



Conference at the Italian House of Representatives (Italian Parliament)
La Scomparsa
Problemi sociali, tecnici e giuridici
The Missing: Social, Technical and Juridicial Issues
22nd February 2018

On 22nd February 2018, Rosa Maria Di Maggio (RMDM), the IUGS-IFG Officer for Europe, was invited by the Italian House of Representatives (the Italian Parliament) to deliver a presentation on forensic geology entitled **'The Missing: Social, Technical and Juridicial Issues'**. The conference was organised by Italian political parties in order to highlight the Italian 'state of art' at planning, implementing and managing the search for missing persons. This presentation considered different approaches, including the review of investigative data, information and the analysis of digital intelligence, including for example: social and psychological behavioural profiles and the analysis of the search environment and territory.

The objectives of this presentation were to: (i) highlight the recent developments and important contribution of forensic geology in searching for missing persons, (ii) illustrate the environmental, geographical, geological and geomorphological features that can influence a deposition site (grave) of a missing person as determined by their abductor; or the possible routes taken by a person who voluntarily escapes (iii) illustrate the geological techniques that are now available and have been applied in missing persons searches. This includes for example the use of geophysics (e.g. Ground Penetrating Radar, metal detector) in association with other techniques (e.g. observations, detector dogs units, the use of a drone, etc.) (iv) provide an introduction to the IUGS Initiative on Forensic Geology, including its contributing establishments, aim, objectives, countries represented and main achievements in relation to searches for burials. Furthermore, this presentation drew attention to the activities of the IUGS IFG, including outreach, capacity building and knowledge transfer and training. Links to the various IUGS IFG and other relevant publications were also provided (e.g. The 2017 Episode Themed Issue on Forensic Geology).

The conference was attended by more than 120 delegates. This included members of Law Enforcement, representatives from the media and political parties, journalists, members of voluntary associations in support of relatives of missing persons and the Red Cross.

The audience was extremely engaged and very interested in the applications of forensic geology in the search for missing persons, the work of IUGS-IFG, and potential further applications in Italy.

Rosa Maria was invited by the representatives of National Association of Families and Friends of Missing People (Penelope – Associazione Nazionale delle Famiglie e degli Amici delle Persone Scomparse) to take part in a technical board, to provide suggestions for improving the laws and protocols related to the search for missing persons.

Rosa Maria was also invited by the representatives of the Red Cross to give a further presentation at Red Cross Central Laboratory, in Rome. The objective of this future presentation is to show the potential applications of forensic geology in the search of missing persons, associated with crime and also as a consequence of natural disaster (e.g. earthquakes, landslides and floods).



Photographs

Rosa Maria Maggio, IUGS-IFG Officer for Europe
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