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Additional Information

1 **Automated Detection of Discontinuities in EUREF Permanent GNSS Network** 2 **stations due to earthquake events**

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9 **Abstract.** The EUREF Permanent GNSS Network (EPN) provides the users with data and
10 products such as station coordinate time series. These are subject to possible discontinuities
11 and trend changes, being earthquake events one of the possible natural causes for these
12 variations. We present here a fully automated tool for the analysis of the coordinate time
13 series of EPN stations located in the desired neighborhood of an earthquake epicenter. The
14 tool is made freely available to the public and applied here to two significant earthquake
15 events occurred in Europe in recent years, where several trend changes and jumps are
16 easily revealed.

17 **Keywords:** Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS); earthquake; time series.

18 **INTRODUCTION**

19 In the last decades, the ubiquitous uptake of Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS)
20 technologies has enabled the deployment of networks of permanent GNSS stations. These
21 consist of continuously operating reference stations collecting data from the different global
22 constellations (GPS, Galileo, GLONASS and Beidou) and data, product and analysis centers,
23 which provide access to raw data and other products obtained from them, facilitating numerical
24 weather prediction and climate research (Guerova et al. 2016; Pacione et al. 2017), tropospheric
25 and ionospheric delay models (Hadas et al. 2017, Bergeot et al. 2014), monitoring of ground
26 deformations (Nocquet et al. 2005; Nguyen et al. 2016) or coordinate series (Kouba 2009).

27 The geodetic reference system in Europe, European Terrestrial Reference System 89 (ETRS89),
28 is maintained by the International Association of Geodesy (IAG) Regional Reference Frame sub-
29 commission for Europe, EUREF, and its permanent GNSS network, EUREF Permanent Network
30 (EPN) provides public access to data from more than 300 tracking stations as well as their
31 precise positions, velocities and tropospheric parameters (Bruyninx *et al.* 2019).

32 Many works have shown the usefulness of GNSS coordinates time series for the study of
33 deformations of the Earth's crust, resulting for example in the determination of periodic signals
34 (e.g. Kaczmarek and Kontny 2018, Xiang *et al.* 2019) or as sources of data for seismic activity
35 research (Kudłacik *et al.* 2018). Other changes are more abrupt and occur more in the form of
36 discontinuities with significant coordinate jumps (e.g. Rapinski 2014, Rapinsky and Kowalczyk
37 2016, Kowalczyk and Rapinski 2018, Najder 2020). The discontinuities may be identified
38 manually (e.g. Völksen and Hackl, 2012) and automatically or semi-automatically (e.g. Najder
39 2020).

40 The time series of GNSS station coordinates contain discontinuities, which are caused, *inter alia*,
41 by exchanges of receivers and antennas at GNSS stations, as well as by geophysical phenomena
42 such as earthquakes and deformations of the earth's crust (Bruni *et al.*, 2014). Many notable
43 examples of discontinuities caused by earthquake events have been studied in the literature, such
44 as the Mw 9.0 Japan earthquake of March 11, 2011 (e.g. Wang *et al.* 2011) and the Mw 8.8 Chile
45 earthquake of February 27, 2010 (e.g. Vigny *et al.* 2011), but the development of fully
46 automated tools for the analysis of possible discontinuities in connection with earthquake events
47 that are freely available to any potential user seems to be a type of resource not available yet.
48 This is precisely our current purpose.

49 In this paper, we present a fully automated tool for the analysis of the station coordinate time
50 series of the EPN stations neighboring an earthquake epicenter, which is made freely available to

51 the users community, and apply it to two significant earthquake events occurred in Europe in
52 recent years: the Mw 6.3 L'Aquila and the Mw 5.1 Lorca earthquakes.

53

54 **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

55 Now we describe the materials and methods needed for the development and use of the
56 tool for automated detection of discontinuities in EPN stations in relation with earthquakes, that
57 is, the data sources in use – earthquake catalog and EPN time series – and the deformation model
58 for the implementation of the desired time series analysis in the freely available, easy-to-use
59 software tool.

60

61 *Data sources*

62 The comprehensive U.S. Geological Survey earthquake catalog (U.S. Geological Survey,
63 2020¹) provides data from the year 1900 to the present with negligible latency, enabling the users
64 to send queries with many different input options (magnitude and time range, geographic region,
65 type of event, etc.) and different output formats (web-interactive, plain text, etc.). It will be used
66 as the source of data to characterize the earthquake events of interest.

67 As the second data source for this study, we use the time series provided for EPN stations
68 (Bruyninx et al. 2019). As of November 27, 2020, the network has 358 active permanent stations
69 which provide dense coverage of the European territory also including some stations in
70 neighboring regions (e.g. North of Africa). They collect data from GPS, Galileo, GLONASS and
71 Beidou constellations, and these data are used by the analysis centers to generate products, which
72 are made available through the corresponding product centers. Specifically, in this work, we use
73 the product EPN coordinate time series, which are accessible to the users by FTP (EPN, 2020). It
74 provides a file for every EPN station with the last coordinate time series obtained for the entire

¹ <https://www.usgs.gov/natural-hazards/earthquake-hazards/earthquakes>

75 working life of the station until the present (with a latency of around two weeks).

76

77 *Deformation model*

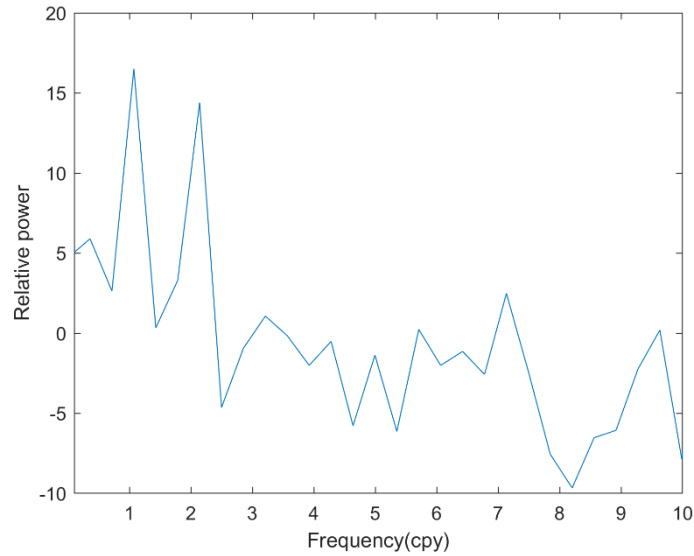
78 The deformations in the Earth's crust induced by an earthquake can be divided into
79 different types, chiefly co-seismic deformations, which occur at the time of the earthquake and
80 can create large instantaneous displacements, and post-seismic deformations, in a period of
81 months to years after the earthquake (depending on its magnitude), which starts with a clear non-
82 linear response immediately after the co-seismic phase followed by a return to a linear trend
83 behavior (similar or not to the one before the earthquake) after the relaxation time. In some
84 cases, some pre-seismic movements can also be observed before the arrival of the earthquake as
85 the result of stress accumulation and small magnitude earthquakes preceding the outbreak of the
86 main earthquake (e.g. Kubo and Nishikawa 2020, Tucikešić and Blagojević 2019).

87

88 Even in the absence of seismic events, seasonal signals can be normally observed in GNSS
89 position time series along with a linear trend. These seasonal signals are mainly caused by
90 changes in the mass redistribution in the Earth's system due to changes in atmospheric loading,
91 non-tidal ocean fluctuations or land hydrology (Dow et al., 2009). As Blewitt and Lavallée
92 (2002) demonstrated, the effect of seasonal variations (annual and semiannual) must be taken
93 into account when estimating velocities; otherwise, the resulting estimates could be significantly
94 biased.

95 Fig. 1 shows the periodogram of one of the coordinate times series used in the subsequent
96 examples of application section, where the peaks at the annual and semiannual periods are
97 clearly visible. These repeating signals are not so evident for other stations but, as Blewitt and
98 Lavallée (2002) explained, they must be taken into account for the velocity estimates to be

99 unbiased, and they should be computed by using a recommended minimum data span of 2.5
 100 years, which is the time period used for the current study.



101

102 Figure 1. Periodogram for the East component time series of ALAC station.

103

104 The model accounting for these annual and semiannual signals can be written (Blewitt and
 105 Lavallée, 2002) as

$$106 \quad u = A_1 \cos(2\pi f_1 t - \varphi_1) + A_2 \cos(2\pi f_2 t - \varphi_2) \quad (1)$$

107 where the signals are characterized by their corresponding frequencies $f_1 = 1$ and $f_2 = 2$, as well
 108 as amplitudes A_1, A_2 and phase lags φ_1, φ_2 (to be determined), being t the time in years and u the
 109 corresponding deformation.

110

111 Developing the cosine of a difference we obtain

$$112 \quad u = A_1 \cos(2\pi f_1 t) \cos(\varphi_1) + A_1 \sin(2\pi f_1 t) \sin(\varphi_1) + A_2 \cos(2\pi f_2 t) \cos(\varphi_2) +$$

$$113 \quad A_2 \sin(2\pi f_2 t) \sin(\varphi_2) \quad (2)$$

114

115 By defining new constants a_1, b_1, a_2, b_2 in terms of constants $A_1, A_2, \varphi_1, \varphi_2$ as

116 $a_1 = A_1 \cos(\varphi_1)$ (3)

117 $b_1 = A_1 \sin(\varphi_1)$ (4)

118 $a_2 = A_2 \cos(\varphi_2)$ (5)

119 $b_2 = A_2 \sin(\varphi_2)$ (6)

120 we can write the model accounting for annual and semiannual signals as

121 $u = a_1 \cos(2\pi f_1 t) + b_1 \sin(2\pi f_1 t) + a_2 \cos(2\pi f_2 t) + b_2 \sin(2\pi f_2 t)$ (7)

122 where the constants a_1 , b_1 , a_2 , b_2 are to be determined. Please note that, in contrast with Eq. (1),

123 the model in Eq. (7) is now linear in these unknowns if a data sample of values (t_i, u_i) is available,

124 so that their values can be estimated by means of a linear least squares adjustment.

125

126 Once discounted the annual and semiannual signals and the linear trends, a co-seismic jump may

127 be studied taking into account that post-seismic deformation, on its turn, is a bit more complex,

128 entailing a first nonlinear relaxation phase before the return to a linear trend. The nonlinear

129 relaxation immediately after the earthquake can be modelled by an exponential or logarithmic

130 decay. Here we follow the model used in Vallianatos and Sakkas (2021)

131 $u = u_\infty + S e^{-\frac{t}{\tau}}$ (8)

132 where u_∞ is the equilibrium value of displacement after a long time, τ is the relaxation time (in

133 years) and S is a scaling factor (please note that at the time of the earthquake, $t = 0$ for the

134 relaxation model, $u = u_\infty + S$).

135 All of these models are implemented in the automated detection tool that is described in the next

136 section and used in the subsequent examples of application.

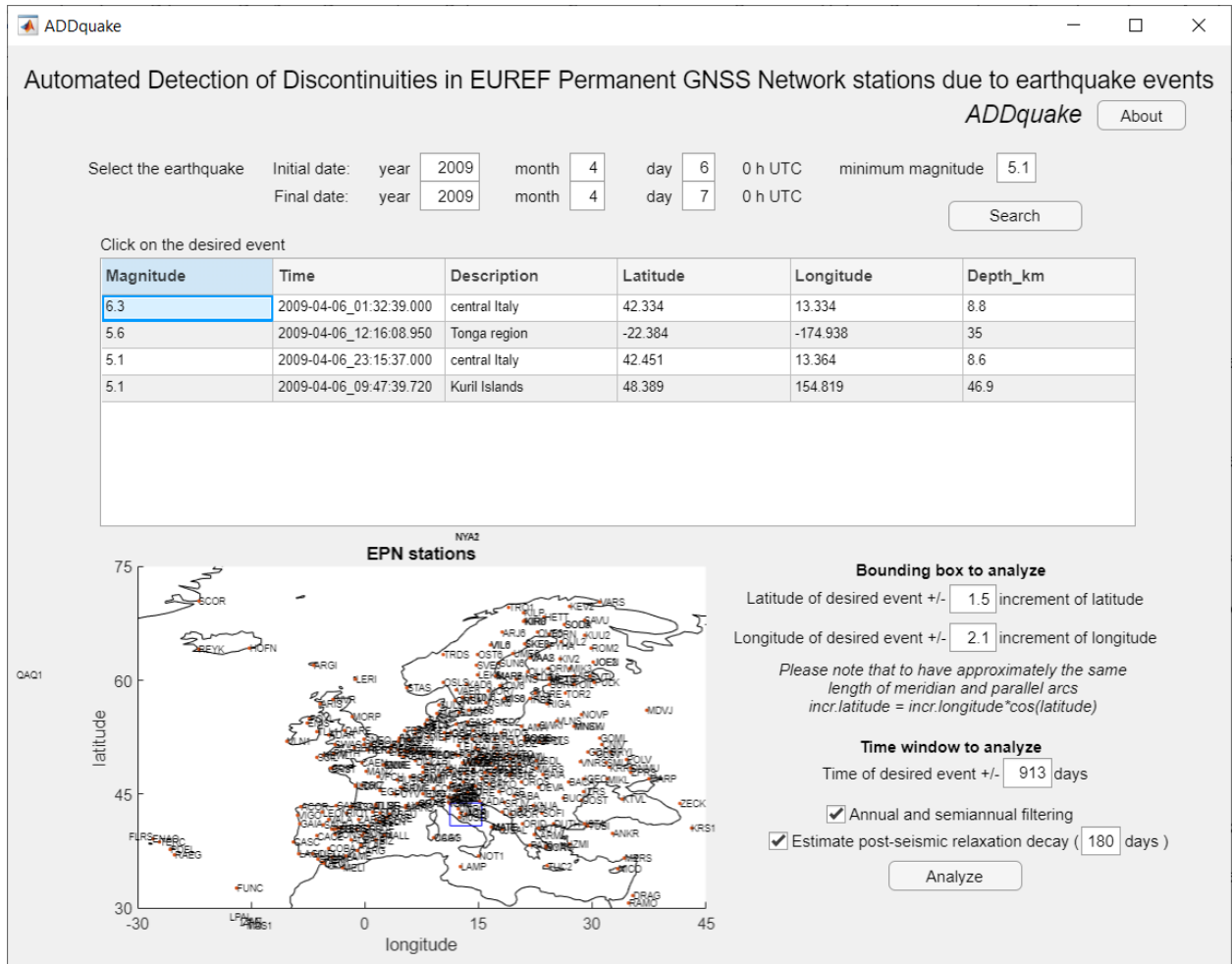
137

138 ***ADDquake software***

139 The Automated Detection of Discontinuities in EPN stations due to earthquake events

140 (ADDquake) application has been developed under Matlab release 2020b (Matlab, 2020) by

141 using its *App Designer* tool. It can be freely downloaded from the personal website of one of the
 142 authors (<http://personales.upv.es/~serbamo/ADDquake/index.html>) and presents the aspect
 143 shown in Fig. 2.



144

145 Figure 2. ADDquake main window.

146 The initial and final dates to search for a specific earthquake can be set up in the upper part of
 147 the window, as well as the minimum magnitude desired for the event. Upon pressing the *Search*
 148 button, a query to the earthquake database is launched (computer access to the internet is
 149 required) in a way that is completely transparent to the user and, as a result, a table is filled with
 150 the values for the events fulfilling the search parameters, in the order of higher to lower
 151 earthquake magnitudes. These magnitudes are understood to be moment magnitude scales (M_w),
 152 while the time is UTC and latitude and longitude are given in degrees (with negative signs

153 denoting South and West, respectively). The depth in km is also provided.

154 If the user clicks on any of the events in the table (central Italy for the case of Fig. 2) a rectangle
155 is drawn on a zoomable map of the EPN stations with center the epicenter of the selected
156 earthquake and boundaries defined as the latitude and longitude minus and plus the respective
157 increments of latitude and longitude indicated in the corresponding boxes at the right part of the
158 window. Since the length of the meridian arc in a sphere of radius R for an increment of latitude
159 $d\varphi$ is

$$160 \quad ds_m = R d\varphi \quad (1^{***})$$

161 and the length of the parallel arc in a sphere of radius R for an increment of longitude $d\lambda$ is

$$162 \quad ds_p = R \cos\varphi d\lambda \quad (2)$$

163 one may want to choose these $d\varphi$ and $d\lambda$ values fulfilling the relationship

$$164 \quad d\varphi = \cos\varphi d\lambda \quad (3)$$

165 so that the resulting arcs of parallel and meridian are equal in length. This note of advice is also
166 given in the ADDquake window. It may be worth explaining that Eq. (3^{***}) as representing the
167 case of the equal meridian and parallel arc lengths holds exactly for a spherical model of Earth
168 but only approximately for an ellipsoidal model, while it is perfectly applicable for our practical
169 purpose, though.

170 Upon clicking on the *Analyze* button, the software searches for the GNSS coordinate time series
171 of the stations included inside the area of study for the dates determined by the date of the
172 earthquake minus and plus the desired time span (100^{*****} days in the example shown in Fig.2)
173 by launching a query to the EPN server, again in a completely transparent way.

174 For every station in the region of interest, a corresponding figure window automatically opens.

175 Additionally, each of these windows is also automatically stored in TIFF format in a folder
176 accessible by clicking on a new button that appears once the process is finished. Point clouds for
177 the station coordinates are represented in different colours (blue for prior data, red for data after
178 the earthquake) as well as the corresponding prior and posterior regression lines for analyzing
179 possible trend changes and significant jumps. This is better illustrated by means of the following
180 examples.

181

182 **EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION**

183 Two earthquake events, of magnitudes Mw 6.3 (relatively high) and Mw 5.1 (moderate),
184 are analyzed now by means of the ADDquake tool.

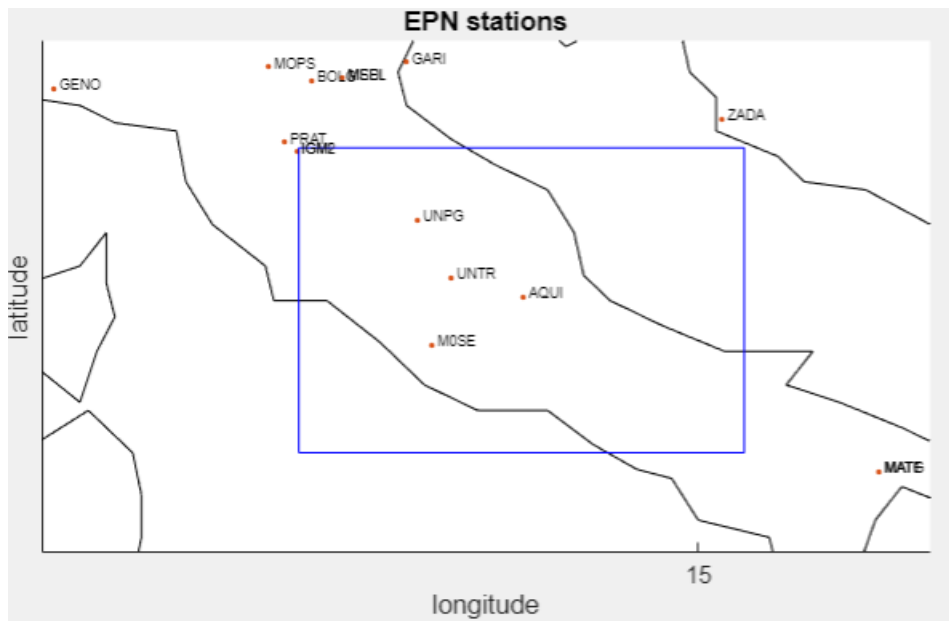
185

186 *The Mw 6.3 L'Aquila earthquake*

187 On April 6, 2009, an Mw 6.3 earthquake severely struck L'Aquila, a city in Central Italy,
188 causing more than 300 deaths and an estimated number of 60000 people left homeless, in which
189 supposed the worst earthquake in the country for 30 years (Enciclopedia Britannica, 2020).

190 The values used to analyze this earthquake event are the default values of the ADDquake tool
191 (those appearing in Fig. 2): 100 *****days before and after the event and increments from the
192 epicenter coordinates $d\varphi = 1.5^\circ$ and $d\lambda = 2.1^\circ$, which result in a bounding box of some 338.6 km
193 of the meridian and parallel arc lengths centered on the epicenter, as it is shown in zoomed-in
194 EPN stations map (Fig. 3). The stations whose time series will be automatically analyzed are:
195 AQUI in L'Aquila, precisely in the earthquake epicenter, UNTR, quite close to the epicenter,
196 and MOSE and UNPG more detached from the epicenter.

197



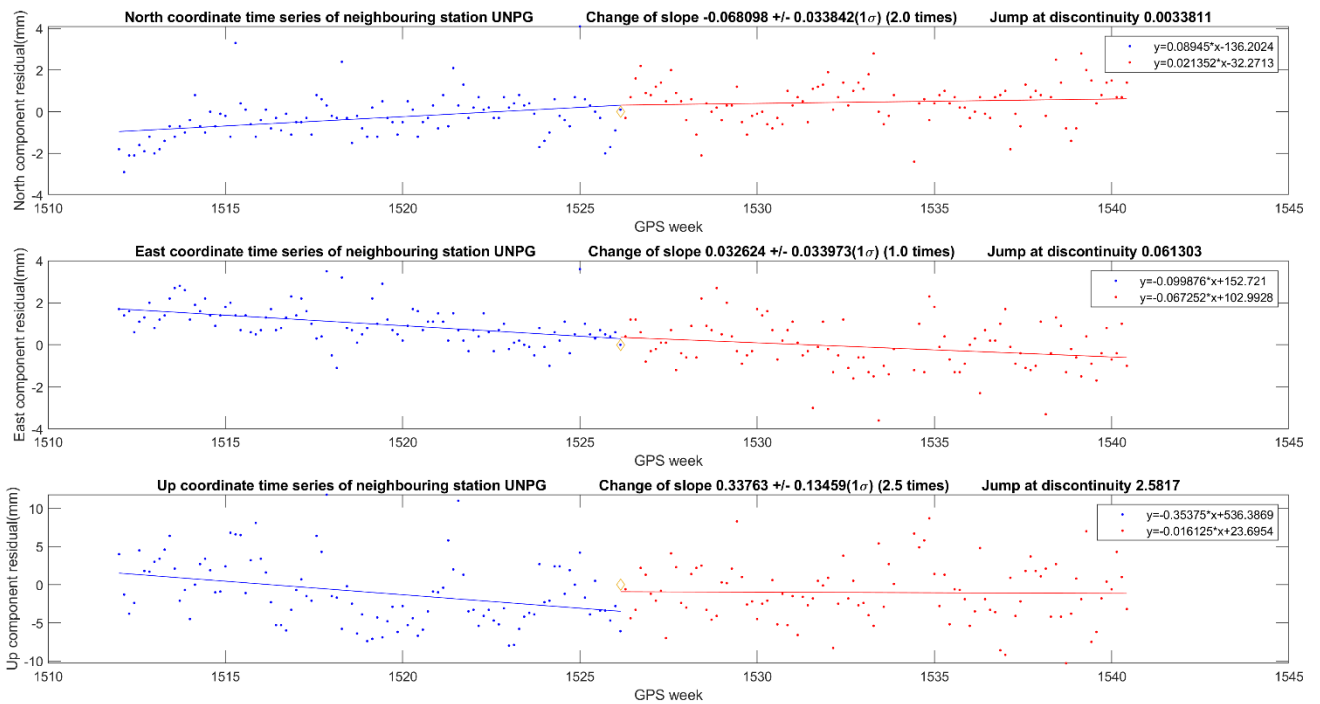
198

199 Figure 3. Area of study for the Mw 6.3 L'Aquila earthquake.

200

201 As we can see in the corresponding figures generated for these stations, Figs. 4, 5, 6 and 7, the
 202 earthquake had a notable influence in the coordinate time series of all these stations. Station
 203 UNPG is the farthest station from the epicenter of the four stations selected but as can be seen in
 204 Fig. 4, the influence of the earthquake on the coordinate time series is noticeable in the vertical
 205 component, which suffers a jump of around 2.6 mm and a change in trend, that is a change of
 206 slope (velocity), 2.5 times its standard deviation, which can be hardly attributable to chance.
 207 Note that in general, we will consider significant these variations larger than, say, 2 or 2.5 times
 208 their corresponding standard deviations inasmuch as they represent p values smaller than 0.05 or
 209 0.01, respectively. That is, if no variation had happened in reality, then the variation actually
 210 observed in the time series could only have been the product of chance with a very low
 211 probability.

212



214 Figure 4. Coordinate time series for station UNPG for the Mw 6.3 L'Aquila earthquake (whose
 215 date is indicated by a small diamond).

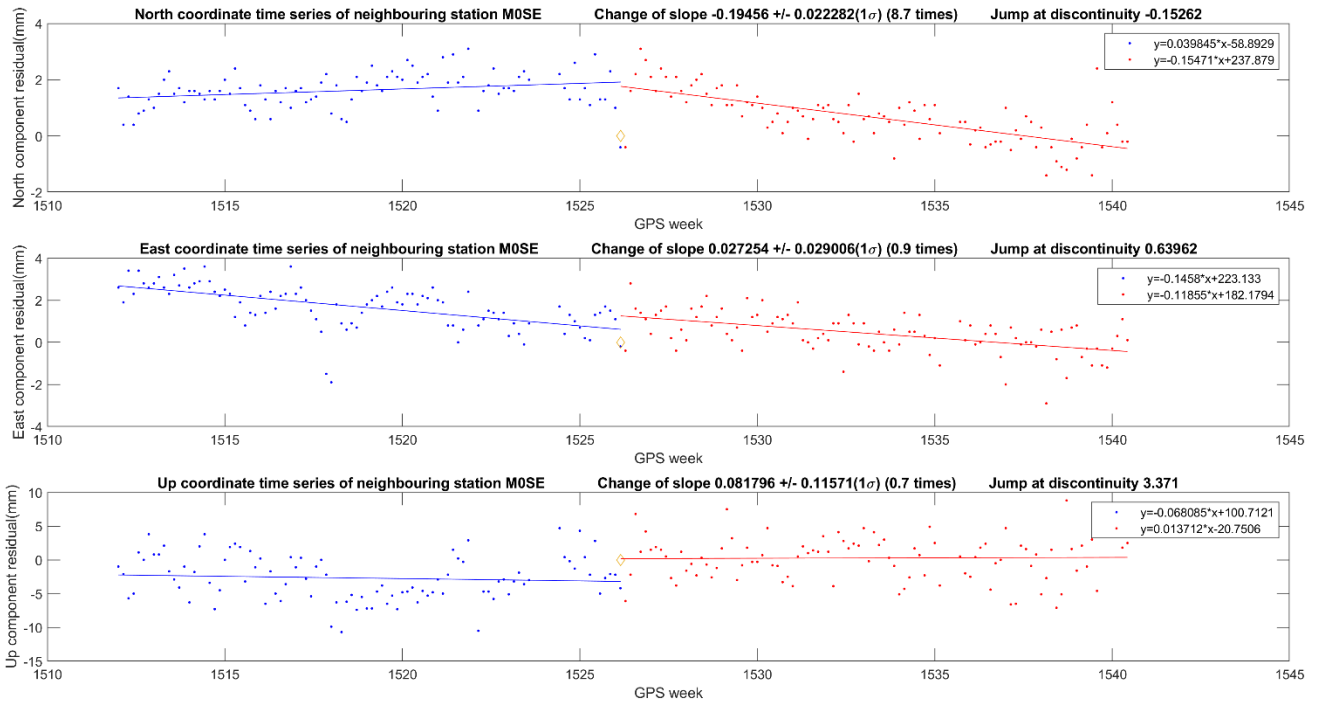
216

217 For the case of MOSE station, Fig. 5, the change of slope is only significant for the North

218 component (here 8.7 times the standard deviation), while the jump discontinuity in the vertical

219 component is also noticeable: around 3.4 mm.

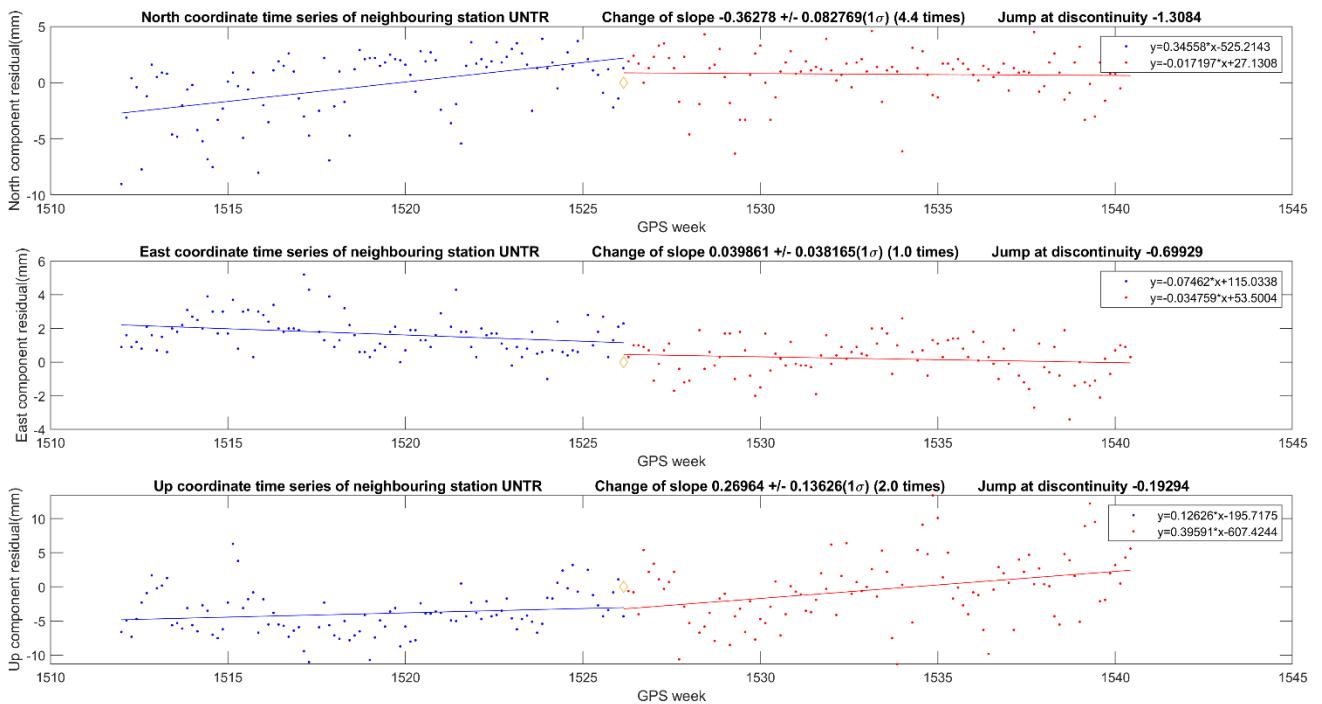
220



222 Figure 5. Coordinate time series for station M0SE for the Mw 6.3 L'Aquila earthquake (date
 223 time is indicated by a small diamond).

224

225 UNTR station (Fig. 6), also shows a significant change of trend for the North component only.

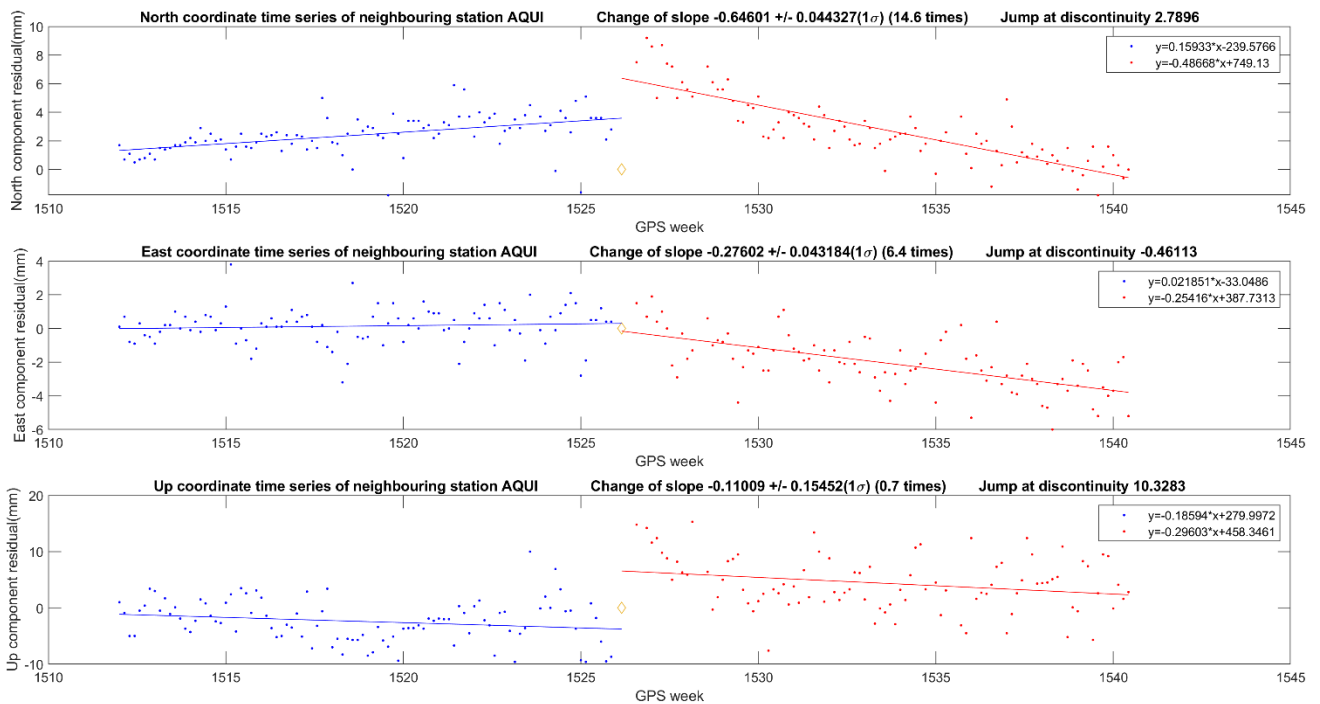


227 Figure 6. Coordinate time series for station UNTR for the Mw 6.3 L'Aquila earthquake (whose
 228 date is indicated by a small diamond).

229

230 Finally, AQUI station, located almost exactly in the earthquake epicenter, shows the features
 231 already seen in the other stations but now taken to a much more significant level, that is, a very
 232 substantial change of trend of the North component (now 14.6 times the standard deviation) and
 233 a notable jump in the vertical component (now of around 10 mm). In addition, there is a
 234 noticeable jump of some 2.8 mm also in the North component as well as a significant trend
 235 change also in the East component (6.4 times the standard deviation).

236



238 Figure 7. Coordinate time series for station AQUI for the Mw 6.3 L'Aquila earthquake (whose
 239 date is indicated by a small diamond).

240

241 A closer inspection may also reveal that some anomalous vertical movements may have occurred
 242 before the earthquake. This agrees with the evidences given in Borghi *et al.* (2016) about some
 243 precursory movements which might be related to the earthquake, which happened a week later.

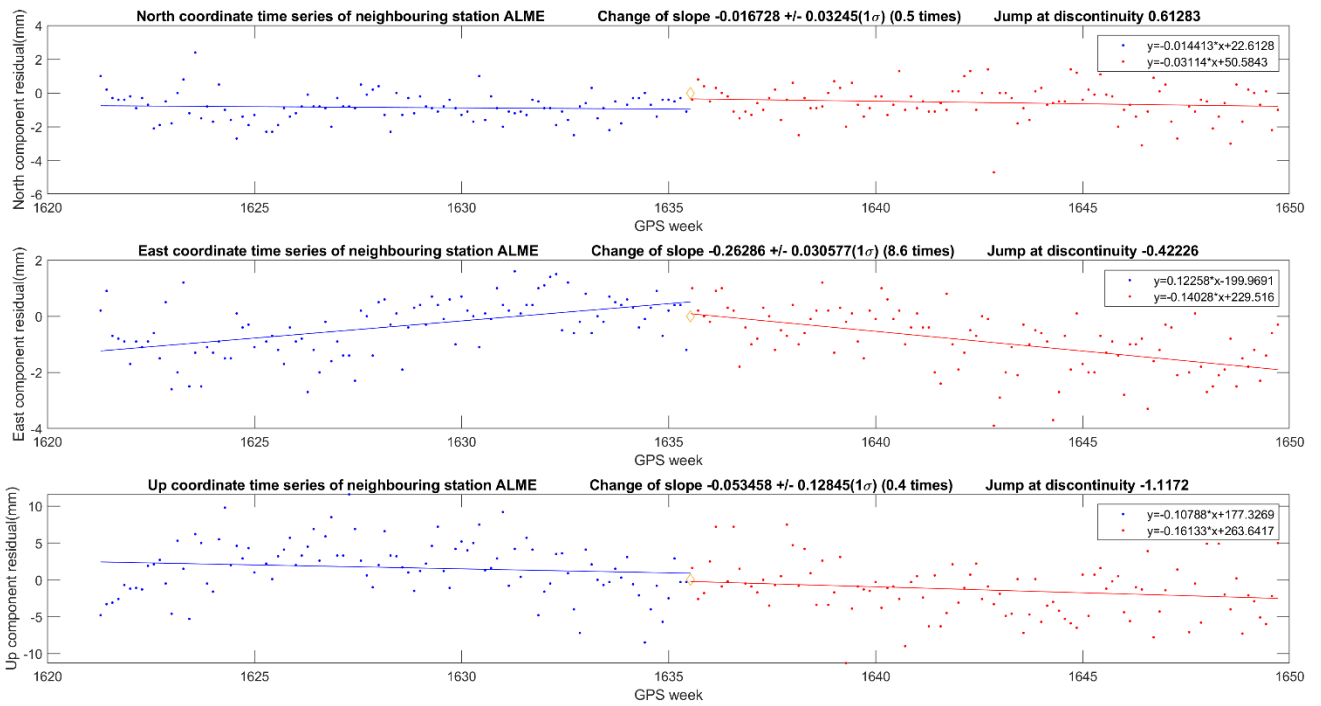
244

245 ***The Mw 5.1 Lorca earthquake***

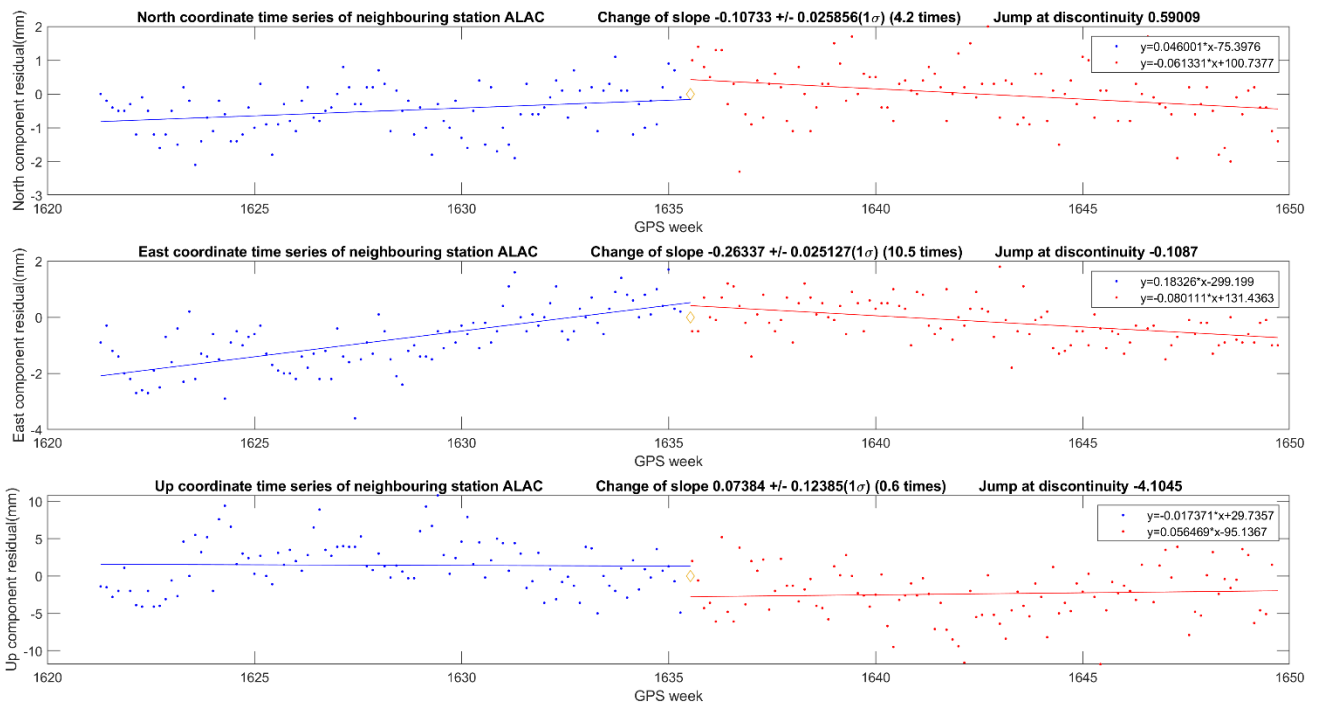
246 On May 11, 2011, a moderate Mw 5.1 earthquake occurred near the city of Lorca, Spain,
 247 causing significant damage to several buildings and nine deaths (The Guardian 2011). This
 248 episode has been the strongest in recent times in a region placed in the broad collision strip
 249 between the Eurasian and African tectonic plates (Morales *et al.*, 2014).

250

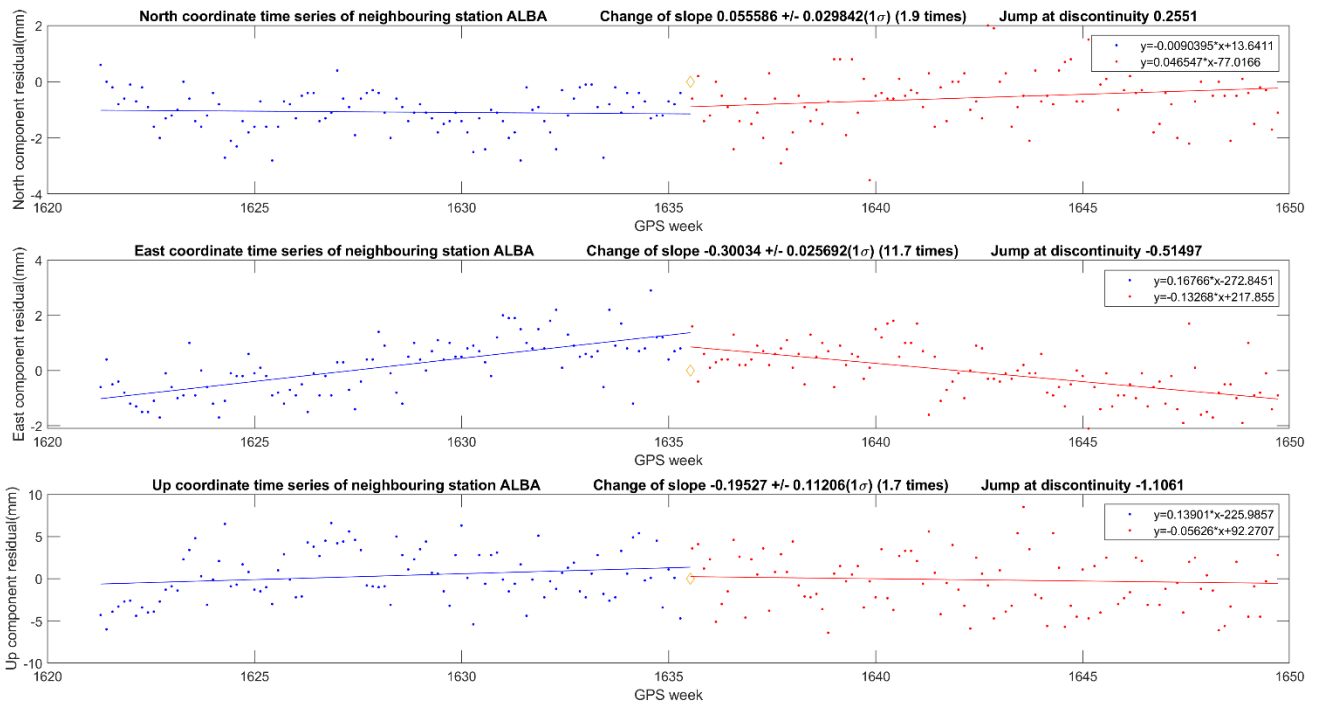
267 coordinate jumps above 1.1 mm except for the case of the vertical component of ALAC station,
268 which experienced a jump of around 4 mm.



270 Figure 9. Coordinate time series for station ALME for the Mw 5.1 Lorca earthquake (whose date
271 is indicated by a small diamond).
272



274 Figure 10. Coordinate time series for station ALAC for the Mw 5.1 Lorca earthquake (whose
 275 date is indicated by a small diamond).
 276



278 Figure 11. Coordinate time series for station ALBA for the Mw 5.1 Lorca earthquake (whose
279 date is indicated by a small diamond).

280

281 **CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK**

282 A tool has been developed for the automatic detection of discontinuities in EUREF
283 Permanent GNSS Network stations related to any desired earthquake event. This software
284 application was applied to two significant earthquake events occurred in Europe: the Mw 6.3
285 L'Aquila and the Mw 5.1 Lorca earthquakes, revealing significant changes occurred in the
286 coordinate time series velocities as well as several coordinate jumps.

287

288 The software tool has been made freely available to the public so that further examples of
289 application may be found and analyzed by the interested readers. Some ideas for future work to
290 improve the tool may include the application to the International GNSS Service (IGS) station
291 network, so that the tool may be applicable to any earthquake event in the world, as well as the
292 inclusion of additional estimates, either in the coordinate domain or related to new data, such as
293 ionospheric anomalies or b-value anomalies, which may suggest preparatory stages of some
294 earthquakes (Sugan *et al.* 2014, Baselga 2020).

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