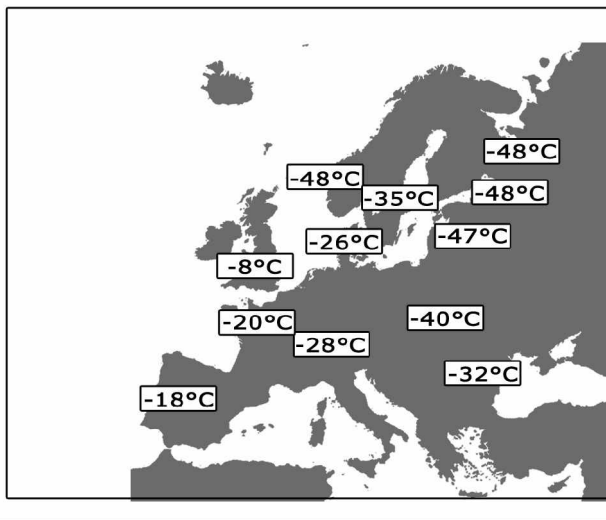


## Our focal point

Mid January 1940,  
minus temperatures in degrees Celsius  
*according newspaper reports*



This investigation is not concerned with naval history but with global warming, respectively climate changes. Describing military events in Europe since September 1939 would require any historical writer to make the distinction between activities on land, in the air and at sea. Military aspects interest us only as far as they affect the climate. As this investigation sustains that climate should be defined as the 'continuation of oceans by other means'<sup>i</sup>, viz. atmospheric humidity instead of ocean water, a clear distinction can be made.

What happened above and under the sea surface is what interest us: activities like ship propulsion, shelling, mining, bombing, torpedoing, depth charges, ship scuttling and sinking, ship fire and explosion, loss of cargo (oil, chemicals, bulk), etc. Each and every activity that resulted in the 'churning and turning' of the seawater is very significant for the warming or cooling of air temperature. If the status of the ocean changes, a corresponding change of the atmospheric conditions is inevitable.

The interconnection is obvious. After only 100 days of war, Northern Europe tumbled straight into severe Little Ice Age conditions, comparable only to those from more than 100 years ago. First, let's see what it meant to Northern Europe to be thrown back in the Little Ice Age and focus on the causes of the arctic war winter of 1939/40.

<sup>i</sup> Arnd Bernaerts, Letter to Editor, NATURE, Vol.360, the 26th of November 1992, p.292.

SIR – The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the earlier struggle for a Convention on Climate Change may serve as a reminder that the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea has its tenth anniversary on 10 December. It is not only one of the most comprehensive and strongest international treaties ever negotiated but the best possible legal means to protect the global climate. But sadly, there has been little interest in using it for this purpose. For too long climate has been defined as the average weather and Rio was notable to define it at all. Instead, the Climate Change Convention uses the term 'climate system', defining it as "the totality of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere and geosphere and their interactions". All that this boils down to is 'the interactions of the natural system'. What is the point of a legal term if it explains nothing? For decades, the real question has been who is responsible for the climate. Climate should have been defined as 'the continuation of the oceans by other means'. Thus, the 1982 Convention could long since have been used to protect the climate. After all, it is the most powerful tool with which to force politicians and the community of states into actions.