

THE EARTHQUAKE IN EMILIA ROMAGNA, ITALY

A first assessment

The earthquake of magnitude 5.9 which lasted about 20 seconds, was recorded in Emilia Romagna at 04:04 hrs on Sunday, 20.05.2012; the seismic event was felt in a vast part of Northwest Italy, France and Slovenia.

The epicenter was determined to have been at 36 km North/Northwest of Bologna (and exactly sited in Finale Emilia, Mirandola and S. Felice Sul Panaro).

Aftershocks followed during the day and, among the most significant ones, one at 05:05 (magnitude 4.9), at 11:28 (magnitude 4.3) and at 15:21 (magnitude 5.1). Some aftershocks are still being registered and there is a rise in groundwater which could cause flooding.

Finale Emilia is the location which was most severely damaged and it is reported that the highest number of houses and monuments collapsed in the city centre.

Not only residential properties and historical monuments have been damaged by the earthquake, but also factories and farms: The "Consorzio Grana Padano" has reported that 400 farms have been lost and numerous buildings were damaged. The total loss is estimated at around 250 million Euros.

Furthermore, the area affected by the earthquake is characterized by a high presence of farms which are of great influence on the economy of the region. It is estimated that the damage to rural buildings with houses, stables, machinery and agricultural implements in the countryside which surrounds the area will amount to millions of Euros.

Even though it is too early to estimate the direct damages caused to the factories (which produce typical products of Emilia Romagna such as food, automotive and pottery), it seems that the total losses will exceed hundreds of millions of Euros. Production at the factories most severely hit by the earthquake has either stopped completely or has only partially been restarted. Some of the companies affected are:

- Ceramica Sant'Agostino: Sant'Agostino: completely stopped its production and which provides work to many people in the city.
- Tecopress: San'Agostino, company devoted to the production of laminates.
- Panaria: Finale Emilia, the company, with more than 300 employees, is now closed.

Just in order to give you a general idea of the situation, in the area of Sant' Agostino the number of factories closed is currently 40, while in Finale Emilia around 60 companies employing more than 2,000 staff, have had to stop production. In the surrounding countryside the situation is no different, with more than 200 companies now closed.

The Government has declared a "State of Natural Disaster", but it is not yet clear if the State will provide economic support, first of all to citizens in houses that need rebuilding and, secondly, to the reinstatement of the factories.

vrs Cincotti will continue to monitor the situation and introduce resources as and when required. vrs Cincotti has extensive experience in handling earthquake claims, particularly following the L'Aquila earthquake in 2009.

If you require any more up-to-date information or would like to report a loss, please contact:

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