

# Interpraevent 2000

This Conference was organised on 26-30 June 2000 by the **international research association Interpraevent**. The objective of the Society is to practice, on an interdisciplinary basis, preventive protection against natural disasters, to conserve landscapes, and to encourage research activities for the protection of habitats, especially against floods, debris flow, landslides, anthropogenic damage and destruction, including investigations into the causes for events that are of negative influence on soils and water systems.

After the flood disasters, which happened in 1965/1966 in the Eastern part of the Alps, it is important to determine who or what was responsible and to analyse in great depth the origin of this event. A multidisciplinary assembly made of researchers and engineers decided spontaneously to work on these questions and organised the first symposium, which took place in 1967 in Klagenfurt (Austria). This was the beginning of INTERPRAEVENT.

Life in the Southern Alps had always been threatened by floods, debris flow, avalanches and massive movements like landslides and gliding rock; this is why it was necessary to find, all over the provinces of the Danube monarchy, organisations designed to protect systematically against those events: as early as in 1788, the 'Direction for water constructions' was founded; then, followed a section 'Wildbachverbauung' (torrent control) in 1884 in Villach, which became the present 'Wildbach und Lawinenverbauung' (torrent and avalanche control). Therefore, one of the most important government missions was and still is the protection of the people as well as of economical and cultural assets. Nowadays, we have access to a vast array of instruments and possibilities in order to realise active and passive protection concepts, ranging from hydraulic engineering to biological engineering, as well as land use planning and juridical help. An important change in structure has occurred in alpine regions in the past decades regarding the sensitisation of society as far as natural hazards are concerned; this new awareness makes it necessary to improve the prevention measures and make them durable.

Consequently, the aim of this 9<sup>th</sup> congress is:

- An exchange of experiences, on an international and a regional level;
- The evaluation of single measures as well as complex protection concepts, taking into account the durability and ecological acceptability along with their effectiveness.

- Conversations about the limits of prevention, about dealing with the risks which still exist.
- How to handle the current disaster areas.

With its presentations, seminars and excursions concentrating on prevention, Interpreavent 2000 wants to start an open discussion about limits of realisation of protection measures, debate the question of risks and the problems regarding current disaster areas.