



Press release

Wabern, 20 October 2014

European national geological surveys to meet in Bern

At the invitation of the Federal Office of Topography swisstopo, directors of national geological surveys from 25 European countries are meeting in Wabern bei Bern. A workshop on the Wednesday is at the top of the agenda. Here the directors of the national surveys (EuroGeoSurveys) will meet up to participate in discussions and exchange experiences on the theme of “Living with geological risks”. The topics to be covered include not only natural hazards, but also man-made geological risks.

This is the most important joint event of the year for EuroGeoSurveys. Representatives from the USA, Canada and Brazil will also be coming to Wabern to attend this meeting, which, as well as offering an opportunity to share knowledge and experiences, serves as a platform for launching projects of pan-European interest. The topic “Living with geological risks” explores how to deal with and prevent natural hazards in general as well as landslides, earthquakes and in particular flooding. One important aspect to be examined is risks arising from human activities, such as earthquakes caused by deep drilling or underground disposal sites.

Illustrative examples on site

Over the course of two excursions, the experts will have the opportunity to obtain an idea of how natural hazard management works in Switzerland. The example at Brienz shows how the devastating storm of 2005 has been dealt with and the lessons that those responsible have learnt from it. The participants will be able to see the safety measures taken on site and discuss the experiences gained from these with representatives of the canton and local authority.

The second excursion will take the experts to the town of Saint-Ursanne in the Canton of Jura, where the swisstopo Swiss Geological Survey runs the Mont Terri rock laboratory. The research findings from the last fifteen years have shown that the results from the rock laboratory make a sizeable contribution to ensuring the safety and the technical feasibility of a geological repository in the clay rock. The trip to Saint-Ursanne may be of particular interest to the representatives of European national geological surveys, as the disposal of highly radioactive waste is still a largely unsolved problem throughout Europe.

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