

Czech scientists assist in research of risks in high mountains

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Prague - A manual aimed to help assess natural risks in high mountains, mainly in areas with glaciers and permanently frozen soil, has been issued by an international scientific team including experts from the Czech Academy of Sciences (AV CR), Marie Fialova, from AV CR, has told media.

In such areas, climate changes can trigger landslides or rock avalanches often resulting in floods, Fialova said.

The guidelines, completed by experts from the Zurich University, should help protect the property and lives of the inhabitants of high mountainous ranges anywhere in the world.

"The manual for state offices and private organisations offers a review of the latest knowledge and well-proved methods of describing, mapping and modelling potentially dangerous processes in high mountains," said Jan Klimes, from the AV CR's Institute of Rock Structure and Mechanics.

He said the methods from the manual can be applied in various parts of the world, including developing countries whose populations are jeopardised by natural disasters most of all.

To contribute to the guidelines, AV CR experts used the knowledge they gained within their ongoing research in the Peruvian Andes, which they launched together with Charles University experts in 2003.

"The research mainly deals with the problem of descending mountain lake moraines, which may result in the moraine dam bursting or being overflowed, with subsequent dangerous floods," the Institute of Rock Structure and Mechanics director Josef Stemberk said.

Landslides and rock collapses do not occur abroad only, but also in the Czech Republic, he said, mentioning the sandstone rocks in the Hrensko area, north Bohemia.

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