

Etna spews smoke and ashes in spectacular new eruption

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Etna is one of the world's most active volcanoes. This is a picture of an earlier eruption in May 2019

Mount Etna, one of the world's most active volcanoes, belched smoke and ashes in a new eruption on Tuesday, but Italian authorities said it posed no danger to the surrounding villages.

"We've seen worse," the head of the INGV National Institute for

Geophysics and Vulcanology in the nearby city of Catania, Stefano Branco, told Italian news agency AGI.

Estimating that the eruption from Etna's southeastern crater began late Tuesday afternoon, Branco insisted that the latest burst of activity was "not at all worrying".

Nevertheless, with small stones and ashes raining down, authorities decided to close Catania's international airport.

The emergency authorities said on their Twitter account that they were monitoring the situation closely in the three villages at the foot of the volcano—Linguaglossa, Fornazzo and Milo.

Images showed a spectacular rose-coloured plume of ashes above the snow-capped summit, but the cloud had largely dissipated by nightfall, while lava flows continued to glow.

At 3,324 metres (nearly 11,000 feet), Etna is the tallest active volcano in Europe and has erupted frequently in the past 500,000 years.

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