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Case study: "Schober avalanche on Feb 28th, 2009 in Styria, Austria"

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On February 28th, 2009 at 07.00 a.m. the Schober avalanche cracked in an altitude of 1820 m above sea level as a slab avalanche with a fracture depth between 2 and 4 m and devastated an area of 10 ha. The peculiarity of this avalanche was the fact, that the avalanche started dry and became wet in the slab. A distance of more than 300 m in the "safety zone" was covered although the steepness with less than 8 degrees was very slight. A part of the railway sidings was submerged with snow up to 8 m. The case study engages with the question which circumstances caused such big avalanches in February 2009. The Schober avalanche was not the only avalanche in Styria that broke as a dry slab and turned into a wet avalanche. More examples will be pointed out in this case study. Another aspect we discuss in this study are the warnings of the Styrian Avalanche Service and how they handled the situation on February 28th, 2009.