

We thank the reviewer for his/her appreciation of the manuscript and for recognizing the value of our manuscript. We also thank the reviewer for the suggestions/comments/feedback that helped us improve our manuscript, and for taking the time to review our paper. We have reviewed all the comments and suggestions and provided a point-by-point response below. The reviewer's comments are shown in black, and the replies are shown in red.

The paper concerns a case of winter 2025/2026 in Bucharest in Romania, which generated intense media reports about historically exceptional cold and snowy weather. The authors confront temperature and snow fall in Bucharest and Romania in January and February 2026 with mean values in the reference period 1971-2000 and with historical data from five stations in Romania from the period starting at the end of the nineteenth century. They have shown that mean monthly temperature and mean monthly minimum temperature are characterized by a positive anomaly when compared with mean values from the reference period. But in case of snowfall episodes the one from 18 February from Bucharest was the highest observed in the record starting at the end of the 19th century, however both the duration and the maximum depth of the snow cover was far from the extreme values. Then they analyse the reports of media items Romanian and international and indicate that the media representations diverge systematically from the scientific, report an exceptionally cold and snowy winter, although in reality it was warmer than typical in the reference period, and although a single snowfall was indeed unprecedented, the maximum snow cover thickness was significantly lower than typical for the reference period.

This is an interesting study, but several elements raise my serious reservations.

The introduction should include a presentation of the problem and a characterization of similar cases from the past or from other regions of the world. However, in this work, the introduction summarizes the research findings, quite well indeed.

Thank you for this comment. We will revise the Introduction according to the reviewer's suggestion.

The analysis of thermal and snow conditions in January and February 2026 against the background of the reference period (i.e. 1971-2000) was performed very precisely and raises no objections.

Thank you for this appreciation.

However, the unique nature of the events is problematic. In the case of mean daily temperature and mean daily minimum temperature, January and February 2026 were truly warm compared to the reference period. However, as the authors themselves point out, the average person relates weather conditions to their recent experiences, i.e., the period of the last few years. We typically wear clothing and footwear appropriate for such weather conditions, not those appropriate for the weather during the reference period. In the case of rapidly progressing warming, the differences are very pronounced.

Thank you for this comment. We agree that the shifting-baseline point deserves fuller treatment, and will expand the discussion to more explicitly address how the perceived "unprecedented" nature of the event may relate to recent (rather than 1971–2000) experienced conditions, alongside the Social Amplification of Risk Framework-based interpretation already presented.

In the case of snowfall, the single-day snowfall of 45 cm, as the authors themselves admit, was the highest recorded in Bucharest since the beginning of the measurement series, i.e., the end of the 19th century. The fact that the snow cover was significantly lower than previously recorded does not diminish the exceptional nature of this event. The authors themselves mention serious traffic disruptions and power outages for over 200,000 people. Regular snow removal after several

centimeters of snowfall is one thing, but the need to quickly clear 45 cm of snow in the absence of electricity is quite another. Additional problems include defrosting refrigerators, spoiling vast quantities of food, the inability to prepare hot drinks and meals, and often even lack of heating and water. Add to this the difficulty of refueling or shopping. All those who personally had to deal with this undoubtedly consider this event extreme and/or catastrophic.

Thank you for this comment. We agree the impacts of the 18th February event were genuinely severe and that the single-day snowfall total was itself locally unprecedented; we did not intend to diminish this. We will revise the manuscript to more clearly separate the (valid) exceptionality of the precipitation/impact event from the (unsupported) media framing of it as a thermally extreme cold event, so that the paper's critique targets the latter specifically rather than reading as dismissive of the former.

Another problem is the analysis of media reports. Firstly, most of it, including all tables and figures, was moved to the supplement. Secondly, the analysis was not separated into the sections concerning reports on thermal conditions, which were indeed overly dramatic, and the reports on snowfall on February 18, 2026. Only a few days in January were cold, and calling them extremely cold is a gross exaggeration, but the snowfall was indeed extreme.

Thank you for this comment. In line with the aforementioned suggestion, we will modify the manuscript accordingly: moving the key media-analysis figures/tables into the main text, and revising the content analysis to separate coverage of thermal/cold conditions from coverage of the 18th February snowfall event, so that the "exaggeration" finding is explicitly scoped to the cold-framing rather than the snowfall impacts.

The recommendations proposed by the authors are also unclear. Who are they aimed at? Meteorological services should be responsible for providing accurate information about weather conditions and the resulting threats to the public. Administrative authorities and services responsible for public health and safety should obtain precise information and possible warnings from them, not from the media. Analyzing the uniqueness of events should also be a task for the meteorological service. It's unreasonable to expect journalists to be familiar with climate series dating back several decades. From my own experience, I know that journalists readily use such analyses if they are available.

Thank you for this comment. We will revise the Recommendations to clarify their intended audience, framing the proposed context protocol primarily as a tool for meteorological services to produce and readily supply (rather than an expectation placed on journalists), which administrative/public-safety authorities and media can then draw on directly.

Other notes regarding the recommendations:

Due to the rapid pace of climate change, it has recently been recommended to choose the last thirty years ending with a full decade as the reference period (in this case, the years 1991-2020). These are still values within the grasp of the average reader.

Thank you for this suggestion. We note that the 1971–2000 baseline is the standard WMO climatological reference period and will retain it as the primary basis for our analysis; we will add a brief clarifying note on this choice in the manuscript.

Journalists should use language understandable to the average reader, so the percentile rank of the anomalies and current TN10p values are generally inadvisable. The multitude of definitions of coldspell would require specifying the current definition, which complicates matters.

Thank you for this comment. We will bear this in mind when framing the proposed context protocol, favoring plain-language descriptors over technical metrics (e.g., percentile ranks, TN10p) for public-facing communication, while retaining the precise definitions in the scientific analysis itself.

Generally, the recommendations contained in this text are recommendations for meteorological service announcements rather than media reports.

However, I fully support the idea that the media should undertake targeted educational initiatives to support improvements in weather and climate literacy, particularly with respect to the interpretation of warnings and the historical context of extreme events as well as presenting concise explanatory material on the interpretation of extreme-weather indicators and terminology, particularly the distinction between anomalous, severe, and climatologically extreme conditions. Both should be made in cooperation with local meteorological services or scientists.

Thank you for this comment. We will revise the Recommendations to make clear that the proposed protocol is primarily intended for meteorological service communications, while also incorporating your suggestion that media outlets pursue targeted weather/climate literacy initiatives (covering warning interpretation, historical context, and terminology such as anomalous vs. severe vs. climatologically extreme), developed in cooperation with meteorological services or scientists.