

Alexis Sáez awarded the Rocha Medal 2026 for outstanding PhD thesis

We are proud to announce that **Alexis Sáez** has been awarded the **Rocha Medal 2026** [<https://isrm.net/newsletter/show/262#isrm-award-winners-were-announced-during-the-eurock2025>] by the International Society for Rock Mechanics and Rock Engineering (ISRM). The award recognizes the most outstanding doctoral thesis in the field of rock mechanics worldwide, defended within the years 2023-2024.

Alexis's thesis was conducted at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in Switzerland. His thesis, titled “**Three-dimensional fluid-driven frictional ruptures: theory and applications**” [<https://infoscience.epfl.ch/handle/20.500.14299/202333>], presents a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding fault slip induced by subsurface fluid motions—a topic of central importance to geomechanics, earthquake science, and subsurface energy technologies.

His work includes the development of analytical and numerical solutions for fluid-driven fault ruptures, and scaling laws that explain the spatiotemporal evolution and magnitude of such events across laboratory to field scales. The results offer critical insights into the physics governing fluid-induced seismicity and its mitigation, with applications ranging from geothermal energy and geological carbon storage in the geo-energy industry to the understanding of natural phenomena such as seismic swarms and slow earthquakes.

This achievement reflects the innovative spirit and scientific rigor of Alexis's research and its impact on the field of rock mechanics.

Congratulations, Alexis!