

Stronger storms forecast for Europe

March 30 2006

Swiss and British scientists say European storms might grow stronger and more frequent, significantly affecting infrastructure and natural systems.

The researchers issued the warning after aggregating a number of regional European climate models to produce more refined estimates of extreme precipitation increases over most of the continent by the late 21st century.

Lead author Christoph Frei and colleagues at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich joined researchers from Britain's University of Reading to estimate exceptionally strong precipitation events during the next 100 years.

Their analysis shows Alpine regions and northern European locations above 45 degrees latitude, including such major cities as London, Berlin and Stockholm, are likely to experience increases in frequency and strength of fall, winter and springtime extreme precipitation events by the year 2100.

In some areas, unusually strong storms now expected to occur once a century will occur at approximately 20- to 40-year intervals.

The research appears in the March 24 issue of the Journal of Geophysical Research-Atmospheres.

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