

## EDITORIALE

### LEADER

*di / by*

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#### THE DEBATE ON CLIMATE: SUPERFICIALITY AND FALSE INFORMATION: “*CUI BONO*”?

Our Journal focuses on land, the environment and natural risks. We address these issues from the standpoint of people who have to implement engineering projects, while keeping an eye on the future in terms of land planning and management. Therefore, in managing our Journal, we should carefully monitor the evolution of research around these issues. As is known, since 1998 - when the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was established - the debate on this theme has constantly made the headlines of newspapers and TV news reports, with major social, political and economic implications. The first implication is that the debate on climate change has moved from the traditional scientific and research arena and become permanently established in the mass media, thus involving increasingly wide brackets of the population. This fact may be an expression of democracy. However, we should wonder about the ways in which these topics are covered and the types of content that are conveyed. In the first place, we should consider that there are still no scientific theories or certainties that can elucidate the mechanisms governing the various climate cycles on our planet. There are various opinions on the climate issue but, from the viewpoint of scientific research, they should be called “research assumptions”. The most common assumption is the IPCC one, which regards the so-called greenhouse gases as the causal factors of global warming. Unfortunately, the communication system often turns these assumptions into judgements, thus immediately engendering population pressures on the political system. In this seemingly endless spi-

ral, the most severe defeat is the one inflicted to the research system, which is more and more marginalised and unable to continue its role of knowledge-driver, as it has been doing especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Many false assertions have been made on global warming (and thus on CO<sub>2</sub>), which is supposed to induce, among others, extreme events, worsening hydrogeological risks. Between 7,000 and 4,500 years ago, the Alpine glaciers had almost completely disappeared; temperatures were much higher than today and in Minoan, Roman and Medieval times; and CO<sub>2</sub> values were definitely below current ones. The same applies to the cold period of 1450-1600. About 400 years ago, Europe was panicking over apparently unrelenting glacial advances. Even in 1970, a debate arose on the possible return of a glacial period. Yet, the IPCC granted that there are no forecasting models (IPCC Third Assessment Report 2001, Chapter 14, Section 14.2.2.2): “*In climate research and modelling, we should recognise that we are dealing with a coupled non-linear chaotic system, and therefore that the long-term prediction of future climate states is not possible.*” Today, the fear of an imminent disaster is dominant. Instead of pushing governments to invest massive funds on research and innovation, the proposed solutions envisage myopic investments on alternative energy sources, many of which are expensive and without future. The goal (Paris 2015) is to curb temperature by about 2°C by 2020, something that even magicians can no longer do. The question is, as the Latins said: “*cui bono?*” (literally “*to whose benefit?*”).