

VareseNews

Eleven months after the landslide, the earth continues to move

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Almost a whole year has passed since the night between 1 and 2 May 2012, when the first little landslide led to the bigger one in Somma Lombardo, between the lookout point (at the top of the hill) and the Panperduto towpath (along the River Ticino).

The landslide is not entirely stable, there are still some little slides, and the work is being affected by the seizure of the area. The erosion caused by the rains (although they have not been strong) over the last few weeks, has led to an advancement of **the upper part of the landslide which has now reached the farmhouse in Via Belvedere**, the only building nearby that was left standing after the collapse of the Rovelli family's villa. "The landslide came up to the entrance gate, and we can't go inside the house any more," said Patricia Puetgens, the owner, who has now moved near Bergamo. The material that slides downhill amasses at the bottom of the landslide, on the roadside. The Mayor of Somma Lombardo, Guido Colombo, spoke about "small landslides caused by the rain, which are being monitored," and added that **"council technicians and surveyors are coming to have a look at the area, on Monday."**

Today, the area affected by the landslide is still closed, for an investigation by the Public Prosecutor of Busto Arsizio, who wants to understand if there has been any environmental damage caused by the **removal of original material, which may have been replaced by other material** from the outside; for this reason, boring has begun to take soil samples, which will then be sent to the regional environmental protection agency, ARPA, for analysis. The suggestion that the gravel in the hill had been replaced with other material was also put forward during the satirical TV programme *Striscia la notizia*, which referred to a source (that was later identified) whose reliability has been subsequently challenged. However, the investigation by the Public Prosecutor's Office is covered by secrecy, so it is not known what other elements the investigators have. Mayor **Guido Colombo said that up to now "50% of the analyses have been carried out, and there shouldn't be any problems.** It appears that the accusations of that person are false."

Then, there is the other investigation (which actually began first), the one to understand why the hill collapsed and whether any individuals are responsible. From the beginning, it was realised that one of the possible causes was the concrete waste pipe, which collected the

water from the purification plant in Somma Lombardo and the water collected by the manholes in the event of storms or strong rain. These pipes carried the water for dumping in the Ticino River, between the “beach” in Somma and the Panperduto basin and dam. The pipe was in a very poor state, the technical reports were old, and there are also recent documents on the potential danger and on the need for intervention. Investigations are in progress, a number of documents have been collected and several people informed of the facts have been interviewed.

The job of making the area safe has been given to the company Consorzio Villoresi, by Lombardy Region, and the council of Somma Lombardo is working with AMSC, the service company that manages the water network, to get the pipe that collects the water rebuilt. The Region had allocated €1 million, of which, €400,000 was to the council, and €600,000, to Consorzio Villoresi. The council has allocated a total of €800,000. Although the area has been seized, the council and Consorzio Villoresi can request authorisation to carry out interventions to make the area safe. “We’re mending all of the sewers that feed into the new penstock,” said Mayor Guido Colombo, who explained that **“even the part that didn’t collapse is being rebuilt**, to ensure maximum safety, so that all of the structures are new.” The work is also being carried out by AMSC.

The street below the landslide was been temporarily made safe by Consorzio Villoresi, after the disappearance of the historic road surface that characterised this point of the towpath (which is the property of AIPO, the company that manages the River Po). The temporary work carried out on the road can also be seen clearly in the satellite photos published on Google Maps.

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