorological fields without compromising the mass-wind balance. One EPS introduces the perturbations along the zones of the three-dimensional PV structure presenting the local most intense values and gradients of the field (a semi-objective choice, *PV-gradient*), while the other perturbs the PV field over the MM5 adjoint model calculated sensitivity zones (an objective method, *PV-adjoint*). The PV perturbations are set from a PV error climatology (PVEC) that characterizes typical PV errors in the ECMWF forecasts, both in intensity and displacement. This intensity and displacement perturbation of the PV field is chosen randomly, while its location is given by the perturbation zones defined in each ensemble generation method.

A new approach based on a manual perturbation of the PV field has been tested and compared with the previous results. This technique uses the satellite water vapor (WV) observations to guide the correction of initial PV structures. The correction of the PV field attempts to improve the match between the PV distribution and the WV image, taking advantage of the relation between dark and bright features of WV images and PV anomalies, under some assumptions. Afterwards, the PV inversion algorithm is applied to run a forecast with the corresponding perturbed initial state (*PV-satellite*).

The non hydrostatic MM5 mesoscale model has been used to run all forecasts. The simulations are performed for a two-day period with a 22.5 km resolution domain (Domain 1 in *http://mm5forecasts.uib.es*) nested in the ECMWF large-scale forecast fields. The MEDEX cyclones of 10 June 2000 and 9 October 2002, that produced heavy precipitations over Catalonia, are a suitable testbed to compare the performance of each ensemble and the PV-satellite method.

The performace of both ensemble forecasting systems and PV-satellite technique is evaluated through the verification of the rainfall field. The results show that the PV-satellite technique performance lies within the performance range obtained by both PV-gradient and PV-adjoint ensembles; it is even better than the non-perturbed ensemble member. Thus, perturbing randomly using the PV error climatology and introducing the perturbations in the zones given by each EPS captures the mismatch between PV and WV fields better than manual perturbations made by an expert forecaster, at least for the studied events.