

PRESENTATION

by

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This special issue of the Italian Journal of Engineering Geology and Environment, collects selected papers discussed in the 1st International “Marmotec 2016 Conference on Sustainable Stone”. The Internazionale Marmi e Macchine’s, International Fair of Marble, Technologies and Design, Carrara Marmotec, organized this Conference on the topic of sustainability. This International Sustainable Stone Conference has been held in May 20, 2016, in Carrara (Central Italy). The event promoted the creation of a meeting platform where the sector of innovation and businesses discuss and exchange viewpoints on the issue of a sustainable approach in the stone industry, in order to encourage improvements in the supply chain and to reduce environmental, economic and social impact. The debate, extended on an international scale, assumes a crucial importance for the decision process: the debate on the role of sustainability in support of policies and practices related to production chains, in fact, can be a very useful tool for the development and preservation if adopted by the production system, by governments and by international organizations to guide decisions and future policies.

The Italian stone industry is made up of around 10,000 companies and 50,000 employees and produces a trade surplus of around 1.6 billion euros each year. The Apuan district of Versilia (Central Italy), or district of the Carrara marble, is known worldwide as the center of excellence in the extraction and processing of stones. However, in recent years the market shares of

the European stone prerogative of non-EU countries are rapidly increasing. This has led to an in-depth debate on competition based on price advantages deriving from low production costs, largely due to an almost total lack of attention to social problems (low wages, safety at work, employment characteristics), but also environmental pollution and land degradation. These aspects, particularly present in Italian regulations, especially in spatial planning activities, can create a big gap with world stone materials producers. The extraction activities of particularly valuable materials (Travertines, Marbles, Granites, etc.) are now taken care of in Italy with particular attention to environmental problems. In response to this situation, in many European countries the demand for ecological stone products is growing. It is therefore essential that operators become aware of this new trend and are able to understand, as soon as possible, what is the frontier of innovation in this “new” sector to be able to intercept the growing demand for eco-sustainable products that it seems to look out of the old and the new continent.

This special issue contains 10 articles by various authors who, from different points of view, develop topical subjects with regard to aspects of environmental sustainability of the extractive industry, recycling, reuse and reduction of waste and quarry waste that suggest practical production processes and more efficient recovery processes according to an effective planning logic and a sustainable development.