



The Felbertauern landslide of 2013: Traffic disruption, regional economic consequences and policy decisions

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The Felbertauern landslide of May 2013 caused the total destruction of approximately 100 meters of road including an avalanche gallery, generating several direct and indirect impacts on the regional-economy. The Felbertauern road, an important traffic arteria for the whole NUTS-3 region East-Tyrol (Austria), was totally blocked for several weeks. Short after the event, regional decision makers were hardly in need for an estimation of the regional-economic impacts of the road blockage to opt for alternatives to reopen the road. So, two weeks after the event, an analysis of the possible effects was carried out using only scattered information and statistical data. The analysis is based on a three-month interruption scenario. Retrospectively the road blockage was only two months. Due to the fact that short after the event no up-to-date data on regional-economics at necessary scales was available, impacts on tourism by analysing overnight stays, additional transportation costs and time losses for the local companies were calculated. Using these numbers, a cost-benefit-analysis was carried out for a projected bypass, a mid-term 1.5 kilometer long route as an alternative to the destroyed road. Finally, the impacts on the local companies were severe, due to additional transportation costs of approx. Euro 1.4 million and Euro 76 000 additional time costs using an alternative approach. The impacts on regional tourism were calculated with Euro 7.7 to 10.7 million - that means 0.6 to 0.8% of the total economic output of the region. The study shows the strong impact of indirect and business interruption costs on regional economies and describes the major problems faced during the study - in particular the low availability of input data. The results of consistent cost assessment are critical for decision makers who are responsible for the development of policies to prevent the impacts on societies.