

PRESENTATION

by

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Organising an in-person conference in a time of Covid-19 can be defined as “heroic”, to say the least.

The Seventh National Congress of Associazione Italiana di Geologia Applicata e Ambientale (AIGA) was planned to take place in the prestigious historical venue of Politecnico di Milano in 2020. However, the problems caused by the pandemic compelled us not only to postpone the event by one year, but also to find another location in the same university, one that would make compliance with Covid-19 restrictions easier. This year, remaining undaunted by the persistent pandemic, a small organising committee, which was firmly led by Prof. Monica Papini and validly supported by Prof. Laura Longoni, Dr. Andrea Abbate, and Dr. Monica Corti, successfully completed the preparatory work for the event.

The community of Italian applied geologists is deeply grateful to Monica and her Milanese colleagues for their determined organisation of the congress. After more than twelve months of forced suspension of associative events, the members of our community were able to meet in person in Lecco, in “*Quel ramo del lago di Como, che volge a mezzogiorno, tra due catene non interrotte di monti, tutto a seni e a golfi...*” - “*On that branch of Lake Como, which turns toward the south between two unbroken chains of mountains, presenting to the eye a succession of bays and gulfs, formed by their jutting and retiring ridges...*” (I Promessi Sposi - The Betrothed - Chapter 1, Alessandro Manzoni).

At national level, the Seventh Congress of AIGA provided researchers from Italian academia and various research institutions, as well as professionals in the sector, with an opportunity, after a long time, to debate and consult with each other on themes that are typical of applied geology.

It is thanks to the painstaking work of the organising committee, supported by the panel of referees and the editorial team of the *Italian Journal of Engineering Geology and Environment* (headed by Prof. Gabriele Scarascia Mugnozza) that this Special Issue of the journal has come into being.

We have chosen the most significant presentations delivered during the congress and focused on different sectors of applied geology, such as hydrogeology, pollution, landslides and key monitoring methods, fluvial dynamics, and design of engineering structures. These themes bear witness to the vitality and propensity for innovation of research carried out by Italian applied geologists.

The papers contained in the publication, of high scientific value, are the result of increasingly wide and cross-disciplinary skills, aimed at giving a qualified response to the typical issues of applied geology.

A large group of young scholars has given an outstanding contribution to the results achieved and reported in this publication. Following the teachings of the founding fathers of modern applied geology, they have led our discipline to make breakthroughs in these opening decades of the new millennium.

Therefore, our final thanks go to all those, young and less young, who contributed to give shape and substance to this Special Issue, which well represents the excellent state of health of research in applied geology in our country, even in a time of Covid-19.