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"Dynamic Mediterranean": an educational path through Earth science and geophysical research at Genova Science Festival 2010

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Science Festivals are events world wide organized, and they have become more and more one of the most effective playground where science meet people.

Genova Science Festival, held since 2003, is the Italian most interesting event of that type.

The Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia (INGV), one of the largest European scientific institution dealing with Earth Sciences research and real-time surveillance, early warning, and forecast activities in geophysics and volcanology, participates every year developing a specific educational path, concerning some of its research areas.

For the 2010 Genova Science Festival, the INGV has produced an educational exhibition called "Mediterraneo Dinamico" (Dynamic Mediterranean). This is a journey in the geodynamical history of the Mediterranean region from 200 million years ago till present. This long process took place also through some instantaneous dramatic events as eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes, whose studies have revealed their strong impact on cultural Mediterranean evolution as well as on environmental aspects as climate.

The exhibition path aim is to illustrate and explain to general public, and especially to teachers and students, the results from researches conducted by INGV also in collaboration with other Italian and International partners, as well as from the real time Mediterranean sea water monitoring. The chosen exhibition instruments are wide colourful illustrated posters, greatly illustrated, together with smart interactive exhibits. In particular the path starts with a "Time Machine", that allows visitors to retrace the main steps of the Mediterranean geological evolution, supported by posters. The following section concerning the "Mediterranean catastrophic event" welcome visitors with a glass pyramid projecting a virtual eruption almost as an "ologramma", and side panels with two short videos explaining two great explosive eruptions and a tsunami event.

The section on Mediterranean Tsunami are equipped with an interactive large map of the location of Mediterranean where occurred tsunami events, illustrated posters and also a microscope with a camera where visitors can analyse a core with a tsunami deposits. Also an interactive model of a GEOSTAR - Geophysical and Oceanographic Station of Abyssal Research provide visitors an entertaining approach on how a submarine observatory works with all his sensors, while a computer station permits visitors to read real time measures of some marine environmental indicators.

The exhibition journey through the Mediterranean geo-history and Earth Science and Geophysical research shows how the continuous knowledge and monitoring of this Region dynamics are fundamental to design a future bearable development for the 30 million people living along the Mediterranean shores.