

Alarm - Landslides at a Conference held in Modena

"Landslides - prevention serves to avoid indicated disasters"

Corsini: "In the Apennines many areas are at risk. However, they will be monitored"

The problem of geological instability in our country, as reflected also in the recent chronicles, is of great relevance. Emilia Romagna has the largest number of landslides in Italy. This issue will be in the focus of the conference to be held 14 – 16 April at the Department for Earth Sciences of the University of Modena. "The territory is very vulnerable - explains Alessandro Corsini, coordinator of the research unit for geology at the University of Modena - but we have the advantage of a steadily increasing attention to these phenomena." The problem of hydrogeological disorders is in particular observed in our Apennines. "Our mountains are composed of rocks predisposed to the occurrence of landslides, even of large dimension - Corsini states - and many mountain communities, like St. Anne Pelgo, Fellicarolo, partly Sestola and many others, are built on landslides considered "quiescent", that means immobile for a long time." And in particular these landslides are causing fears, as they might reactivate at any time. "Although it is difficult to understand if and when a landslide will resume its journey - reassures Corsini - much can be done regarding the prevention and the control of landslides. The positive aspect of our Apennines is the presence of very slow moving landslides, allowing in the case of emergency that one can react more easily regarding prevention or evacuation."

Regarding the risk factors, Alessandro Corsini debunks the myth that sees increasing urbanization as the cause of landslides. "It is not the construction of new homes that weakens the territory and increases the number of landslides. Landslides are always the same, the damages to infrastructure are growing due to the increasing number of buildings." Consequently the key is then prevention which is precisely in the focus of a two-days meeting organized by the Department for Earth Sciences. The objective of the EU project Monitor II, bringing various experts from different European countries to Modena, is to promote the mapping and monitoring of areas in South-East Europe prone to landslides, in order to improve the processes used for the analysis and communication of natural hazards. Started in 2009 the project aims to improve the integration of information processing into the procedures developed for risk management.