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A brief history of the first 25 years of AIGeo

Abstract: Agnesi V., *A brief history of the first 25 years of AIGeo*. (IT ISSN 0391-9838, 2025). The note briefly summarizes the first twenty-five years of AIGeo (Italian Association of Physical Geography and Geomorphology), recalling its founding principles, membership structure, and main initiatives.

Key words: AIGeo, Physical Geography and Geomorphology, Italy.

Riassunto: Agnesi V., *Una breve storia dei primi 25 anni dell'AIGeo*. (IT ISSN 0391-9838, 2025). Nella nota, vengono brevemente riassunti i primi venticinque anni dell'AIGeo (Associazione Italiana di Geografia Fisica e Geomorfologia), richiamandone i principi fondatori, l'assetto associativo e le principali iniziative assunte.

Termini chiave: AIGeo, Geografia Fisica e Geomorfologia, Italia.

The Italian Association of Physical Geography and Geomorphology (AIGeo) was established on 22nd June 2000 by Augusto Biancotti, Ludovico Brancaccio, Francesco Dramis, Paolo Roberto Federici, Elvidio Lupia Palmieri and Mario Panizza, on the initiative of the “Gruppo Nazionale di Geografia Fisica e Geomorfologia” (GNGFG) of the National Research Council (CNR).

The choice to give GNGFG, which had profitably been working since 1983 for the development of research Physical Geography and Geomorphology (Panizza, 2017), a new associational structure arose from the expectation that greater weight and better visibility would have been given to the research carried out in future decades. Indeed, a strong input to this transformation was given by the great success of the Fourth International Conference of the “International Association of Geomorphologists” (IAG), held in Bologna in 1997, which saw almost one-thousand participants from 67 nations and a rich programme of thematic sessions, as well as of pre- and post-conference symposia

and field trips. This success had a role in the election of Mario Panizza as Vice-president (then elected President in 2001) of the IAG (Migon and Soldati, 2024).

Since its establishment, AIGeo has been governed by a Council, elected by the General Assembly, including the President and other officers (Vice-President, General Secretary and Treasurer).

According to its Statute, AIGeo holds two annual meetings (in spring and autumn, the latter including a field trip) which are organized by local academic groups. Since 2005, every three years, AIGeo organizes a scientific Conference that represents an important moment of debate and discussion on the main research current topics, always recording a large and careful participation and addressing topics of great importance and relevance.

AIGeo has promoted the establishment of Working Groups, spontaneous fixed-term aggregations with scientific purposes on programmed topics. At the same time, great attention was paid to the growth and training of young researchers, both through the establishment of the junior member category (members up to 35 years old) and the Italian Young Geomorphologists Group (IYG). Since 2005, the IYG, which as of today constitutes almost 30% of the total members, organizes held every two years the Young Geomorphologists' Days. At the same time, AIGeo

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has foreseen periodic calls for grants and financial support to young researchers, to encourage their scientific growth and allow participation in various scientific initiatives in Italy or abroad.

Having reached the quota of 156 members, the first General Assembly, held in Naples in December 2000, elected the first Council for the 3-year period 2001-2003. The Council nominated Francesco Dramis as President, who was then confirmed for the term 2004-2006 by the Council elected in Palermo in October 2003. During Dramis' 6-year presidency (Vice-President: A. Carton; General Secretary: T. De Pippo; Treasurer: C. Vecchione), Working Groups started to be formed and continuity was given to the annual Assemblies. In 2005, the first scientific Conference took place together with the first Young Geomorphologists' Day. Among the many activities, it is worth to mention the involvement with leading roles of many AI-Geo members in the new edition of the Marinelli's Atlas of Geographical Types.

The electoral assembly of Chiavari (GE) in October 2006 led to the renewal of the AI-Geo Council and the subsequent election to the presidency of Paola Fredi for the term 2007-2009, which was then confirmed for 2010-2012 by the new Council elected at the General Assembly held in Modena in September 2009. The Fredi's presidency (Vice-President: V. Agnesi; General Secretary: T. De Pippo, later replaced by M. Pelfini; Treasurer: C. Vecchione, later replaced by C. Caputo) was characterized by a marked projection of AI-Geo in the international framework of the IAG and the organization of young geomorphologists stages. At the same time, the signing of an agreement with the Lazio Region administration for training activities targeted to regional technical officers, confirmed the attention paid by the AI-Geo community to stakeholders' relations and technological transfer issues.

The 2013-2015 AI-Geo Council elected by the General Assembly in Palermo in October 2012 nominated Gilberto Pambianchi as President, who was confirmed in his role for the term 2016-2018 by the Council elected in Cagliari by the General Assembly held in September 2015. During his presidency, Pambianchi (Vice-President: L. Pellegrini; General Secretary: F. Colasanto, later replaced by M. Materazzi; Treasurer: O. Nesci) gave continuity to the activities of the young geomorphologists and contacts were established with the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) for the revision of the definition of the new geomorphological mapping guidelines of the Italian cartography national project (CARG).

The 2018 General Assembly, held in September in Camerino, elected the 2019-2021 AI-Geo council nominated Valerio Agnesi as President (Vice-President M. Pelfini; General Secretary: I. Bollati; Treasurer: O. Nesci). The Agnesi's presidency had to face the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it impossible to carry out activities in presence; the 2020 and

2021 statutory assemblies, in fact, took place online. For this same reason, the Agnesi's mandate was extended up to 2022. Among the activities, it is worth mentioning the establishment of two new scientific awards devoted to young members: one, every two years, for the best doctoral thesis, and one, every year, for the best scientific article.

In October 2022, the autumn assembly could be finally held in presence in Palermo, during which the current Council was elected for the three-year period 2023-25. Mauro Soldati was elected as President (Vice-President M. Pelfini; General Secretary: I. Bollati; Treasurer: P. Coratza). Among the main activities of the Soldati's presidency, the affiliation to the Italian Geological Society, the consolidation of relations with other Italian scientific associations and the revision of the Statute of the Association. The main innovative elements introduced in the Statute concern the direct election of the President and the increase of the number of Council member, with a seat reserved to an under 40-years member. Finally, the submission of the Italian candidacy for hosting and organizing the 2030 IAG International Conference, which will be presented at the forthcoming 11th IAG International Conference in Geomorphology in Christchurch (New Zealand).

At the end of these 25 years, AI-Geo has doubled the number of members (now just under 300), through a trend of slow but constant and solid growth. The Association accounts for over 80% of academic professors and researchers in Physical Geography and Geomorphology sharing within the prestigious forum of the IAG the experience and scientific knowledge developed in Italy.

The AI-Geo first 25 years have been a positive experience, and the success achieved is due to the enthusiastic and selfless commitment of the vast majority of members, at every level of involvement, in the design and implementation of the many initiatives undertaken.

This commitment and enthusiasm will undoubtedly continue to characterize AI-Geo's activity in the years to come.

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