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Journalists, Communication and Volcanic Risk Management in Spain

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An effective volcanic risk management is a collective responsibility for all individuals and groups who work or live in areas with volcanic activity. This includes scientists, authorities, civil protection specialists, communication professionals, sociologists, psychologists, health specialists, urban and territorial planners, economists, educators, and the general public. While some may have more specific roles and responsibilities in this effort, communication professionals can make a significant contribution to volcanic risk management efforts.

Journalists and the media have the ability to impact the success of volcanic risk management efforts and can potentially save lives by accurately reporting on and informing the public about volcanic hazards. In order to fulfill this role effectively, media professionals should be knowledgeable about the unique characteristics of volcanoes and the methods used to volcanic risk management. However, it is important to note that the media also has a responsibility to critically evaluate and report on the effectiveness of risk management efforts. This dual role of the media can be complex, but it is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability.

This research aims to assess the level of understanding and interest that media professionals have about volcanoes and volcanic risk management in Spain, and to examine the potential and desired role of the media in enhancing the effectiveness of volcanic risk management efforts.

In order to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of journalists regarding volcanoes, volcanic risk management, and communication in Spain, we developed an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of approximately 25 questions and can be completed in about 15 minutes. Approximately 24% of the questionnaire consists of general questions such as residence, gender, age, education level, etc. Questions and comments related to volcanoes and volcanic risk management make up approximately 42% of the questionnaire, while the remaining 32% focus on communication and the role of the media in volcanic risk management in Spain. The questionnaire was released on December 26 and by the end of the year 2022, a total of 105 journalists had completed it. Here we present some preliminary results obtained including qualitative data on needs and sentiment towards volcanic risk.