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TU1208 GPR Association: Why? How? What?

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TU1208 GPR Association (www.gpradar.eu/tu1208/) is a follow-up initiative of COST Action TU1208 “Civil engineering applications of ground penetrating radar” (www.gpradar.eu), which ended in October 2017. The association inherited the same primary objective of the Action, namely, to exchange and increase scientific-technical knowledge and experience of ground penetrating radar (GPR) technique, whilst promoting a wider and more effective use of this safe and non-destructive inspection method. Currently (2019) the association involves 41 Members from 30 Institutes in 14 Countries; participating institutions include universities, research centers, public agencies, GPR manufacturers and end-users. The association is open to experts from all over the world and not 'only' to Members of COST Action TU1208. The research activities supported by the association cover all areas of GPR technology, methodology, and applications.

Why?

The motivations to maintain, expand and leverage our COST network after the end of the Action could be summarized by saying that during the Action’s lifetime we acquired awareness that “we are stronger together.” There can be different ways to keep a COST network alive after the Action’s end, the most common being continuation through funding of another Action or EU/international collaborative research projects. We realized that establishing an association would offer a great added value. An association is actually a platform to coordinate, complement, and support any new initiatives undertaken by its members; it helps to avoid fragmentation of research, achieve better harmonization of activities and approaches, and constantly attain involvement of new actors. In perspective, an association can potentiate the contact of a community of innovators with policy makers. Moreover, an association gives identity to the group and encourages the discussion of general principles alongside more strictly scientific topics.

How?

TU1208 GPR association was founded in September 2017, before the Action’s Final Conference. The financial model is a non-profit scientific association with statutes, registered with the Italian Revenue Agency. Administrative and operative offices are in Rome. The simplest financial structure was chosen for the association, which has a fiscal code but does not have a VAT number; thus, the association can receive social quotas, donations, and occasionally other types of incomes. This model is the easiest to run and can be upgraded in the future, if useful.

What?

We believe that the key principles and values that we experienced together in COST Action TU1208 continue to matter notwithstanding the Action ended, so we aim to apply them and spread them out.

The association publishes books, proceedings, and educational material. We have founded the first peer-reviewed scientific journal dedicated to GPR, "Ground Penetrating Radar" (www.gpradar.eu/journal/): this is the most challenging and ambitious initiative that the association has initiated and carried out so far. Our publications are distributed in true open access, free to both Authors and Readers.

We organize networking and educational events, such as workshops, training schools, roundtables and scientific sessions in international conferences (including the EGU session «COST Actions in Geosciences», wherein this abstract is presented, and the EGU session «Ground Penetrating Radar: Technology, Methodology, Applications, and Case Studies»). The association has also funded/co-funded a few scientific missions.