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'Understanding volcanoes and society: the key for risk mitigation'



Science development on volcanology flawed by the Spanish IGN

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Scientists performing research activities in the field of volcanology recently discovered that not all seismic events that occurred in the country had been listed in the Spanish National Seismic Catalogue and its related data base. The National Geographic Institute (IGN) is the legal Spanish institution in-charge of the National Seismic Catalogue, together with volcanic surveillance in Spain. It was therefore a huge surprise to discover that the number of seismic events registered in and around Tenerife Island in 2010, and according to the national catalogue, was only approximately 60, while the real number of seismic events recorded by the IGN in the region was 1,176. The existence of two different accounts of seismic activity registered by the IGN in and around Tenerife Island, keeping one for the public eye, while hiding the other one from even the scientific community, is not only illegal but also unscientific, hindering the progress of science. In addition, most importantly it is detrimental for timely forecasting of sudden/instantaneous dynamic events, such as major earthquakes and/or volcanic eruptions which might spell disaster for the population, the economy of the island, and severely impact tourism. This unethical behavior by IGN's volcanological staff has already caused damage to open scientific discussions. A scientific contribution was recently published using data from 15 years of research on diffuse CO₂ emission monitoring from the summit cone of Teide volcano (Pérez et al., 2013). The seismic data that was used to discuss the observed temporal variations of the degassing pattern from Teide volcano came from the National Seismic Catalogue. In contrast it is obvious that the observed variations on diffuse CO₂ emission from Teide volcano from 1997 to 2011 provided a better scientific explanation when using the real seismic data that had been concealed for several years by IGN's volcanological staff. Pérez et al., 2013. J. Geol. Soc., DOI:10.1144/jgs2012-125.