

Extreme weather calls for action: Interdisciplinary exchange at the Inter-Alpine Natural Hazards Conference

Drought, heavy rain, mudslides or floods: extreme weather events in Europe have increased significantly in 2024. This makes the development of protection concepts for natural hazards even more urgent. The Inter-Alpine Natural Hazards Conference (INAC), which will take place from May 5 to 7 2025 at Congress Innsbruck, offers a new European platform for networking science and practice for transdisciplinary exchange and the development of safety concepts. Registration for participants is now open.

Innsbruck, 10/12/2024. The year 2024 recorded the hottest summer in Europe since documentation began and will most likely be more than 1.5 per cent above pre-industrial levels on an annual average, reports the EU Copernicus Climate Change Service. Progressive global warming and the associated extreme weather events are leading to the occurrence of specific natural hazards in the Alpine region.

Increase in extreme weather events in the Alpine region

Robert Hofmann, head of the Department of Geotechnics at the University of Innsbruck, summarises the current situation in the Alpine region: 'Climate change is triggering a number of natural hazards in the Alpine region and requires protective measures to be adapted for the coming years. Abrupt changes in temperature, in conjunction with intense precipitation, cause landslides, rockfalls, rock avalanches and mass movements.' **Margreth Keiler** from the European network women exchange for Disaster Risk Reduction (we4DDR) points out that these events occur more frequently and more intensely as a result, with devastating effects: 'Recent extreme events in Europe have shown that climate-induced natural hazards are changing in frequency, intensity and extent worldwide, leading to fatalities, significant financial losses, loss of livelihoods and business disruption.' **Alison Evans** from the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (WPMMW) refers to the avalanche events, floods, mudslides, rockfalls and forest fires of the last five years as well as to the changed conditions in glacier regions and the consequences of glacier melting: 'Warming due to climate change not only leads to an increase in the melting of ice-covered areas, but also to the occurrence of phenomena in previously unexposed areas that could threaten downstream human settlements, including the accelerated evolution of glaciers and the degradation of permafrost.'

New European forum to strengthen exchange between research and practice

The Inter-Alpine Natural Hazards Conference (INAC) will take place for the first time from 5 to 7 May 2025 at Congress Innsbruck and is intended to promote the exchange between industry, infrastructure, engineering practice and research in the integration of findings from the various research areas and sectors, their discussion and the development of safety concepts. **Christian Mayerhofer**, Managing Director of co-organiser Congress Messe Innsbruck (CMI), summarises: 'With the INAC, we want to contribute to the best possible protection of the living space and infrastructure in the Alps against natural hazards in various fields of knowledge and application.'

The experts, who are also members of the INAC programme committee, emphasise the urgency of an interdisciplinary and integrated perspective in order to advance research and the development of security concepts. Among them is also **Cédric Moscatelli**, President of the French organisation infra2050, who emphasises: 'In order to strengthen the resilience of the affected areas, it is important to set up cooperation between researchers and operational staff to develop robust and effective risk management techniques and methods that can be used in the field.'

In addition to research into natural hazards, their prevention and management in cooperation with industry and infrastructure, planners and manufacturers, authorities and organisations as well as municipalities and regions play an important role. As **Willigis Gallmetzer** from the avalanche warning centre in Bolzano explains, this also includes the expansion of early warning



services for civil protection: 'The risk awareness of the population and the corresponding behavioural measures for self-protection are a potential for reducing or avoiding damage that has been underused to date. Our goal must be to contribute to staying one step ahead of events through efficient warnings and alerts.'

Registration for INAC is now open. Further information on the congress can be found at www.inac-conference.com

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. We look forward to your report!

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