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Operational forecasting of a snowfall event over the Greater Athens Area

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Abstract. A case of an intense snowfall in the Greater Athens Area (GAA) between 16 and 18 February 2008 is investigated. The physical processes that forced the snowfall event are identified and analysed. The main factor causing the event at its start was the entrainment of arctic air masses from North-Eastern Europe. At a second stage, the Aegean Sea acted as the Great Lakes of Canada and North-East USA and in association with the existing extremely cold air masses aloft and the enrichment of the air with humidity and heat led to the enhancement of the snowfall in the GAA. In the final stage of the event, the local meteorological conditions associated with the topography of the area resulted in the occurrence of very intense snowfall event on the leeward side of the GAA. The available operational observations and forecast tools were used for accurately predicting the intensity, duration and evolution of the event.

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