

Underperforming European countries in geosciences: the case of Italy

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Modern science was born in the XVI-XVII centuries thanks to the work of outstanding figures, including Galileo Galilei, professor at the University of Padua in Northern Italy. Unfortunately, since its unification in the XIX century, Italy had a poor development in Science and Technology compared to other European countries. Lack of vision, absence of meritocracy, lack of interest from the industry and from the government, resulted also in the limited development of relevant scientific infrastructures. The decline has been further accelerated since the end of the Cold War and especially today with the surge of populist, often anti-scientific, parties. In this contribution I will discuss:

- (1) the reasons of the decline of the Italian research system with emphasis on the geosciences;
- (2) that the presence of scientifically underperforming countries, like Italy, is a serious issue for all Europe if Europe aims at being a leading continent, especially after Brexit, in the next decades;
- (3) in consideration of the limited interest of decision-makers in Science and Technology, if there is something we can do from the "bottom", from us as professionals in research, to arrest the scientific decline in underperforming countries like Italy.