FIG COMMISSION 3 WORKSHOP AND ANNUAL MEETING
26-30th of NOVEMBER 2017

LISBON – PORTUGAL

Opening ceremony

It is a great pleasure and honor that I am here today representing Egos in this workshop joint with the Portuguese Engineers association in order to talk about the **volunteered G.I. application in public science and citizen participation.**

That issue is very critical and very interesting for a professional association of surveyors as FIG, EGOS, CLGE and the nationals associations especially nowadays in this dynamic changing environment of practice our profession.

Sixty-two people lost their lives during the great fires last summer that shook Portugal and moved Europe. Endless tragedy, great pain for the people who lost their lives, great loss for the beautiful forests that were destroyed.

This phenomenon is repeated approximately every year mainly in the countries of South Europe.

In our small Greece, we have 83 major fires every year. 43,000 ha are burnt and many human lives are lost.

Every year we also count victims from small and big earthquakes and we live with the agony of a larger one.

Last summer, a settlement on a small Greek island was completely flattened by a strong earthquake, fortunately without any casualties.

This year, we've also had thousands of victims from earthquakes in many countries in Asia and South America.

I always remember the first night of my wedding. We slept in a car in an Athens park. 7,5 Richter had shaken Athens two days before with 20 dead and countless disasters. Even in the church, there was an earthquake at the time of our marriage.

15 days ago, 23 people drowned in Athens due to one of the largest floods in a structured area. 150 mm of water fell in a matter of minutes.
Climate change? Some people will wonder.

However we do not think that all the severe weather phenomena observed in recent years are all due to climate change, since similar phenomena occur once every 20-30 years.

- Bad prevention and suppression mechanism?
- Poor design of anti-fire, flood or anti-seismic projects?
- Poor urban planning of cities when built on paved streams or in loose soil?
- Political inability to deal with these phenomena early?
- Political corruption in the implementation of prevention and protection projects?

A common feature of all these disasters is that the vulnerable social groups always suffer the greatest losses.

And here comes the question "can geographic information from civilian volunteers help to prevent and suppress such phenomena?".

A difficult question that we expect to answer through the interesting presentations of the distinguished speakers that follows.

First of all we have to point out that the rapidly development of the technology in our field, gives us the ability to address in civilians volunteers to support the emerging situations with G.I.

Moreover, necessary conditions for this purpose, in our view, are

- the determination of the state to apply similar methods,
- the sensitivity of the people,
- the proper use of the technology at our disposal,
- the proper organization of the requested information and,
- of course, the correct and in time use of that information.

However, this is a primary problem for the professional Surveying Engineer, who is called upon to convince the public sector about this need, to organize an efficient

geographic information resource system based on private volunteers, to manage it and to use it efficiently to prevent or suppress the extreme weather phenomena.

The ability to have correct and timely information from a network of volunteer citizens certainly does not replace the state's responsibility for the organization and operation of valid and timely geographic information both for prevention and for dealing with every extreme phenomenon.

Let us hope that in the future our branch will be of great help in this area so that we have less human losses from extreme phenomena and, of course, fewer disasters in the environment and infrastructure.

On behalf of the EGOS, we wish you good luck in the works of the committee.

Thank you

Nikos Zacharias
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President of EGOS