



## Does knowledge signify protection? The SEISMOPOLIS centre for improvement of behavior in case of an earthquake

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It is vastly accepted that earthquake education is the way to earthquake protection. Nonetheless experience demonstrates that knowing what to do does not necessarily result in a better behaviour in case of a real earthquake.

A research project titled: "Seismopolis" - "Pilot integrated System for Public Familiarization with Earthquakes and Information on Earthquake Protection" aimed at the improvement of the behaviour of people through an appropriate amalgamation of knowledge transfer and virtually experiencing an earthquake situation.

Seismopolis combines well established education means such as books and leaflets with new technologies like earthquake simulation and virtual reality. It comprises a series of 5 main spaces that the visitor passes one-by-one.

Space 1. Reception and introductory information. Visitors are given fundamental information on earthquakes and earthquake protection, as well as on the appropriate behaviour in case of an earthquake.

Space 2. Earthquake simulation room Visitors experience an earthquake in a room. A typical kitchen is set on a shake table area (3m x 6m planar triaxial shake table) and is shaken in both horizontal and vertical directions by introducing seismographs of real or virtual earthquakes.

Space 3. Virtual reality room Visitors may have the opportunity to virtually move around in the building or in the city after an earthquake disaster and take action as in a real-life situation, wearing stereoscopic glasses and using navigation tools.

Space 4. Information and resources library Visitors are offered the opportunity to know more about earthquake protection. A series of means are available for this, some developed especially for Seismopolis (3 books, 2 Cds, a website and an interactive table game).

Space 5. De-briefing area Visitors may be subjected to a pedagogical and psychological evaluation at the end of their visit and offered support if needed.

For the evaluation of the "Seismopolis" Centre, a pilot application of the complete complex took place with the participation of different groups (schoolchildren, university students, adults, elderly persons, emigrants and persons with special needs). This test period recorded positive impression and reaction from the visitors and indicated the pedagogical and psychological appropriateness of the system.

Seismopolis is the outcome of collaboration of public, academic and private partners and of a range of disciplines, namely seismologists, geologists, structural engineers, geographers, sociologists and psychologists. It is actually hosted by the Municipality of Rendis in Athens.

More information on Seismopolis can be found in [www.seismopolis.org](http://www.seismopolis.org) .