

Increasing number of flash floods in Greece

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In the Mediterranean most of the floods are caused by intense rainfall in a short time frame, making flash flooding the most common type of inundation. The temporal distribution of flood events in Greece between 1880 and 2010 presents a significant increase during the last decades. This is not a trend in natural processes (i.e. climate change), however, but is due to:

- The increase of population, leading to augmented pressure for urban expansion, sometimes in unacceptable locations increasing in turn the number of individuals and properties at risk.
- The enhancement of means of reporting and recording disasters through the years.
- The increased social and media interest in climate related catastrophes in the last decades and the lower tolerance threshold of the society with respect to natural hazards which lead to reporting of events of smaller significance.
- The increased human interference in hydrological processes, through the expansion of public works, road networks and impervious surfaces, especially near the cities.

In Greece, however, the problem of flooding and therefore the need to improve land use planning is increasing.

Source: Diakakis et al., 2012. Natural Hazards 62: 485–500.

Photo: A.M. Anderson (www.flickr.com)