



Giant sinkhole swallows cars

On 25 May 2016 about thirty car owners were about to regret parking in downtown Florence alongside the quay, with a view of the Ponte Vecchio.



Cars in the giant sinkhole



Around noon, all of a sudden, a large part of the embankment collapsed and came crashing down a number of meters. A leaking cast iron water pipe DN600 washed away a massive amount of soil, causing a giant hole with a swirling water mass, which swallowed the parked cars and caused an enormous mess.

Water supply within 24 hours by means of a bypass

Within 24 hours the worst mess was cleaned up and the water supply for this part of town was restored with a bypass. Then it was time to assess the total damages: it will take at least six months before all damages can be repaired and the embankment can be restored.

Problem solving is: always be prepared

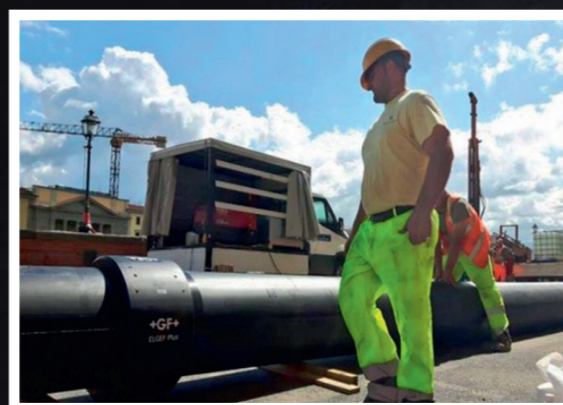
The water company in Florence, Publicacqua S.p.A., applies the principle that new suppliers of materials must go through a tough screening before they can actually supply anything. Fortunately for the city, employees of GF Italy had brought the MULTI/JOINT® 3000 Plus system to the attention of Publicacqua S.p.A. a number of times already, so the product had already been approved for use in the network of Publicacqua S.p.A. Also other GF products, such as Primofit and Alupex Multilayer pipes have been approved for use by the water company.



The location where the bypass would be made later on



Installing the DN600 MULTI/JOINT® 3000 Plus flange adaptor



Finished bypass ensuring the supply of potable water in Florence

Important success factors

- MULTI/JOINT® had been approved by the water company beforehand.
- GF products were listed in the emergency plan.
- Excellent communication and fast action between water company, dealer and GF.
- The required products for a bypass were on site in no time thanks to local stock at the dealer.
- Additional products were immediately supplied from the GF distribution centre in Italy.



Business partner close by

One of GF's business partners, S.D.M. s.r.l., is located in Calenzano, near Florence. The company supplies cast iron and PE fittings and accessories to various gas and water companies. The owner Mr. Massimo Santini also owns a transport company with trucks that can carry 12,5 m long pipes. All of this came in very handy that day.

Emergency repair

S.D.M. s.r.l. was contacted almost immediately after the embankment came down. They got in touch with GF and other suppliers and were able to deliver the required materials for the bypass in PE with lightning speed. The supply of drinking water to the area was restored within 24 hours. This was possible thanks to the local stock of products at S.D.M. s.r.l. and good relations they have with their suppliers. Two MULTI/JOINT® 3000 Plus DN600 flange adaptors were immediately supplied from the stock to Publicacqua S.p.A. GF Italy supplied two additional DN600 flange adaptors and eight ELGEF electrofusion couplings d.500mm very quickly from the GF distribution centre in Italy.

Lifesaver

The repair of the main cast iron pipe and the other damages caused by the breakage of the pipe is well under way. However, it will take at least until December before the work is completely finished. The "disaster" in Florence will not easily be forgotten. To the water company of Florence, MULTI/JOINT® was a lifesaver for this big emergency. The product offered a true added value to the water company, the city of Florence, S.D.M. s.r.l. and especially the inhabitants and tourists of Florence. ■