CSIC and the Government of the Canary Islands sign a protocol to collaborate in reducing volcanic risk

- **The agreement aims to provide scientific advice, training for Civil Protection personnel, and develop volcanic hazard maps**

- **The protocol will be implemented through the Natural Risk Assessment and Management Service of the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Water Research**

La Palma volcano in eruption / César Hernández Regal (CSIC)

Barcelona, 21 August, 2024. The Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), through the Institute of Environmental Assessment and Water Research (IDAEA-CSIC), and the Government of the Canary Islands have signed a General Protocol of Action aimed at reducing risks associated with volcanic eruptions in the region.

The agreement, signed by the CSIC's Vice President for Organization and Institutional Relations, **Carlos Closa Montero**, and the Minister of Territorial Policy, Territorial Cohesion, and Water, **Manuel Miranda Medina**, establishes close collaboration between both entities to prevent and mitigate risks arising from volcanic activity. This collaboration will facilitate the exchange of knowledge between the scientific community, which has a deep understanding of natural and geological processes, and

emergency managers and technicians, who are responsible for decision-making and on-the-ground actions.

Joan Martí Molist, researcher at IDAEA-CSIC and head of the project, stated that this new protocol "represents the integration of scientific research on volcanic activity with emergency management, fostering essential dialogue between experts and Civil Protection officials. This allows for informed decision-making, optimizing planning and resilience in the face of volcanic risks."

Among the actions agreed upon in this collaboration is the development of volcanic hazard maps for the Canary Islands, created by the Natural Risk Assessment and Management Service (NRAMS) of IDAEA-CSIC. These maps, which provide a visual representation of areas potentially affected by volcanic hazards, are a crucial tool for establishing scenarios, designing preventive measures, prioritizing resources, coordinating interventions during emergencies, and increasing public awareness of risks and response protocols.

Additionally, the protocol includes the preparation of reports, the creation of working groups, the promotion of research and technological development, the training of technical and research personnel, as well as the organization of workshops and seminars on reducing volcanic risk.

Commitment to improving natural risk management

The volcanic eruption on La Palma in 2021 highlighted progress in the coordination between organizations and the implementation of the Canary Islands Volcanic Emergency Plan. However, it also revealed the need to improve aspects such as the transmission of data from observation networks to the Scientific Committee during emergencies, strengthening scientific knowledge about volcanic phenomena, and creating specific protocols for monitoring eruptions. **Marta López-Saavedra**, a researcher at IDAEA and a member of the NRAMS service, also emphasized how this eruption exposed “the lack of public awareness about volcanic risks and the need to integrate a multi-hazard perspective into emergency plans, considering potential interactions with other hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, or landslides.”

The General Protocol of Action signed between the CSIC and the Government of the Canary Islands addresses these needs by enhancing mutual support in the development of scientific and technological activities to improve volcanic hazard mapping in the Canary Islands.

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