BEST PRACTICE AND COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS OF THE SPANISH VOLCANO MONITORING AND ALERT SYSTEM

C. López, A. Felpeto

Observatorio Central. Instituto Geográfico Nacional (IGN), Madrid, Spain

Penultimate eruption in Spain took place in 1971 (Teneguía volcano, La Palma Island), when no volcano monitoring network and no legal framework for volcano emergencies management existed in Spain. In 1996 a National Basic Directive for Volcanic Risk Management was published, followed in 2010 by the Canarian Plan for Volcanic Emergencies and Risk (PEVOLCA) and, more recently (February 2013) by the National Civil Defence Plan for Volcanic Risk. Meanwhile, in 2004, the National Geographic Institute (IGN), already in charge of National Seismic Network, was designated as the institution in charge of volcano monitoring and the declaration of volcanic alerts.

The unrest, eruption and post-eruption activity on El Hierro Island during 2011-2012 has been the first opportunity to test the effectiveness of the volcano monitoring system and the Regional Plan (PEVOLCA). This test has shown that while volcano monitoring has been conducted satisfactorily, obtaining a real time full record of geophysical and geochemical signals during the whole process, improvement is needed in the communication between the different institutions involved, and from these to the media and population. It has also evidenced the need of a detailed protocol of good communication practices between all partners at every level, and, specifically for the diffusion of the information to the media and population.

This presentation will show the experience of El Hierro eruption, pointing out different aspects of communication that should be improved.