

The Stava Valley disaster

The world's worst disaster due to the collapse of tailings dams

On July 19th 1985, shortly after midday, a mineral waste facility made up of two tailings dams collapsed in the Stava Valley, a tributary valley of the Val di Fiemme in the municipality of Tesero. This facility served a fluorite mine and was raised over a period of more than 20 years in order to decant, consolidate and store the tailings resulting from flotation process of the Prestavèl mine and other fluorite mines of Trentino, South Tyrol and Lombardy.

A mudflow of 170.000 cubic meters poured out of the tailings dams and moved downhill at a velocity approaching 90 Km/h destroying everything in its path, until it reached the river Avisio. The mudflow killed 268 people and completely destroyed 3 hotels, 53 homes and 6 industrial buildings; 8 bridges were demolished and 9 buildings were seriously damaged.

Legal proceedings ended in 1992. Ten people were convicted of multiple manslaughter and culpable catastrophe: the managers of the mine and the responsible from the Mining District of the Autonomous Province of Trento who failed to carry out the checks on the tailings dams.

Compensation for damages of over 132 million Euros was almost completely allocated with an out-of-court settlement to 739 plaintiffs in 2004 by the companies who managed the mine (Edison on behalf of Montedison, Finimeg on behalf of Fluormine and Eni-Snam on behalf of Solmine) and by the Autonomous Province of Trento.

The entire area has now been reclaimed. The buildings have been re-erected: Stava is once again the wonderful tourist resort it was before disaster struck.



An image of the locality of Stava, above Tesero, destroyed by the mudflow released following the collapse of the Prestavèl fluorite mine tailings dams

The Stava 1985 Foundation

The memory of the disaster lives on. Thanks to the efforts of the Association of the relatives of the Victims and the Municipality of Tesero the Stava 1985 Foundation was set up. Among its founding members it includes the Municipalities of Longarone and Cavalese, which were hit by the Vajont and Cermis disasters.

The Foundation's main goal is active remembrance – as stated by the then Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi when he granted his High Patronage to the Foundation – in order to prevent similar, pointless and predictable disasters from happening again.

Last year, on the fortieth anniversary of the catastrophe, the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella laid a wreath at the monument in memory of the Victims in the San Leonardo cemetery in Tesero and expressed to the Stava 1985 Foundation *"the Republic's gratitude for having helped mend communities and territories, history, identity and the future"*.

The enclosed booklet contains detailed information about the Stava 1985 Foundation and the Stava Valley disaster. For further information log on to www.stava1985.it

E-mail: info@stava1985.it



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Open days at the Stava Centre 1985

On February 9th and March 9th the Stava 1985 Centre will remain open continuously from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm to allow visits by spectators who have come to the valley for the Olympic and Paralympic Games and by accredited journalists.

Created by the Stava 1985 Foundation, the Stava 1985 Centre – located in piazza Sgorigrad 2 in Stava di Tesero – uses various multimedia tools to describe the genesis, causes and responsibilities of the catastrophe of July 19th 1985 in the Stava valley.

The main information tools are the educational trail and the docudrama “Stava July 19th”. The film recounts the mountain trip of a group of kids who retrace, through conversation, the history of the Prestavèl mine, the processing plant and the tailings dams that collapsed on July 19th 1985 killing 268 men, women and children.

The information tools are in Italian, English and German.



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