

Brief report on the 2014 IUGG Conference on Geophysical Risk (GEORISK 2014) held in Madrid, Spain, in November 18-21, 2014

Under the title “IMPROVING GEOPHYSICAL RISK ASSESSMENT, FORECASTING, AND MANAGEMENT”, it was celebrated in Madrid, Spain, in November 18-21, 2014, the second GEORISK conference organised by the IUGG Commission on Geophysical Risk and Sustainability (www.georisk2014.com). The conference was attended by 63 scientists from 14 different nationalities and addressed through several keynote presentations and a poster session different topics of major interest for the commission and in general for scientists working on geophysical risk reduction, which included: 1) Global Risks assessment for natural hazards: methods and practices, 2) Modelling and assessment of geophysical hazards, 3) Vulnerability assessment methodologies, 4) Monitoring and early warning systems for geophysical hazards, 5) Decision making models, and 6) Communication protocols and practices. The conference also included a side event on Extreme Geohazards that included several keynote presentations and a panel discussion.

One of the most important aspects of the Madrid Georisk Conference was the interaction between participants and the exchange of knowledge and experiences of scientists and professionals from different disciplines related to geophysical risk reduction. The general discussions that followed each scientific session were warmly followed by all participants who actively participated in all them. It was of particular interest the sessions that included presentations and general discussions on the role of Civil Protections and Communication Protocols during crisis, respectively, which generated the most heated and constructive debates.

It is important to remark some of the main conclusions that arisen from this conference. It was clear for all participants that collaboration among different disciplines and experts is necessary to successfully address risk reduction from the scientific side. Also, it was emphasised that effective risk reduction urgently needs to transform theory into practice, meaning with this that all the effort made by science to understand and predict hazardous phenomena, needs to be translated into a societal value, and that scientists need to be directly involved in programs designed for risk reduction. A direct collaboration between scientists and Civil Protections and decision makers is also needed in order to facilitate to those last the comprehension of the natural phenomena, but also in order to allow scientists to understand what is really needed from them when making decisions. The way in which scientific knowledge needs to be transferred to population, media, decision makers and Civil Protection officers also deserved part of the attention of the Madrid Conference, reaching consensus on the fact that there is still a long way to follow in that sense.

Madrid also offered the opportunity to the members of the Executive Committee of the GRC who attended the conference to meet and discuss about issues relevant to the commission and to define a working plan till the Prague meeting.

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June 14, 2015