

EUROPEAN GEOPARKS NETWORK

European Geoparks Magazine ● Issue 23

Geoparks:
**Engaging with communities
for a better future**



THE EUROPEAN GEOPARKS NETWORK

www.europeangeoparks.org

Calendar of Events 2026

MARCH

3-5 March 2026: ITB Tourism Fair

21 March 2026: International Day of Forests / World Day for Glaciers

22 March 2026: World Water Day

23-26 March 2026: 53rd European Geoparks Network Coordination Committee Meeting Karavanke-Karawanken

30 March 2026: International Day of Zero Waste

APRIL

20 April 2026: GGN Advisory Committee Meeting 2/2026 - On line

22 April 2026: International Mother Earth Day 2026

30 April 2026: 2026 Annual General Assembly for Accounts

MAY

18 May 2026: International Museum Day

15-25 May 2026: International Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks “UNESCO Global Geoparks : Geo-conservation, sustainable tourism and local development” Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece

24 May – 7 June 2026: EGN Week

JUNE

5 June 2026-Friday: GGN Advisory Committee Meeting 3/2026 - On line

5 June 2026: World Environment Day

8 June 2026: World Oceans Day

JULY

AUGUST

9 August 2026: International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples

SEPTEMBER

4-12 September 2026: 9th APGN Symposium - Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark (Malaysia)

13 September 2026: International Day of Caves and Karst

15-18 September 2026: 18th EGN Conference - Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark (Finland)

17 September 2026: World Cleanup Day

September 2026: 54th EGN CC Meeting (online)

27 September 2026: World Tourism Day

OCTOBER

6 October 2026: International Geodiversity Day

13 October 2026: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction

19-23 October 2026: 8th GeoLAC Conference - Mixteca Alta Geopark - Mexico

NOVEMBER

November: UNESCO Global Geoparks Council Meeting, Paris

5 November: World Tsunami Awareness Day

27 November 2026 -: GGN Advisory Committee Meeting 4/2026

DECEMBER

5 December 2026: World Soil Day

11 December 2026: International Mountain Day



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Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark:
unique experiences in a natural treasure

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Geoparks: Engaging with communities for a better future

The European Geoparks Network (EGN) is one of three regional networks designated as UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGps)

The variety of activities and innovations highlighted in the 23rd issue of the EGN Magazine show how Geoparks collaborate with their respective communities and partners to work for a better future.

In March 2025 the 51st EGN Coordination Committee Meeting, hosted by UNESCO, celebrated a decade of UNESCO Global Geoparks and was followed in September by the EGN’s Coordination Committee Digital Meeting. With the designation of Arran, Costa Quebrada, Fjord Coast and MurGEopark as new UNESCO Global Geoparks, EGN affiliation increased to 113 members in 29 Countries.

During European Geoparks Week, held mainly between late May and early June, 106 European Geoparks organised 1,283 activities attracting 122,983 visitors.

Engaging with communities and partners in UGGps aims to achieve sustainable development. From 27 to 30 May 2026 Arouca UGGp will host the CPLP UNESCO Global Geoparks Forum to reinforce cooperation for sustainable territorial development across Lusophone countries. In Bakony Balaton UGGp the restored Sümeg Mogyorós Hill Nature Conservation Area connects with geotourism facilities in Sümeg town. Basque Coast UGGp, together with partners, visited Las Loras UGGp sharing experiences in management and citizen participation in heritage. Beigua UGGp conserves its geodiversity by collaborating with the University of Genoa. In Origenes UGGp geoconservation is achieved through citizen volunteering. Massif des Bauges UGGp created the “dark sky corridor” with the support of its municipalities. Chelmos Vouraikos UGGp together with its former residents restores an abandoned village. GeoMôn UGGp considers how to engage with communities successfully and build its credibility as a valued partner. Geo-Naturepark Bergstrasse-Odenwald and Freudenberg town intend to create a meeting place in the town centre. Katla UGGp encourages a local community to rescue young fulmars. Möllerdall UGGp’s digital platform supports local fruit growers. The annual lecture series in Ore of the Alps UGGp informed communities about green energy supply. In Naturtejo and Sobrarbe-Pirineos local authorities and communities have united to protect their geoparks from proposed large-scale energy infrastructures. Pollino UGGp launched a project for the purchase of community composters. Engaging with local communities in Ries UGGp shapes regional identity and sustainable development. Saimaa UGGp participates with universities and Finnish UGGps in an Innovation platform for art, technology, and

sustainable tourism. Karawanken-Karavanke UGGp is congratulated on the award of the Julius Kugy Prize by the Community of Carinthian Slovenes Karavanke for its outstanding cross-border work in the field of sustainable regional development.

All UGGps are engaged in formal and informal educational activities. Between 29 September to 2 October the Azores UGGp organised meetings on Environmental Education. Science, education, and public engagement were central to paleoclimate research in Bükk Region UGGp. Cabo de Gata-Níjar’s newly designed memory card game brings its geological heritage closer to visitors of all ages. In Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UGGp the 10th anniversary of UNESCO Global Geoparks provided an opportunity for giving visibility to scientific, institutional and community collaborations. Harz. Braunschweiger Land. Ostfalen UGGp’s cooperation with schools through the “Nature Park and Geopark Schools” programme encourages young people to take responsibility for their environment.

Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi UGGp is building a strong identity by collaborating with local institutions, businesses, and schools across its four municipalities. A new chapter in Lesvos Island UGGp began with the gradual operation of the new Antissa Educational Centre. In 2025 the Luberon Regional Nature Park management body of Luberon UGGp coordinated a programme of communal atlases of biodiversity across several municipalities. Maestrazgo UGGp’s project “Guardians of the Territory: Children for Palaeontological Conservation” fosters curiosity and responsibility among young learners in natural and cultural heritage. Oeste UGGp achieved remarkable success with the first edition of its educational programme “GeoSchool”. Sieras Subbéticas and Villuercas-Ibores-Jara UGGp’s “Groups of Educational Centres” aims to foster the consolidation of collaborative educational networks. In Sunnhordland UGGp the “Crazy Geologist” will visit schools and focus on the Geopark’s characteristic rock types. In TERRA.vita UGGp Prof. Dr. Harald Lesch led an interactive “Climate Dialogue”.

Four new UGGps, Arran, UK, Costa Quebrada, Spain, Fjord Coast Norway and MurGEopark, Italy are presented in this issue.

Engaging with communities requires European Geoparks to function as vibrant and imaginative organisations that work with their communities and partners to achieve sustainable development for a better future. Achieving these goals entails flexibility in a world that is subject to changes in global climate and loss of biodiversity.

Tony Ramsay,
Publication Editor

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Autumn Digital Meeting of the European Geoparks Network Coordination Committee 2025: a Summary

On September 30th and October 1st, 2025, the Coordination Committee of the European Geoparks Network (EGN) met digitally, bringing together representatives from 28 countries that are part of the EGN, as well as individual members of the Global Geoparks Network and representatives from UNESCO, the International Union of Geological Sciences and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

The Zoom meeting was hosted with technological support from the Lesvos UGGp's team, and was regularly attended by around 160 participants who discussed and decided on issues relating to the governance, daily operation, visibility, and promotion of the EGN and its institutional members.

On Day 1, besides the most appreciated “networking time” (with participants assigned to groups of 6 people), and a warm welcome to the new geoparks and new EGN CC members, the topics discussed included the EGN Action Plan and the next stages in developing the EGN climate change toolkit. The most relevant topics of the day were the analyses, discussion and voting on new EGN procedures and rules of operation, proposals concerning expense and reimbursement procedures, invoice requirements and updating the EGN “Rules of Operation. The discussion concerning the issue of «Spring Meetings Funding” will be addressed during the EGN CC Spring Meeting, in 2026.

Day 2 of the Autumn Digital Meeting included the presentation of two major meetings of the EGN in 2026: the EGN CC Spring Meeting, to be held on 23rd to 26th March in the cross-border Karavanke-Karawanken UGGp, in Austria and Slovenia, and the “18th European Geoparks Conference-2026”, that will take place in Saimaa UGGp, in Finland, on 16th – 18th September. Colleagues from in Karavanke-Karawanken and Saimaa UGGp's presented important information about those events. The EGN coordinators highlighted the elections for the EGN Coordinator, Vice Coordinator and Advisory Committee members.

Following a call for EGN Magazine and Newsletter contributions, the digital meeting proceeded with meetings of the EGN Working Groups through the Zoom platform. In this significant networking and sharing activity, to which all participants were invited to join and contribute, teams focussed on the following issues: Communication, Education, the Fossil Record & Evolution, Geohazards, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, Tourism, Volcanic Areas, Climate Change and Youth Involvement.

The meeting ended with greetings from the EGN Coordinators, and a joint farewell: see you all on March 2026, in Karavanke-Karawanken UGGp, in Austria and Slovenia!

João Carlos Carreiro Nunes
Member of the European Geoparks Advisory Committee.

Screen shot showing some of the 160 participants at the Autumn Digital Meeting of the European Geoparks Network Coordination Committee 2025.



European Geoparks Network Coordination Committee Spring Meeting on the 10th Anniversary of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP): Celebrating a Decade of UNESCO Global Geoparks

5 & 6th March 2025, UNESCO Paris

Opening remarks by Ms Lidia Brito, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, at the celebration of the 10 years of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) and UNESCO Global Geopark designation

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Dr. Sophie Justice, Coordinator of the European Geoparks Network presented the keynote address, "Shaping Tomorrow: UNESCO Global Geoparks for Peace and Sustainability."

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2025 was the 10-year anniversary of the creation of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) and the UNESCO Global Geopark designation. For this special occasion, the European Geoparks Network was honoured to hold the Spring Coordination Committee meeting at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris. Held over two days, this successful meeting organised in partnership with UNESCO was a hybrid event, featuring closed and open sessions. Taking an unprecedented approach, this remarkable gathering brought together UGGp representatives, ambassadors, and national delegations as well as UNESCO experts. The well attended and vibrant meeting was an excellent marker for the incredible progress that UNESCO Global Geoparks have achieved since their creation and the potential that the designation holds for the future.

The morning of 5th March was a closed session for the European Geoparks Network with the participation of the two Coordination Committee representatives from each European UGGp and the EGN Individual Members. A number of observers joined the meeting, notably members of the Global Geoparks Network Executive Board and invited representatives of other UGGp's outside Europe. Following words of welcome from the EGN Coordinators and UNESCO, the Coordination Committee meeting was updated on EGN affairs as well as projects in progress such as the review of the EGN governance, and the preparation of tender for a new EGN website. Several topics were developed and discussed and put to a vote with EGN CC members. These included adjustments to the EGN Magazine, the 2025 promotional fee, an overview of the EGN finances and the budget for 2025.

Ms Michèle Ramis, President of the French National Commission for UNESCO, welcomes the assembly of of geopark representatives and member states in the afternoon session of 5 March.

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H.E. Mr Miquel Iceta i Llorens, Ambassador Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom of Spain to UNESCO chairs Panel 2 Local to global: the impact of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

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EGN members discussed the different proposals and voted using the secret electronic ballot system. All proposals were approved by the majority of the EGN members. The activities of the morning were brought to a close with an excellent interactive workshop led by Kirstin Lemon looking deeper into our collective climate knowledge and exploring what tools and support EGN can provide its members on this topic. As a conclusion, EGN CC members contributed to a large fresco made of images illustrating climate mitigation and adaptation action within the UGGp's of the European network.

In the afternoon there was an open session and a true celebration. With a mixed audience of geopark representatives and member states, the assembly was welcomed by the Director-General of UNESCO by video message, Ms. Lidia Arthur Brito, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, UNESCO;

H.E. Amb. Simona-Mirela Miculescu, President of the 42nd session of the General Conference; Prof. Nickolas Zouros President of Global Geopark Network; Dr. Ludwig Stroink, Secretary General of International Union of Geological Sciences; Ms Michèle Ramis, President of the French National Commission for UNESCO and Prof. Young Hee Kim, Vice-Chair, IGCP Council. After the presentation of the IGCP results, The Master of Ceremony, Prof. Iain Stewart invited Dr. Sophie Justice, Coordinator of the European Geoparks Network to give the keynote address, "Shaping Tomorrow: UNESCO Global Geoparks for Peace and Sustainability ». Sophie talked about the power of Geoparks in driving long term territorial development, and the vital need to position geo-diversity and an awareness of our geoheritage to ensure this. The afternoon continued with three panel discussions:



The IGGP 10th Anniversary Cocktail Event featuring geopark produce from around Europe brings the events of March 5 to a close.

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Delegates take an opportunity to mix and discuss during the 10-year anniversary meeting of the creation of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) and the UNESCO Global Geopark designation.

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Panel 1 Geodiversity for sustainable development.

The chair, H.E. Ms Rosa Batoréu, Ambassador Permanent Delegate of the Portuguese Republic to UNESCO, invited speakers to discuss the importance of recognising and protecting geodiversity, local economic development successes in their territories, and future ambitions. The invited speakers were Asier

Hilario, IUGS commission and Basque Coast UGGp (Spain), Kristin Rangnes, GGN Treasurer and Gea Norvegica UGGp (Norway), Marco Giardino, Prof. University of Turin and Sesia Val Grande UGGp (Italy), Xiaochi Jin, Chinese Institute of Geology, GGN Vice-President and Chinese Geopark Network.

Panel 2 Local to global: the impact of UNESCO Global Geoparks.



Professor Nickolas Zouros President of Global Geopark Network (badge holder) in conversation with delegates at the 10-year anniversary meeting.



The group photograph of all participants in the celebration of a decade of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

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The chair, H.E. Mr Miquel Iceta i Llorens, Ambassador Permanent Delegate of the Kingdom of Spain to UNESCO invited speakers to showcase a “story” illustrating different themes at the core of their geoparks, such as community, tourism, education, gender, and inclusivity. The invited speakers were Salomé Meneses, Azores UGGp (Portugal), Carol Gleeson, Cliffs of Moher UGGp (Ireland), Emmaline Rosado, Latin American and Caribbean Geoparks Network (GeoLAC), Driss Achbal, African Geoparks Network.

Panel 3 Extending the network and strengthening UNESCO Global Geoparks.

The chair, H.E. Ms Xinyu Yang Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the People’s Republic of China to UNESCO invited speakers to illustrate the impact of UGGp governance, networking, and collaboration in their regions/countries and around the world, as well as global success stories in the growth of UNESCO Global Geoparks, and how this can be further strengthened. The invited speakers were Guy Martini, General Secretary of the Global Geopark Network, Agness Gidna, UNESCO Global Geopark Council and Ngorongoro UGGp (Tanzania), Hussam Turki, Director of Saudi Geopark initiatives (Saudi Arabia), Sergio Benevides, Counsellor in charge of Natural Sciences, Permanent Delegation of the Federative Republic of Brazil to UNESCO.

The day’s events were brought to a close with the IGGP 10th Anniversary Cocktail Event that featured geopark produce from around Europe where guests and geoparks mixed happily, sharing stories and tasting products.

Despite only meeting on the morning of the 6th of March, the agenda was very full. A short, closed session started the morning with presentations from the two candidate territories to host the EGN Conference in September 2026: Estrella UGGp, Portugal and Saimaa UGGp, Finland, following a vote by the EGN CC members.

The meeting was then opened to outside participants, warmly greeted by Antonio Abreu, Director of the Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, UNESCO and Ms. Isabelle Desvignes, Deputy

Permanent Delegate of France to UNESCO. The meeting continued with three cross cutting technical panels featuring UNESCO specialists from outside the IGGP and the geopark experts. These were chaired by members of the EGN AC:

Open session 4: Advancing Scientific and Environmental Education

Mikko Kiuttu, Rokua UGGp, invited panellists to discuss Education and scientific knowledge for a stronger tomorrow. Participants were Naomi Foster, North Pennines National Landscape UGGp; Ms. Julia Heiss, Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO; Ms. Amal Kasry, Basic Science, Research, Innovation and Engineering (Intl Decade of Science for Sustainable Development) UNESCO; Mr. Iain Stewart representing Chair Geoscience Communication.

Open session 5: The Heritage Nexus.

Ilias Valiakos, Lesvos Island UGGp invited speakers to talk about protecting and managing natural, cultural, immaterial for peace and sustainability. Participants were Larissa Arras, Bergstrasse Odenwald UGGp, Kana Furusawa, GGN; Antonio Abreu – Director Ecological and Earth Sciences; Ms. Jyoti Hosagrahar Deputy Director World Heritage Centre.

Open session 6: Building Community Resilience.

Alessia Amorfini, Apuan Alps UGGp invited speakers to talk about disaster risk reduction and climate change. Participants were Mr. Alain Petit, Famenne Ardenne UGGp; Setsuya Nakada, GGN-UGGpC; Mr. Koen Verbist Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation UNESCO; Ms. Fadouma Ali, Disaster Risk Reduction unit, UNESCO.

The meeting closed with the announcement that the next EGN Conference would be held at the Saimaa UGGp, in Finland and a group photograph of all participants.

Dr. Sophie Justice
European Geoparks Network Coordinator

The European Geo parks Week 2025



ASPRONTE UGGp, ITALY



APUAN ALPS UGGp, ITALY



BEIGUA UGGp, ITALY



BERGSTRASSE-ODENWALD UGGp, GERMANY



AROUCA UGGp, PORTUGAL



BASQUE COAST UGGp, SPAIN



BLACK COUNTRY UGGp, UK



BIOKOVO-IMOTSKI LAKES UGGp, CROATIA



AZORES UGGp, PORTUGAL



ADAMELLO BRENTA UGGp, ITALY



BAKONY-BALATON UGGp, HUNGARY



BEAUJOLAIS UGGp, FRANCE



BUKK REGION UGGp, HUNGARY

The European Geoparks Week, often called the Geoparks Festival held between late May and early June, is a major occasion in the annual calendar of events for all European Geoparks. This European-wide festival aims to raise public awareness about Geoparks, their role in conserving the geological and natural heritage, educational activities and how, by promoting geotourism, they endeavour to provide economic benefit for the local people. It also shows residents in Geoparks and their communities that they are part of a wider European and Global Network.

During EGN Week 2025, 106 European Geoparks organised 1,283 activities attracting 122,983 visitors. Online provision plays an increasingly significant role and 68 online activities attracted 80,374 participants. In addition, 664 press releases, 148,393 programme flyers and 8,523 printed articles were published in 2025.

Events in the 2025 European Geoparks Week programme involved a variety of activities which, by highlighting the links between the geology, landscape, natural heritage, industrial and cultural heritage informed local communities and the wider public about



BURREN AND CLIFFS OF MOHER UGGp, IRELAND



BUZAU LAND UGGp ROMANIA



CATALUNYA CENTRAL UGGp, SPAIN



CABO DE GATA-NÍJAR UGGp, SPAIN



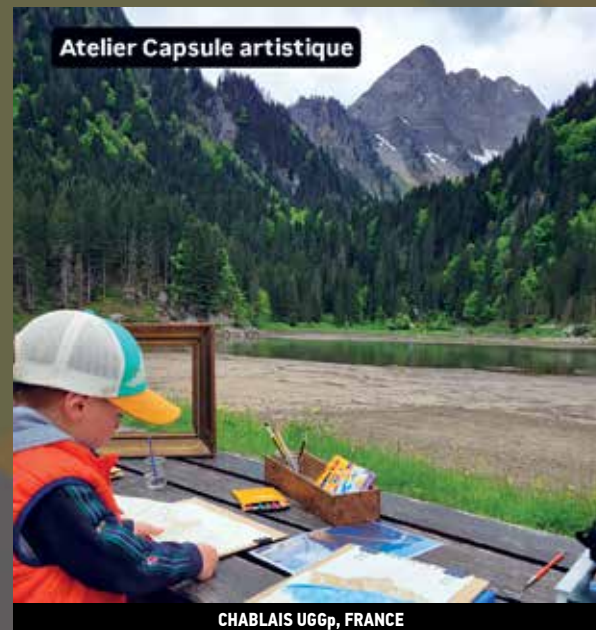
CHELMOS-YOURAIKOS UGGp, GREECE



CABO ORTEGAL UGGp, SPAIN



CAUSSES DU QUERCY UGGp, FRANCE



CHABLAIS UGGp, FRANCE



COUREL MOUNTAINS UGGp, SPAIN



DJERDAP UGGp, SERBIA

the aims and holistic nature of the Geopark concept. During this week most Geoparks engage in more than one activity.

Guided tours

Guided tours provided Geoparks with an opportunity to showcase their landscapes and geology along established way-marked trails, also to introduce new trails. Ries UGGp delivered five guided tours. The Apuan Alps UGGp's "Health comes by walking" trail on the Gothic Line of Mount Folgorito was an initiative conceived by the Italian League for the Fight against Cancer and organised with the Apuan Alps UGGp. In Aspromonte UGGp a special opening of the "Alto Aspromonte" State Forest was organised to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity. Beigua UGGp celebrated the European Day of Parks with the "Alta Via Trail in Blossom" and investigated rocks and landforms in "Geotrecking Hidden Treasures in Gargassa's Valley". In "Forest Bathing: A Regenerative Immersion in Nature" participants experienced a Japanese practice that promotes relaxation and deep contact with the natural environment. Cabo de Gata-Níjar UGGp's Geoparks Week began with a guided walk to explore the surroundings and learn about the

area's geology and biodiversity. As night fell, attendees enjoyed stargazing. With the help of telescopes and expert explanations participants identified constellations, planets and other celestial bodies. Cabo Ortegal UGGp's programme included boat tours to Vixia Herbeira and Cabo Ortegal, interpretive hiking in iconic sites like Pico da Vela or the cliffs of Loiba, horseback riding and via ferrata adventures. Children enjoyed "geo-workshops" and family-friendly exploration routes. Geopark De Hondsrug UGGp's excursion "Landscape Beyond Psychology" with a group of 30 psychology students from the University Of Zürich, Switzerland explored how the landscape and knowledge of the geological history can contribute to raising the level of consciousness and improvement of mental health and resilience in our society. Multiple events in English Riviera UGGp included learning about the unique geology and ecology of the Geopark through walking or from the perspective of the water for all age groups. Estrela UGGp's "Science by Walking" interpretative walk introduced visitors and locals to the Geopark and its heritage. Fforest Fawr UGGp focused on guided walks from the Geopark's hub at Craig-y-nos Country Park in the company of a local author and included the "Cribarth" and "Wealth

of Water" Geotrails. In GeoMôn UGGp the EGN walk was led by Dr Rob Marsden, Chief Executive Officer of Anglesey Mining, who summarised the Neolithic to 19th Century copper mining at Parys Mountain. Dr Graham Leslie, formerly of the British Geological Survey mapping team, led a 3-day field trip explaining new geological interpretations to members of the GeoMôn and Liverpool Geological societies. Haute-Provence UGGp's guided tours focused on the UNESCO Global Geoparks exhibition and excavation workshop (game) which raised awareness of the palaeontological heritage. Idrija UGGp's Geopark Day, a half-day event for all generations, featured a guided hiking tour, local culinary delights, children's workshops and live music, with the involvement of the local community and providers. Karawanken-Karavanke UGGp hosted the «Drau-Drava Run», a cross-border Geopark school run. The opening of the new Ey-

jafjallajökull viewpoint, with a short path to a perfect viewpoint of the glacier and the volcano was one of the main events in Katla UGGp. In the Land of Extinct Volcanoes UGGp the "Open gardens among extinct volcanoes" project was a special event for local people, nature lovers and anyone who enjoys gardening or wants to make their backyard more eco-friendly. Lauhanvuori-Hämeen kangas UGGp Geopark partner entrepreneurs organised a guided cycling tour to the Kauhaneva-Pohjankangas National Park. Participants heard fascinating history, nature and folklore stories. Madonie UGGp's "Valledolmo" hosted a sensory evening excursion to Pizzo della Madonna involving sounds, colours, scents and flavours followed with an aperitif and music at dusk. In Massif des Bauges UGGp a guided walk highlighted the natural disasters that have occurred in the commune of Grésty-sur-Isère, as part of the "Souvenirs Majeurs" project on geohazards.



CUILCAGH LAKELANDS UGGp, UK-IRELAND



DE HONDSRUG UGGp, THE NETHERLANDS



ENGLISH RIVIERA UGGp, UK



ESTRELA UGGp, PORTUGAL



COPPER COAST UGGp, IRELAND



EL HIERRO UGGp, SPAIN



FAMENNE-ARDENNE UGGp, BELGIUM



FORREST FAWR UGGp, UK



GEOMON UGGp, UK



GREVENA-KOZANI UGGp, GREECE

The 4th edition of the 'Geology and Climbing' day at Fort Marthod, focused on Bauges diamonds, which occur as fenestrated quartz in predominantly limestone rocks. Mountain guides, trainers and climbers walked the trails of the unique Gavros geosite to explore and document the flora and celebrated World Environment Day in Meteora-Pyli UGGp. Monts d'Ardèche UGGp, in partnership with the Geological Society of the Ardèche and the Museum of the Ardèche, organised visits to two of the region's volcanic geosites. In North West Highlands UGGp the inaugural Earth Mind Fieldtrip engaged a new audience with the extraordinary story of the landscape of the North West Highlands, providing them with the time and space for contemplation and connection with the ancient landscapes. During the Museum Weekend of Salzburg, the Larzenbach show mine and the "Ores, Gold and Minerals" museum in Hüttau were highlighted as part of the Ore of the Alps UGGp and all-day guided tours were offered in the copper show mine. During EGN Week 2025, Rokua UGGp provided a series of guided tours showcasing the region's unique geological features, cultural heritage and environmental art. Highlights included nature and art walks to significant sites like Rokua's Harjunpolku trail and Manamansalo's Peurapolku, where participants explored striking landscapes and inspiring

environmental artworks such as the "Golden Cone" and "Seer" installations. The week also featured the "Time Travel" exhibition in Muhos, providing an interactive journey through local history and geology with virtual reality elements. In Salpausselkä UGGp the unique musical experience in nature, Melodies of the Lakes, in Hollola at Lake Vähä-Tiilijärvi. "Järvifantasia – Lake Fantasy", a nature-inspired work by composer Hannu Kella, was performed by nine musicians along the trail around the lake. Geopark Gravel 2025 involving more than 50 cyclists explored the rolling hills, ancient glacial landscapes and along the changing coastlines of the archipelago in South Fyn Archipelago UGGp. In addition The Archipelago Expedition 2025, in which participants aboard the historic schooner Fylla, combined hands-on experiences in marine geology, biology and archaeology with storytelling, maritime history and seafaring traditions. In Sunnhordland UGGp participants enjoyed the boat expedition to the Geopark's archipelago with the visit to the famous but remote stone age quarry for axes at the Hespri Islet as the main goal. Swabian Alb UGGp's "Brenz Adventure Day" took place again this year. In the small city of Giengen, guided tours, biotope discovery tours, dancing and a research station in Brenzpark attracted visitors. Königsbronn municipality added exciting highlights

with museum and local tours and a new project on the former clay pits Troodos UGGp highlights the field trip organised in cooperation with the Geological Survey and the Troodos Geopark mountain guides. During this trip, participants explored the Troodos Geopark area and learned about the Troodos ophiolite, creating an enhanced and engaging educational experience.

Education

Geoparks engage in formal and informal education. Consequently educational activities are a significant component of EGN Week. Arouca UGGp held the Awards Ceremony for the Educational Project Illustrate Your School 'Little Farmers of the Vale de Mansores'. In Bergstrasse-Odenwald UGGp the Institute of Geosciences at Heidelberg University opened its doors to inspire teenagers and young adults with theory and practice in geosciences. The Black Country

UGGp highlights an event at the 'Wildside Centre' in the Wightwick Wedge and Smestow Valley Geosite which included a host of presentations on geology, history and biodiversity with the aim of producing teaching resources for the geosite. In Bohemian Paradise UGGp Paleopark Balka is an entertaining and educational project that includes an educational trail about the geological history of the local landscape. Copper Coast UGGp hosted a talk by a Geophysicist outlining new research using data from a seismograph located in their Visitor Centre to track fin whales off the coast. In Courel Mountains UGGp more than 200 children from three schools and a high school participated in age-appropriate activities, including a music show based on nature sounds, storytelling on biodiversity, geology workshops or a route exploring the local historical heritage. Cuilcagh Lakelands UGGp held a diverse array of public and schools engagement events



HARZ. BRAUNSCHWEIGER LAND. OSTFALEN UGGp, GERMANY



HAUTE-PROVENCE UGGp, FRANCE



KATLA UGGp, ICELAND



KEFALONIA-ITHACA UGGp, GREECE



HOLY CROSS MOUNTAINS UGGp, POLAND



IDRIJA UGGp, SLOVENIA



KULA-SALIHLI UGGp, TURKIYE



LAND OF EXTINCT VOLCANOES UGGp, POLAND



IMPACT CRATER LAKE LAPPAJÄRVI UGGp, FINLAND



KARAWANKEN-KARAVANKE UGGp, AUSTRIA-SLOVENIA



LANZAROTE AND CHINIJO ISLANDS UGGp, SPAIN



LAS LORAS UGGp, SPAIN

and highlights the schools educational programmes involving new geoheritage focused education for young people. In Geopark De Hondsrug UGGp the Geo-week School excursion "Drilling through the Ice Ages" included 30 participants from a regional school. Educational activities in Djerdap UGGp included a series of successful events promoting geoheritage, education and cooperation with the local community. In partnership with the Museum of Majdanpek, an exhibition dedicated to the archaeological site of the Rudna Glava Copper Mine was opened. El Hierro UGGp provided «Training Tools of the El Hierro Geopark for Understanding its Geological Heritage», a training course for the island's primary school teachers. English Riviera UGGp supported multiple events including engaging with local artists, participating in hands-on scientific experiments and beach discoveries. The educational programmes in Estrela UGGp used the Geopark as an outdoor laboratory. In Famenne-Ar-

denne UGGp a part of the Flood Convention, the Lesse River Contract provides educational activities using the augmented reality sandbox 'Exact Lab' to model a territory in sand, onto which maps (flood hazards, land registry, etc.) are projected. In Grevena-Kozani schools from around the province visited the Trampantzeio Historic Schoolhouse of Siatista, which houses historical palaeontological and botanical collections. Harz. Braunschweiger Land. Ostfalen UGGp organised the "Market of Opportunities" with the aim of providing information and motivating action about sustainability. The Geoparks campaign "Wonder world meadow" with lots of hands-on activities aimed at children experiencing meadows was a huge success. In Katla UGGp presentations in Icelandic and English, about the stability of Víkurfjara Beach where children from Víkurskóli school, have been monitoring the changes in beach width and volume for four years. Fieldtrips and the Second "Cretaceous Meetings" were highlights in

the educational activities of Las Loras UGGp. Here celebrations concluded with a wonderful concert by the Burgos Conservatory band, who visited the Geopark in the morning and performed outdoors in the afternoon. In Madonie UGGp the "Rocks and Imagination" event was held with the students of the "G. Oddo" Comprehensive Institute of Caltavuturo to deepen their knowledge of rocks and processes through direct observation and explanations by experts. Maestrazgo Cultural Park UGGp launched the Young Ambassadors programme featuring a student exchange initiative and diverse field activities throughout the Geopark. In Meteora-Pyli UGGp students from the primary school and kindergarten in Stourmaraiika community in the Municipality of Pyli participated in World Environment Day activities through an informative event held at their school, as well as through a virtual connection with a school in Lesvos Island UGGp. North West Highlands UGGp celebrated the final session of

the Geopark Explorers Club at the Rock Stop Visitor Centre. The club is open to children from 5-11 years in age living in the Geopark. Activities were designed through discovery and teamwork to raise awareness of the environment and the landscapes of the North West Highlands. Oeste UGGp organised several field trips with 7th to 12th grade students providing hands-on learning experiences and raising awareness about the region's geological, ecological and cultural values. Orígens UGGp highlights an activity held in two different schools, where nearly 60 students learned about the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, putting the concepts into practice by completing challenges. The workshop on UNESCO Schools in Reykjanes UGGp aimed at strengthening collaboration, knowledge and understanding of UNESCO School activities to prepare schools in Suðurnes to apply for participation in the UNESCO School network. Sierras Subbéticas UGGp and the regional Teacher Training Centres



LAUHANVUORI-HAMEENKANGAS UGGp, FINLAND



LAVREOTIKI UGGp, GREECE



MELLERDALL UGGp, LUXEMBOURG



METEORA-PYLI UGGp, GREECE



LUBERON UGGp, FRANCE



MADONIE UGGp, ITALY



MOLINA ALTO TAJO UGGp, SPAIN



MONTS D'ARDECHE UGGp, FRANCE



NATURTEJO UGGp, PORTUGAL



MAESTRAZGO UGGp, SPAIN



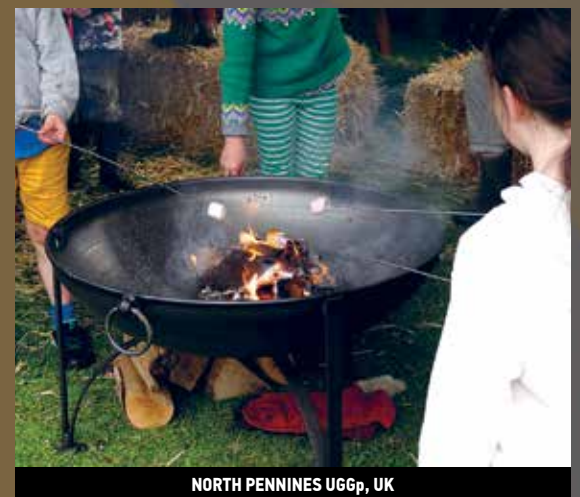
MAIELLA UGGp, ITALY



MASSIF DES BAUGES UGGp, FRANCE



NOVOHRAD-NOGRAD UGGp, SLOVAKIA-HUNGARY



NORTH PENNINES UGGp, UK

held the second field trip of a province-wide teacher training course. The course aimed to introduce educators to the Geopark's unique geological heritage and provide them with educational materials and activities. The Hidden Treasure Hunt of Sitia UGGp "Travel through time with the Deinotherium of Sitia" involved volunteers and 60 students from Sitia schools in an activity that aimed to introduce the rich palaeontological history of the Geopark through an exploration game.

Sobrarbe-Pirineos provided tourist information agents of the different villages inside the Geopark as well as those who work in the Ordesa and Monte Perdido National Park with high quality information about the Geopark, its landscape and culture. In Swabian Alb UGGp education concerning sustainable development played a central role in EGN week events. In Terras de

Cavaleiros UGGp lectures and field trips were conducted with researchers, students and faculty members of the Institute of Earth Sciences to exchange knowledge and enrich scientific understanding. Troodos UGGp partnered with local schools on International Museum Day, to educate students about the geology of Cyprus and raise awareness of the importance of geoconservation. In Villuercas-Ibores-Jara UGGp the Geoconvivencia, the special day for education centres

involved students, teachers, relatives, volunteers and the organisation team. Vulkaneifel UGGp's "Geotope" Conference brought together geoscientists, educators and conservationists in the Vulkaneifel UNESCO Global Geopark. Under the theme "Geosites as Learning Sites of the Future", the programme featured targeted sessions for educators, protected area managers and policymakers. Field trips to outstanding geosites, such as different quarries or the mofettes around Daun,



OESTE UGGp, PORTUGAL



NORTH WEST HIGHLANDS UGGp, UK



ODSHERRED UGGp, DENMARK



ORE OF THE ALPS UGGp, AUSTRIA



ORIGENS UGGp, SPAIN



PAPUK UGGp, CROATIA

provided hands-on experiences and fostered dialogue between science and practice.

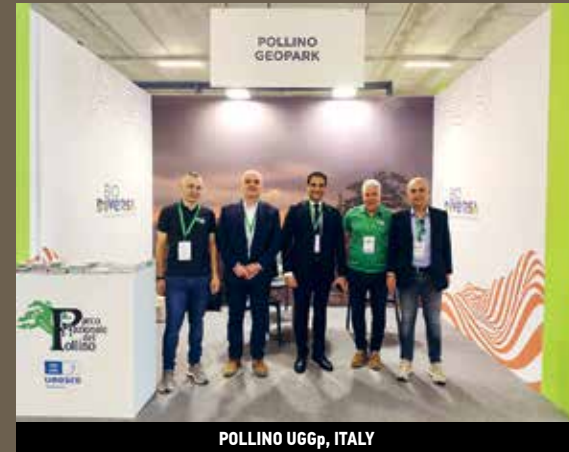
Group activities

European Geoparks Week provides an opportunity for a variety of group activities including exhibitions, lectures, seminars, workshops, festivals aimed at engaging with partners, visitors and residents in aspects of their culture and history. Adamello Brenta UGGp's activities coincided with the International Year for Glacier Preservation. The event was organised in collaboration with many stakeholders, such as the Glaciological Commission of the Mountaineering Society of Trentino, the organising committee of the Water Festival, mountain guides, a theatre company and members of the press. In Arouca UGGp the opening of the exhibition "Iter Hominis: An Illustrated Route", at the Arouca Municipal Museum was one of the main events in the Geopark during EGN Week. The grazing festival in Crégols Village in Causses du Quercy UGGp moved with the rhythms of the flocks of ewes. This event, organised by the Geopark in partnership with the Crégols-Lugagnac pastoral land association and the "Les Caussignols" breeders' association, highlight-

ed the practice of grazing to visitors and residents. Basque Coast UGGp's Geotalks combined science, art and communication and attracted an ever-increasing audience. In Beigua UGGp cultural activities included visits to Campo Ligure, one of the most beautiful villages in Italy and guided tours of Tiglieto Abbey. Bergstrasse-Odenwald together with the UNESCO World Heritage Site Lorsch Monastery invited participants to an extensive programme in the centre of Lorsch. The "Landscapes, stories, geology" conference was the principal event organised by the Bükk Region UGGp during EGN Week 2025. Many of the 109 Geopark municipalities presented their own practices. Burren and Cliffs of Moher UGGp focused on a single weekend event in their Geopark Academy. Guest speakers, in a daylong conference, discussed all aspects of recent research in the Geopark followed by a field trip. Buzău Land UGGp hosted a series of activities aimed at students, visitors, local communities and volunteers from the business sector. These initiatives focused on raising awareness of the Geopark's rich natural and cultural heritage. Catalunya Central UGGp combined literary gatherings and storytelling sessions at public libraries, with excursions such as exploring the "Colònia



PLATABERGEN UGGp, SWEDEN



POLLINO UGGp, ITALY



PSILORITIS UGGp, GREECE



RIES UGGp, GERMANY



ROCCA DI CERERE UGGp, ITALY



SAIMAA UGGp, FINLAND



SALPAUSSELKA UGGp, FINLAND

Santa Maria" mining heritage, the natural dye workshop at the Prehistoric Park of the "Coves del Toll" and the excursion to explore the urban geology from "El Pont de Vilomara". The Kalavryta Ski Centre in Chelmos-Vouraikos UGGp organised a workshop entitled the "Bio-Geodiversity Lab" which included an interactive exhibition of animals, plants, rocks and fossils from the Geopark area. In Cuilcagh Lakelands UGGp public events held in partnership with their Geopark Ambassadors included outdoor Bushcraft, a Haiku Poetry Walk and heritage walking tours at unique Geosites. Djerdap UGGp highlights "Plasintijada", an event aimed at preserving local traditions, culture and culinary heritage. The publication of "Cribarth - The Giant Awakes" by Jeff Alexander which documents the history, industrial archaeology and landscapes of the Cribarth geosite was celebrated in Fforest Fawr

Geopark. In GeoMôn UGGp the joint event with Anglesey Antiquarians Society examined stones used at different stages in building the village of Newborough and its Medieval Church. Members of Grevena-Kozani UGGp Geopark staff were among the presenters at a seminar on traditional dances, held in Grevena and organised by the Pindos Dance and Cultural Association of Grevena. Haute-Provence UGGp organised a festival in Digne-les-Bains in the Musée Promenade (Geopark Visitor Centre). Geopartners were invited to present their professional activities and sell products (olive oil, honey, clay modelling, basketry, craft beer, etc). Three "old times living" exhibition centres of the territory were also present to highlight wooden games, manufacturing, playing with children and a mule ride. Karawanken-Karavanke UGGp celebrated the opening of a permanent outdoor sustainable exhibition which



SUNNHORDLAND UGGp, NORWAY



SIERRA MORENA DE SEVILLA UGGp, SPAIN



SIERRAS SUBBÉTICAS UGGp, SPAIN



SITIA UGGp, GREECE



SOBRARBE-PIRINEOS UGGp, SPAIN



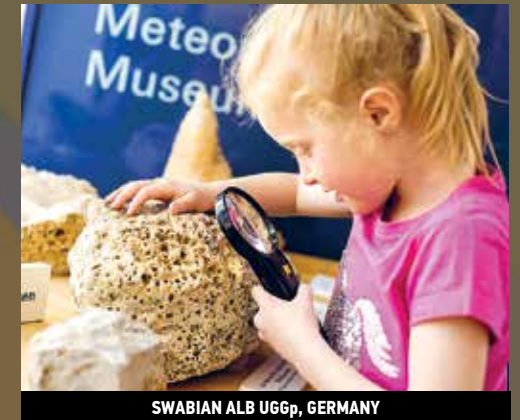
SCHELDE DELTA UGGp, THE NETHERLANDS-BELGIUM



STYRIAN EISENWURZEN UGGp, AUSTRIA



SESIA VAL GRANDE UGGp, ITALY



SWABIAN ALB UGGp, GERMANY

highlight the importance of conservation and protection of vulnerable and protected flora and fauna species in the Geopark. In Kula-Salihli UGGp visits to Kula Divlit Volcanic Park, Kula Fairy Chimneys, Çakırca Basalt Columns and Historic Kula Houses captured the area's unique natural and cultural heritage. Madonie UGGp organised a visit to the Oldest neighborhood of the Borgo with the "Gruppo Coloriamo Insieme la Vita". In Maiella UGGp a seminar with over 50 students from a high school (art school) in Sulmona focused on the housing crisis and rural dry-stone buildings made in the past by shepherds and farmers of the Maiella's mountain by removing the stones from land for cultivation. Möllerdall UGGp focused on the "Al Schmelz" geosite, where iron ore was smelted in the 18th and 19th centuries. A new interpretation tool was inaugurated at the site in the presence of the national Minister for Spatial Planning. Now, the former blast furnace and stamp mill can be experienced in digital form as augmented reality. Ries UGGp's three-day event in Daiting also focused on ancient iron smelting and craftsmanship. Here visitors observed traditional processes of iron production, from building and firing a

historic furnace to smelting ore and forging iron by hand. In Meteora-Pyli UGGp representatives of the region's cultural institutions were introduced to all museums operating within the boundaries of the Geopark and held in-depth discussions with the organisers about potential collaboration and joint events, as well as ways to record the area's culture and folklore activity. The major food fair / festival held prior to the Nordic Ceremony Michelin on June 16th in Odsherred UGGp featured many local products from Odsherred and elsewhere in more than 50 booths, leading to the most intense celebration of fine dining. The Oeste UGGp's festival attracted visitors from across the region and beyond, offering a variety of workshops, exhibitions, tasting local products, cultural activities and scientific experiences to celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of the territory. The Festival of the Naturtejo UGGp is an annual event that celebrates the natural, cultural and geological heritage of the Geopark region. The festival features a wide range of activities aimed at discovering and appreciating the area's unique landscape, with particular emphasis on its geological significance. Alongside the

geological activities, the festival offers a rich cultural programme that includes music, local cuisine and crafts, fostering a deeper connection between the community and its environment. Pollino UGGp highlights its participation in BIODIVERSA 2025, which included some of the gastronomic treasures from MurGEopark UGGp. In the first Festival of Croatian Geoparks, held in Papuk UGGp the three Croatian UNESCO Global Geoparks introduced themselves to the public through stands with brochures, leaflets and other promotional materials. A special focus was given to local producers from each Geopark, offering visitors the chance to taste and enjoy a variety of products such as honey, cheese, wine and jams during the local products fair. As part of the festival, a professional conference "Geoparks for the Future of Local Communities" was held, providing a platform for discussion and knowledge exchange. Psiloritis UGGp organised a visit with locals and the staff of the environmental Agencies of Crete to Zominthos Minoan palace the newly designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. Rocca di Cerere UGGp's "Geographies of Identity, Roots Tourism and the Tastes of Memory" highlighted roots tourism by combining the stories of

families who emigrated to America at the beginning of the last century. The "Tools and Ideas for Reading a Territory" at the Kore University of Enna attracted researchers, students and local communities to explore landscape interpretation through science, culture and storytelling. The "Geoportale della Cultura Alimentare" provided local food and traditional music, and emphasised the role of local food heritage in cultural identity, community memory and sustainable territorial development. In Villuercas-Ibores-Jara UGGp the inauguration day, at Deleitosa village, let participants admire the exhibition of photos from Eugene Smith's "Spanish Village" photo essay which was published in the April 1951, issue of LIFE magazine.

Events for families and children

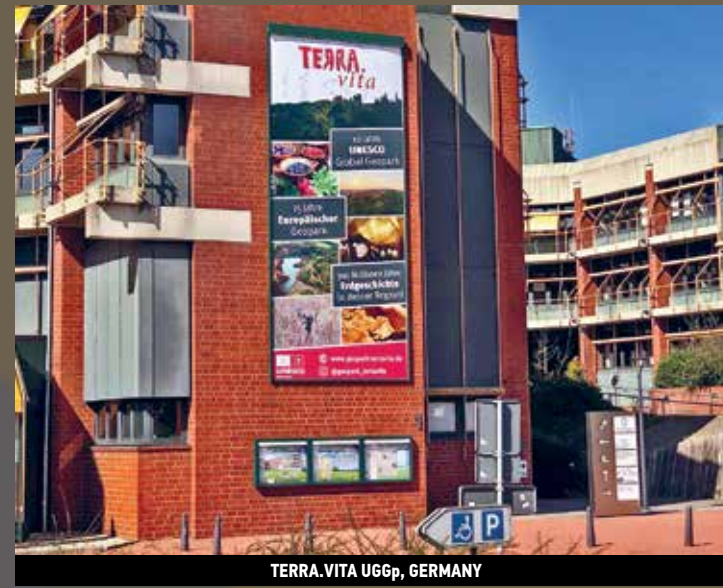
EGN Week provides Geoparks with an opportunity to engage directly with children and their families. Maestrazgo Cultural Park UGGp celebrated the 14th edition of the Drawing Contest "What is a Geopark for you?" with 250 children from local schools. The awards ceremony, hosted by Castellote School, celebrated young talents. Möllerdall UGGp highlights its discovery tour for children, which encouraged them to



TROLLFJELL UGGp, NORWAY



TROODOS UGGp, CYPRUS



TERRA.VITA UGGp, GERMANY



TERRAS DE CAVALEIROS UGGp, PORTUGAL



VIKOS-AOOS UGGp, GREECE



VILLUERCAS-IBORES-JARA UGGp, SPAIN



VULKANEIFEL UGGp, GERMANY



SOUTH FYN ARCHIPELAGO UGGp, DENMARK

observe the surroundings along a hiking trail. Mourne Gullion Strangford UGGp organised a free family day to discover nature in the only city in the Geopark. In a programme packed with opportunities for hands-on activities and nature discovery participants explored the wild side of city life, learned about local wildlife and the need to protect their natural homes. In the North Pennines UGGp Nature Camp the Geopark organised an overnight event for families including camping, food and activities such as bird watching, campfire, walks and games. Artistic workshops including printing, photography and textiles were also provided for families and adults. The “Geokids” event in Rocca di Cerere UGGp celebrated Floristella’s mining heritage with guided excursions and traditional games, stimulating children’s curiosity and sense of belonging. Saimaa UGGp showcased the diverse appeal of the Geopark through a wide array of events that underscored the Geopark’s relevance to everyone, from young children to seniors, fostering a sense of community and shared appreciation for our unique geological heritage. In Schelde Delta UGGp the Geopark’s partners organised field excursions and tours for schoolchildren and adults. Themes included geology, archaeology, landscape, flood protection and climate change. TERRA.vita UGGp organised geological excursions for children to the Cretaceous limestone quarry Dyckerhoff in Lengerich and the Triassic Silbersee quarry. To celebrate World Oceans Day Trollfjell UGGp arranged an ocean day for children and families and explored the bustling shore life. Together with a marine biologist, participants

collected and identified living creatures found on the shore. The celebration ended with a meal of locally harvested sea food.

Geology and geoconservation

Geoparks are unified areas with international geological significance in which geoconservation focuses on identifying and protecting sites of high geological, geomorphological, or scenic significance. Azores UGGp, in partnership with nine organisations celebrated EGN Week across all nine islands with the campaign “Pieces of Sea and Environment.” Activities focused on geoconservation and sustainable use of the geological heritage. In Chelmos-Vouraikos UGGp a bicycle ride entitled “I see the town differently” and a “Town Geology Tour on foot” were organised aimed at introducing participants to a tour of Kalavryta town’s geology. In an activity entitled “Bring me your rock item to tell you what it is” participants could learn more about their everyday items made from rocks. Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UGGp organised a guided trail, limited to 35 participants, providing an intimate journey through Lanzarote’s unique geology. Lavreotiki UGGp collected videos and photographs from the European Geoparks. The material was displayed at the Koutavos Environmental Information Centre in Argostoli, to celebrate and showcase Europe’s geological heritage. Cabrières-d’Aigues Village in Luberon UGGp hosted a fossil-themed weekend in partnership with the CNRS in Lyon (French National Centre for Scientific Research). The event was part of a scientific and cul-

tural exchange with Cabrières (Hérault), located in the aspiring UNESCO Global Geopark “Terres d’Hérault”. The highlight of EGN Week in Monts d’Ardèche UGGp was the screening in Jaujac of the film ‘Il n’y a pas de fumée sans feu’ (‘There’s no smoke without fire’), written and directed by 12 amateur film-makers from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, who produced an intimate and collective portrait of the Jaujac Volcano. In Sesia Val Grande UGGp the most successful activity was the screening of a new documentary on the Sesia Supervolcano. In the video, Professor Sinigoi from the University of Trieste, who discovered the supervolcano, takes a rafting trip down the Sesia River highlighting key rock outcrops and explaining the area’s geology in an accessible format. In Schelde Delta UGGp a major geoconservation activity with volunteers and local residents in the quarry in Nieuw-Namen was a huge success. This activity attracted a lot of publicity on radio and TV. Sierras Subbéticas UGGp co-organised with the University of Granada and Carcabuey Town Council a visit to the Puerto Escaño stratigraphic section, an internationally significant site that could become the global reference point for the Jurassic-Cretaceous boundary.

Digital activities

The provision of online activities during EGN Week

are growing in number. Chablais UGGp’s online presence in 2025 was particularly successful with strong social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram and super promotion efforts by our tourist offices, notably Destination Leman. Kefalonia-Ithaca UGGp celebrated the diversity and the value of the European Geoparks Network in photographic and video material from 50 European UNESCO Global Geoparks displayed daily on digital screens in the Geopark’s exhibition hall. Oeste UGGp participated in the online course for Regional Interpretive Guides. The EGN Working Group on Transnational Geoparks held an online meeting in Novohrad-Nógrád UGGp on May 27 and a representative of the Geopark participated in the Visegrád Four Countries’ Geopark Workshop, held in Poland from June 2-4 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

The range and response to the activities delivered during EGN Week 2025 is testimony to the success and inventiveness of Geoparks in engaging with visitors, families, partners and their communities. The European Geoparks Network looks forward to building on these achievements in EGN Week 2026.

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Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal Strengthening Lusophone Cooperation: I CPLP UNESCO Global Geoparks Forum in Arouca Geopark



I FÓRUM DE GEOPARQUES MUNDIAIS DA UNESCO DA CPLP

From 27 to 30 May 2026, the Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark in Portugal will host a landmark event for the Portuguese-speaking world: the I CPLP UNESCO Global Geoparks Forum. Organised in partnership with the Municipality of Arouca, the Portuguese Network of UNESCO Global Geoparks and the CPLP Geoparks Informal Network is supported institutionally and financially by the National Tourism Authority of Portugal (“Turismo de Portugal, IP”). The Forum represents a decisive step in reinforcing cooperation and advancing a shared vision for sustainable territorial development across Lusophone countries.

UNESCO Global Geoparks are internationally recognised territories that promote the conservation of geological heritage while fostering education, community engagement and sustainable development. Within the CPLP, Portugal and Brazil together already include twelve UNESCO Global Geoparks, but several other member states—Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea and Timor-Leste—have expressed their ambition to develop Geopark initiatives of their own. Acknowledging this growing interest, the Ministers of Tourism of the CPLP endorsed, in 2024, the creation of a “Geoparks Network in CPLP Countries”, aiming to reinforce cooperation, promote responsible tourism and protect natural and cultural heritage across the Lusophone world.

The 2026 Forum has three central objectives: to strengthen cooperation in the creation, management and promotion of Geoparks across CPLP territories; to share knowledge and define joint strategies for establishing new Geoparks; and to empower local and national stakeholders engaged in sustainable development and

heritage preservation.

The event will involve up to 120 participants, including representatives from UNESCO Global Geoparks, aspiring Geoparks, municipal authorities, tourism entities, universities, researchers, teachers and students. The first two days, held at the D. Domingos de Pinho Brandão Library, will feature plenary sessions and thematic panels covering geological heritage and geoconservation, governance and community development, sustainable tourism, communication and science education, and the challenges and opportunities for Geopark creation within CPLP countries. Distinguished speakers mainly from Portugal and Brazil will contribute to the discussions, alongside a roundtable dedicated to the perspectives of countries preparing to develop Geoparks.

Complementing the academic and institutional programme, participants will visit key sites in the Arouca UNESCO Global Geopark, gaining first-hand insights into its geological, natural and cultural heritage and the strategies that underpin its long-standing success as a territory of science, conservation and sustainable tourism.

By fostering dialogue and collaborative action, the I CPLP UNESCO Global Geoparks Forum aims to deepen Lusophone cooperation and inspire the creation of new Geoparks. This collective effort is fully aligned with the mission of the Global Geoparks Network and UNESCO itself, supporting capacity building, knowledge exchange and the expansion of Geopark initiatives into CPLP countries where they do not yet exist, thus strengthening the global reach and impact of the Geoparks movement.

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Azores UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal Geodiversity in the spotlight in the Azores Geopark

From September 29th to October 2nd 2025, the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark organised the XVI Regional Meeting on Environmental Education together with the XXXI Pedagogical Meeting on Environmental Education. For the first time, these two major national and regional events converged, creating a unique platform for strengthening dialogue, sharing practices, and enhancing cooperation in environmental education across Portugal. This synergy brought about 150 people together including, educators, researchers, NGOs, local authorities, and community actors from the Azores and mainland Portugal, fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge and experiences.

Driven by the theme Memory of the Earth: a lighthouse for environmental education, the meeting placed geodiversity at its core, exploring its relevance for understanding natural resources, ecosystem services, natural hazards, and climate change. The programme began on September 27th with a tribute to the 68th anniversary of the eruption of Capelinhos Volcano (geosite of international relevance of the Azores UGGp and listed among the first 100 geological heritage sites of the International Union for Geological Sciences).

The concept of Earth’s memory highlighted the geological record, landforms, and natural processes, revealing the history of the planet, past climate changes, and the interactions between nature and community. By grounding environmental education in geodiversity, the meeting sought to empower teachers and other professionals to integrate geosciences into pedagogical initiatives that promote sustainability, resilience, and informed citizenship.

The event was organised around four thematic areas – Geoeducation, Natural and Cultural Identity, Ecosystem Services, and Natural Hazards and Climate Change – and featured a programme centered on the role of geodiversity in environmental education. The opening lectures were delivered by João Carlos Nunes, who explored the development of geodiversity studies in the Azores, and Joana Rodrigues, who addressed the importance of giving “voice to the Earth” through science communication and the communal valorization of geological heritage.

A highlight of the meeting was the roundtable The Potential of Geodiversity in Environmental



Geosites Route on Faial Island undertaken during the pre-event field excursion.

©Azores UGGp.

Education in UNESCO Global Geopark Territories, which involved representatives from Portuguese UNESCO Global Geoparks – Naturtejo, Arouca, Azores, Estrela, and Oeste – to reflect on how these territories function as living laboratories where geoconservation, geoeducation, and geotourism converge.

The programme also included several workshops, among them the Children’s Guides to the Azores Geopark as an educational tool; When the Earth Speaks, dedicated to geohazards and climate change; the (GEO)Urban Route of Horta city, showcasing the educational potential of (GEO) Urban Routes across the archipelago; and Making the Invisible Visible: Strategies for Communicating Geodiversity, by Joana Rodrigues, reinforcing the importance of effective communication in fostering public engagement with geological heritage.

During the event, Geodiversity assumed a central role, delivering truly remarkable experiences to participants.

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Hands-on activity on rocks of the Azores during the “Children’s Guides of the Azores Geopark” workshop.

©Tito Cardoso.



Workshop on the educational potential of the (GEO)Urban Routes.

©Tito Cardoso.

Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark, Hungary

Geology and archaeology: rebirth of a pilgrimage geosite in Bakony–Balaton Geopark

Bakony-Balaton
Geopark



The new protective roof over the trench.

Photo by Barnabás Korbély.



The entire key section was cleaned.

Photo by Barnabás Korbély.

As part of a major EU geological conservation project, some of the Geopark's iconic geosites were restored in 2023. One of them is the Sümeg Mogyorós Hill Nature Conservation Area where university field trips have been taking place for decades. The history of this geo- and archaeological site of great importance goes back to the beginning of the 1960s: in that time the national geological key section survey for determining the most characteristic type of all rock formations was initiated. Beyond naturally outcropping rocks, such places were also sought where the bedrock is close to the surface and easily exposed after stripping the covering soil and debris. Mogyorós Hill was especially appropriate for this purpose, because under the surface the vertically dipping sequence of Jurassic and Cretaceous limestone strata is easy to study.

In the course of excavating a 300-metre-long trench, Lajos Kocsis, a local worker found prehistoric tools made from antlers. Following this sensational discovery, László Vértes an archaeologist made excavations, which resulted in the discovery of an ancient, 4000–6000 years old flint quarry.

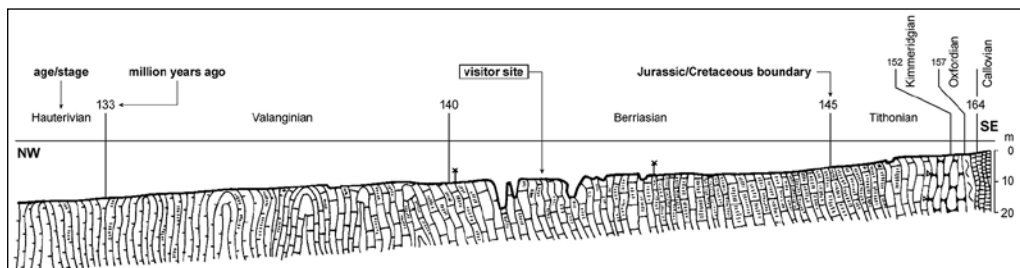
There are flint lenses of good quality between the vertically dipping limestone strata. The easily available raw material was exploited by the one-time quarrymen from the base of trenches of a few metres in depth. For this work they used various tools

(wedge, hammer, rake) made from the antlers of red deer. They quarried the limestone strata and with quartzite pebbles removed the useless calcareous covering from the flint pieces.

The valuable archaeological site and the trench of the geological key section have been designated as a protected nature conservation area and was established as a geological education and interpretive site in 1976. Some parts of the ancient trenches were cleaned and a protective roof was built. However, the facilities have been destroyed due to weathering during the past decades.

Thanks to the project funding, the site was renewed three years ago and it was restored to the service of geo-education again. The soil cover, the detritus caused by frost shattering and the shrub vegetation were removed from the trenches. A new protective roof was built and a "stone park" was also established for presenting the characteristic rock-types of the region. A new nature trail also awaits the visitors with eight bilingual interpretive panels. The town of Sümeg has been a dedicated partner of the Geopark from the very beginning: now the geosite is connected to the geotourism facilities they have created, such as the adjacent geoscience exhibition.

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The geological key section of the Mogyorós Hill. Illustration after J Haas 1985.

GEOPARK KEA

GEOPARQUE LAS LORAS

Basque Coast and Las Loras UNESCO Global Geoparks, Spain

From Las Loras to the Basque Coast:

A landscape and human exchange. Tradition, memory, and nature together in a meeting covering coexistence and learning and involving local associations.



Participants attending the specially convened meeting in September 2025

The Basque Coast Geopark features a living territory full of traditions. It comprises a 13 km long coastline within an area of 92 km² which UNESCO recognised for its natural, cultural, and intangible heritage. The associations in Las Loras Geopark had the opportunity to find out about its heritage during a specially convened meeting in September 2025.

The idea of visiting another Geopark to learn about and exchange experiences arose from the Las Loras Associations working group. The response was immediate. The bus was filled with partners such as El Tozo Cultural, Valdehumada Viva, ARCO, Tejiendo Cambios por la Igualdad, Foto Palencia Norte and Adeco Camino, among others. The aim of this diverse group was to better know, share and keep learning about experiences in other geoparks related to management and citizen participation regarding heritage.

IDENTITY. The first stop was in Mutriku, where the group was received by Itziar, a member of the Pelotazales Danak Bat Association, who explained how the Basque handball is still a living identity symbol.

A remarkable exhibition of "cesta punta" was given at the Basque handball court (Frontón). It is a fast and demanding sport; impressive both because of the technique and the passion showed by those who practise it.



Restoring traditional rowing and sailing boats, safeguards the areas maritime legacy.



Participants enjoy the boat tour along Zumaia cliffs.

Players are surprisingly young, which proves that the continuity of the tradition is assured.

HISTORICAL MEMORY. The next visit was to Saturrarán Beach, a natural environment of great beauty and of painful historical significance. Arantxa, a member of the Saturrarán Association for Historical Memory, told the story of suffering of inmates in the notorious Saturrarán Women's Prison during the Franco dictatorship.

The group, mainly composed of women, felt overwhelmed by this testimony.

MARITIME HERITAGE AND ACTIVE GEOLOGY. Lunch was followed by a visit to Beduola Association in Zumaia, where Inaxio and Beñat, spoke about their work conserving maritime heritage, mainly by restoring traditional rowing and sailing boats, safeguarding the place's maritime legacy.

The day concluded with a boat tour along Zumaia cliffs. Naiara guided the tour and described the Flysch, a geological formation dating back 50 million years and which is like an open book about the story of the Earth.

The explanation, conveying an important message, had a deep impact because there the variety of folded strata are only visible in the coastal cliffs along the 8 km separating Deba from Zumaia.

EAGER FOR MORE. Irene and Nerea, members of the Basque Coast Geopark organised the meeting and their involvement was crucial for the development of the activities. The passion and involvement of the associations within Las Loras Geopark also contributed to its success.

The meeting's positive outcome left the group wanting more. Participants were able to strengthen ties, and to exchange ideas. The importance of the people working daily with the aim of conserving natural and cultural heritage in their territories was also reinforced.

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Beigua UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy Building geoconservation through research and local engagement in Beigua Geopark

The conservation of geodiversity is a broad field that encompasses many different activities: from scientific assessment to the practical management of sites, and even public outreach. For a UNESCO Global Geopark, however, one element is essential: becoming a true research laboratory, where new methods and actions can be tested to enhance the protection and sustainable enjoyment of geological heritage.

This is the direction taken by the Beigua UNESCO Global Geopark, which in recent years has strengthened its collaboration with the University of Genoa. In 2022, the University funded a PhD project supervised by Prof. Pietro Marescotti, dedicated to studying the area's geological heritage. The research, carried out by Dr. Fedra Gianoglio, focused on the characterisation and evaluation of the Geopark's geosites, analysed from different perspectives and with complementary goals.

On one hand, the project provided a more detailed characterisation of soils and rocks within the main geosites, offering useful data that refine the knowledge already available. On the other hand, the research produced tools that support the management authority, helping to plan sustainable strategies based on solid, objective information. A further component involved interpretation, experimenting with innovative approaches to communicate the values of geodiversity and geoheritage to the public.

A central element of the work was the development of an integrated geosite assessment methodology, applied across the entire Geopark. The first phase focused on evaluating the tourism potential of all 40 geosites in the Beigua area. Based on this, the sites with the highest attractiveness were selected and subsequently assessed in terms of degradation risk. This step is essential not only to promote the geosites most suitable for public enjoyment, but also to protect the



Fedra Gianoglio in action.

more fragile and vulnerable sites, preventing excessive pressure from visitors who may be unaware of the sensitivity of certain geological features.

The entire PhD process also generated significant social and territorial outcomes. The organisation of focus groups with the local community made it possible to gather perceptions, knowledge, and expectations related to geodiversity, contributing to enhanced geological literacy and encouraging shared stewardship practices. At the same time, the work provides new opportunities for responsible tourism development, grounded in the understanding and appreciation of the Beigua Geopark's geological heritage.

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Characterising of Beigua UGGP's soil in the laboratory.



The beautiful 'Orba meander' geosite.



Characterising of Beigua UGGP's soil in the laboratory.



Geo-Naturepark Bergstrasse-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark Germany Future needs heritage – rooted in our region - Geo-Naturepark Bergstrasse-Odenwald



Opening Ceremony of the meeting point with new shelter hut.

Extending over a territory of c. 3800 km², Geo-Naturepark Bergstrasse-Odenwald supports its member communities in various ways. This also requires to not only understand the whole area as one big family of members, but to keep diverse audiences and different strands of heritage in mind. With the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a foundation of our work and programmes, we are strongly aware that developments towards the future need special attention: The global challenges are more than obvious and together with partners in our region we work on projects to define and live out options on how to achieve, preserve and enhance circumstances right outside our doorstep. We aim to highlight that even small contributions can have meaningful impact – and be it “only” in a regionally defined scope.

The project developed together with the town of Freudenberg is one example how engaging with a specific community has a better future in focus. The overall town comprises five places of settlement and between them an area of substantial forest – almost 60% of the town's territory. The idea is to create a meeting place – for the communities as well as for visitors – in the centre of their town territory, a common place with a shelter hut to enjoy the outdoors, nature, and the view. Hence, the “Waldverbindung” (Forest Connection Network) was initially launched in 2023. Since then, a new path from

each of the villages will be created over a period of five years. Every path leads to a central meeting point: the big shelter hut and some outdoor activities have already been installed. Alongside the paths, different topics of nature, wildlife, biodiversity, etc. are being addressed: The route leading from Boxberg to the meeting place for example explains the importance of the preservation of orchards for biodiversity and connects it to the cultural heritage of orchards in the region (SDG 15), natural and cultural heritage are intertwined and appreciated. What has been a strong part of the heritage of the region became unpopular over recent decades as local producers faced more and more challenges to survive from the orchard harvest. This particular path encourages, and reminds us of the importance of preserving the heritage for the intermediate and long-term future.

Now the following years are going to see the next four paths being defined and equipped with topics closely related to Freudenberg, linked to the special heritage of the immediate region and pointing towards the potential of good future developments: forest (SDG 15), climate (SDG 13), water (SDG 6) and sustainability (Agenda 2030). This joint project contributes to preserving and fostering what is close to us and, also to the broader context, reaching as far as the global connection of the SDG's.

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Walking one of the five connecting paths: the Orchard Path.



Understanding the heritage of orchards and learning about their importance for the future from the information panel on the Orchard Path.

Harz. Braunschweiger Land. Ostfalen Germany

Shaping the future together:

Examples of collaboration in the UNESCO Global Geopark Harz. Braunschweiger Land. Ostfalen



The UNESCO Global Geopark Harz. Braunschweiger Land. Ostfalen shows how sustainable development can succeed when people, institutions, and regions work together. In a time of global challenges, the Geopark sees itself as a platform where education, culture, science, and commitment merge into a shared vision of the future.

Learning for the future

A central pillar of this work is cooperation with schools. The “Nature Park and Geopark Schools” programme encourages young people to become aware of their environment and take responsibility for it. Nature, geology, and culture are taught not only theoretically, but also made tangible through excursions, projects, and collaboration with local stakeholders.

This creates education that extends far beyond the classroom: children recognise that they are part of a larger community working together toward a sustainable future.

Global partnerships, joint action

The Geopark also focuses on cooperation and exchange across national borders. As part of the worldwide network of UNESCO Global Geoparks, it maintains partnerships with regions in Europe and Asia. These connections not only serve cultural dialogue, but also joint learning about sustainable tourism, environmental education, and resource conservation.

Symbolic gestures such as the exchange of information material or joint events build bridges between cultures. The partnerships show that global cooperation is not an abstract idea, but comes to life in direct interaction – driven by a shared desire to share knowledge and learn from each other.

For the third time, the Geopark is participating in the international programme Kulturweit – Incoming, an international exchange programme organised by the German UNESCO Commission and the Federal Foreign Office. During a three-month internship, young adults have the opportunity to gain practical experience in such projects. Participants can build cross-border networks, choose their own focus areas in nature, culture, or education, and benefit from programmes that convey both international and local perspectives on social



engagement.

A network for the community

Within the region, the Geopark information centres connect people, places, and ideas. They make the Geopark visible in museums, tourist information centres, environmental centres, and educational institutions. Here, knowledge is passed on, dialogue is promoted, and sustainability is brought to life.

Regular meetings between partners serve to learn from each other, develop new projects, and draft joint strategies for the future. These networks show that sustainable development can only succeed if the burden is shared by many shoulders.

A common goal: a future worth living

Whether in schools, international collaborations, or regional networks, the focus everywhere is on working together to create a better future. The Geopark shows how geological diversity, cultural heritage, and human commitment can work together to take responsibility for our own region and for our planet.

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Projects with teachers from the Geopark School.

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The Visit to the Indonesian partner Geopark Ciletuh.

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The network meeting of the Geopark information centres.

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Luberon UNESCO Global Geopark, France

Atlas of Biodiversity and Geodiversity in the Luberon Geopark



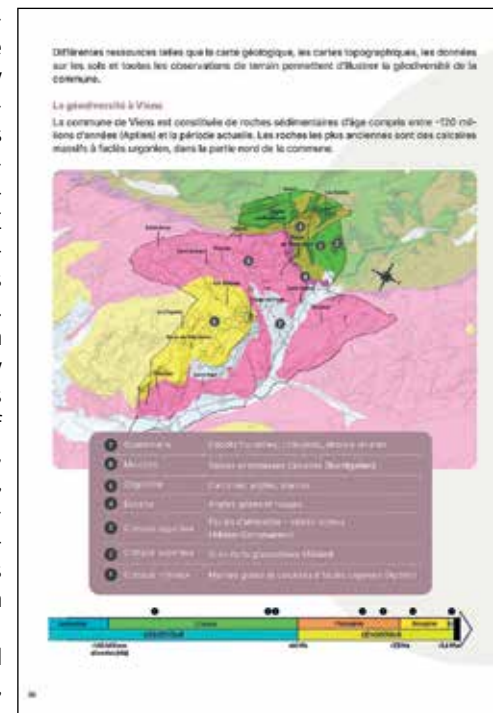
Fieldtrip introducing residents to local geology.

Since 2023, the Luberon Regional Nature Park, management body of the Luberon UNESCO Global Geopark, has been coordinating a programme of communal atlases of biodiversity (ABC – Atlas de la Biodiversité Communale) across several municipalities. Supported by the French Office for Biodiversity (OFB), this initiative aims to enhance knowledge of natural habitats, fauna, flora, and geodiversity, while engaging local authorities, residents, associations, and schools in concrete preservation efforts.

Between 2023 and 2025, expert surveys, citizen inventories, and a field research camp generated nearly 13,000 new observations, including new observation of species and the identification of habitats of major conservation interest. Over thirty public workshops and field trips, as well as twenty-six educational sessions in local schools, helped raise awareness among both young people and residents.

The results are compiled into maps, technical reports, and outreach brochures, providing municipalities with reliable tools to integrate ecological and geological considerations into local planning policies.

A distinctive feature of this programme is the



Excerpt from the public brochure on the theme of geodiversity.

transversal integration of geodiversity, supported by the expertise of the UNESCO Global Geopark and the Luberon Geological Nature Reserve. Several concrete actions have been developed:

- an interactive mapping platform combining geological, geomorphological, hydrological and geoheritage data;
- public geological field excursions introducing participants to landscape interpretation and the Viegie-Terre citizen-science programme;
- the inclusion of geodiversity in communication materials such as the public brochures.

This participatory approach strengthens the visibility of geodiversity as a key component of natural heritage and an essential foundation

for biodiversity and cultural identity. It also highlights the capacity of UNESCO Global Geoparks to connect knowledge, education, and territorial governance.

Future developments (2025–2027) include expanding the programme to four additional municipalities, improving the digital cartography, and reinforcing the integrated approach linking biodiversity and geodiversity.

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Bükk Region UNESCO Global Geopark, Hungary “Lessons from the Past” climate change workshop and community engagement in Bükk Region Geopark



Lectures from the past” workshop in the István Dobó High School, Eger.

Science, education, and public engagement were central to our paleoclimate research from St. István Cave in the Bükk Region UNESCO Global Geopark. Our goal was not only to conduct high-quality scientific investigations into past climate variability but also to share this knowledge—including the mechanisms and impacts of climate change—in ways local communities could understand. Helping residents recognise how climate change can influence karst groundwater reservoirs is crucial for fostering environmental awareness, emphasising shared responsibility, and supporting lifelong learning within the Geopark.

A key element of this educational mission was our outreach to schools. We collaborated with five local high schools and two universities, providing climate-focused workshops—titled “Lessons from the Past”—and a mobile exhibition translating complex scientific processes into accessible knowledge. Students learned about major climate changes shaping Earth’s history and their driving factors, and how speleothems preserve isotopic and chemical signals revealing these past variations. To make the experience tangible, students could touch a stalagmite, helping them understand which cave formations act as natural archives of climate change. Cave-monitoring data—such as temperature and CO₂ levels—illustrated how climate variables behave and how tourism can influ-

Dome Hall in the St. István Cave.



ence sensitive cave environments.

One of the most inspiring outcomes emerged at the Jesuit High School in Miskolc, where two students, inspired by the workshop and exhibition, independently analysed our palaeoclimate exhibition and created their own presentations: “Palaeoclimatology in the St. István Cave” and “Climate Change Through the Eyes of Students.” These student-led lectures represent a model example of empowering youth to engage with scientific issues and communicate them to their peers.

Two UNESCO Kulturweit volunteers participated in fieldwork and cave monitoring, further strengthening the project’s international dimension and long-term capacity building. In a short video, they presented the cave-based palaeoclimate research in a youth-friendly format, sharing their perspective on the project and translating complex concepts into understandable language.

We extended outreach beyond schools to municipalities, engaging 109 mayors to introduce Geopark research, explain how speleothems record past climate, highlight water resource protection, and show tourism impacts on the cave environment.

Overall, the initiative demonstrates how palaeoclimate research can contribute not only to scientific progress but also to community education, sustainability awareness, and youth empowerment within a UNESCO Global Geopark.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of UNESCO and the Aberdeen Charitable Foundation, which significantly contributed to the implementation and educational outreach of our research.

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Mobile exhibition reveals the results of paleoclimate and monitoring research of St. István Cave



Cabo de Gata–Níjar UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain

Celebrating Geoheritage Through Play:

Cabo de Gata–Níjar Geopark Launches the Innovative Geo-resources Memory Game



The memory card game and instructions developed in collaboration with the local company Experience Cabo de Gata.

The Cabo de Gata–Níjar UNESCO Global Geopark has unveiled an engaging new tool designed to bring its extraordinary geological heritage closer to visitors of all ages: a memory card game dedicated to the geo-resources that define this iconic volcanic landscape. Developed in collaboration with the local company Experience Cabo de Gata, the game reflects the Geopark’s commitment to education, conservation, and sustainable tourism through creative and accessible outreach initiatives.

Located in the province of Almería in south-eastern Spain, the Cabo de Gata–Níjar Geopark is renowned for its dramatic coastlines, fossilised volcanic formations, and exceptional biodiversity. As one of Europe’s most distinctive arid environments, it offers a uniquely visible geological record shaped by volcanic activity that



Images of the landscape and geology displayed on the memory cards.

occurred between 15 and 7 million years ago. These features have made the Geopark a reference point for the study of Mediterranean volcanic provinces and an inspiring destination for visitors, researchers, and nature enthusiasts.

The newly developed memory game translates this scientific richness into an enjoyable, hands-on learning experience. Each card pair represents a significant geo-resource or geological element from the Geopark, including volcanic domes, mineral formations, fossilised beach deposits, and characteristic rock types such as andesite and ignimbrite. Accompanied by striking illustrations and concise explanations, the game encourages players to identify, match, and learn about these formations while developing observational and cognitive skills.

The partnership with Experience Cabo de Gata has been essential in ensuring that the product balances

educational depth with visitor appeal. Drawing on the company’s expertise in designing locally rooted experiences, the game has been crafted to be visually attractive, durable, and suitable for use in visitor centres, schools, guided activities, and family settings. By integrating scientific content with thoughtful design, the initiative strengthens the link between geoheritage education and community-based entrepreneurship.

Importantly, this first edition marks the beginning of a broader educational strategy. Building on the success of the geo-resources game, the Geopark is already planning new thematic editions focused on areas such as botany and the

marine environment. These future expansions aim to showcase the full diversity of Cabo de Gata–Níjar’s natural assets, while providing versatile tools for environmental education across different audiences. Beyond its educational value, the memory game also reflects the Geopark’s commitment to sustainable development. Conceived and produced locally, with a clear focus on environmental responsibility and regional economic benefit, the project embodies the principles at the heart of UNESCO Global Geoparks: connecting people with the Earth, supporting local communities, and enhancing appreciation of the natural heritage.

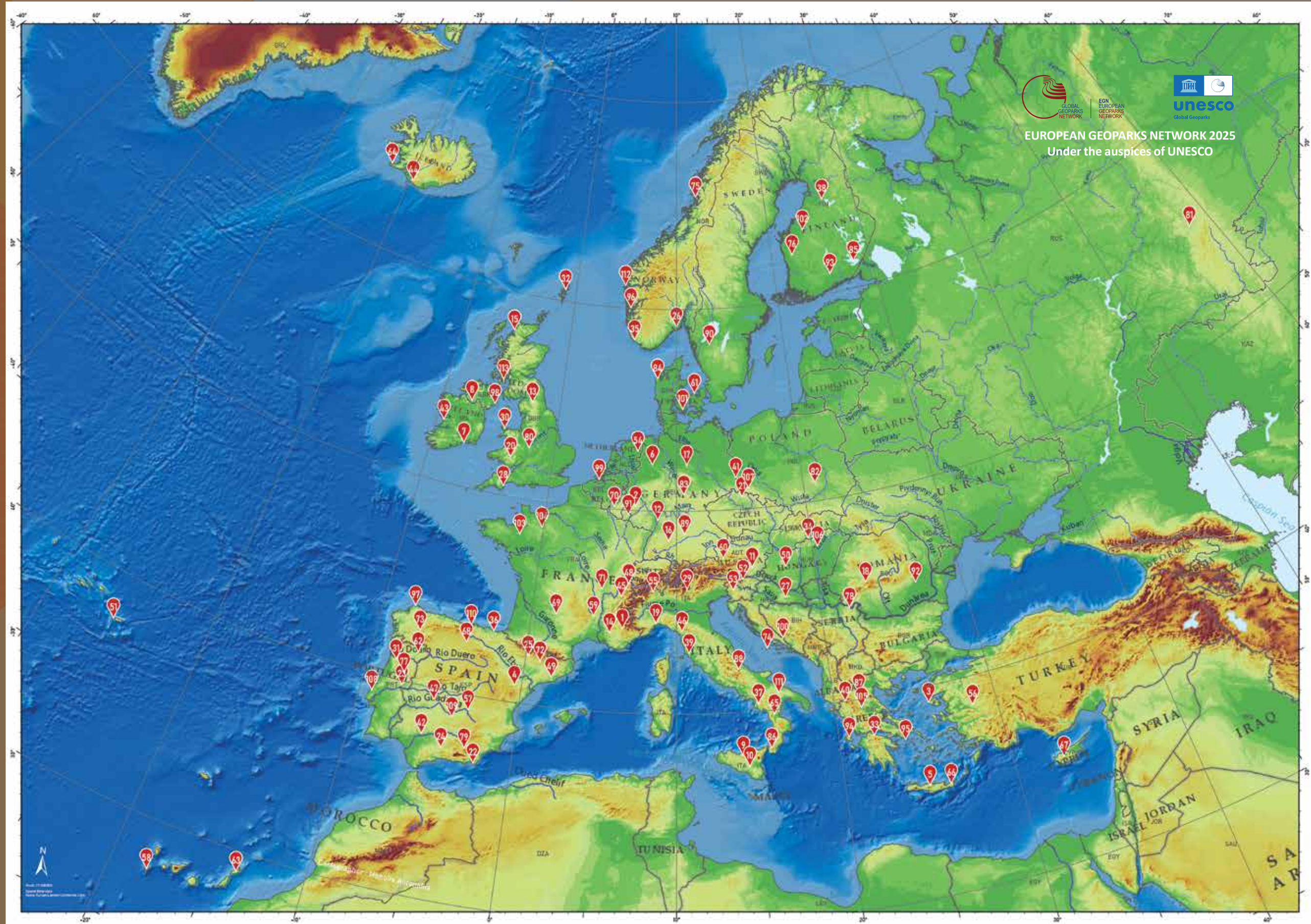
With this new resource, the Cabo de Gata–Níjar UNESCO Global Geopark reaffirms its dedication to making geology—and the wider natural world—approachable, enjoyable, and meaningful.

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Children are captivated by playing the memory card game.

The European Geoparks Network today



The Network consists of 109 Geoparks in 28 European countries
www.europeangeoparks.org



GLOBAL
GEOPARKS
NETWORK

EGN
EUROPEAN
GEOPARKS
NETWORK

No.	Geopark	Country	Year	No.	Geopark	Country	Year
1	Haute-Provence	France	2000	59	Monts d'Ardeche	France	2014
2	Vulkaneifel	Germany	2000	60	Ore of the Alps	Austria	2014
3	Lesvos Island	Greece	2000	61	Odsherred	Denmark	2014
4	Maestrazgo	Spain	2000	62	Terras de Cavaleiros	Portugal	2014
5	Psiloritis	Greece	2001	63	Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands	Spain	2015
6	Terra vita	Germany	2001	64	Reykjanes	Iceland	2015
7	Copper Coast	Republic of Ireland	2001	65	Pollino	Italy	2015
8	Cuilcagh Lakelands	N. Ireland/Republic of Ireland	2001	66	Sitia	Greece	2015
9	Madonie	Italy	2001	67	Troodos	Cyprus	2015
10	Rocca Di Cerere	Italy	2001	68	Las Loras	Spain	2017
11	Styrian Eisenwurzen	Austria	2003	69	Causse du Quercy	France	2017
12	Bergstrasse-Odenwald	Germany	2003	70	Famenne-Ardenne	Belgium	2018
13	North Pennines	UK	2003	71	Beaujolais	France	2018
14	Luberon	France	2004	72	Origens	Spain	2018
15	North West Highlands	UK	2004	73	Courel Mountain	Spain	2019
16	Swabian Albs	Germany	2005	74	Vis Archipelago	Croatia	2019
17	Harz Braunschweiger Land	Germany	2005	75	Trollfjell	Norway	2019
18	Hateg Country	Romania	2005	76	Lauhanvuori-Hameenkangas	Finland	2020
19	Beigua	Italy	2005	77	Estrela	Portugal	2020
20	Fforest Fawr	UK	2005	78	Djerdap	Serbia	2020
21	Bohemian Paradise	Czech Republic	2005	79	Granada	Spain	2020
22	Cabo de Gata	Spain	2006	80	Black Country	UK	2020
23	Naturtejo	Portugal	2006	81	Yangan-Tau	Russian Federation	2020
24	Sierras Subeticas	Spain	2006	82	Holy Cross Mountains	Poland	2021
25	Sobrarbe-Pirineos	Spain	2006	83	Thuringia Inselberg-Drei Gleichen	Germany	2021
26	Gea-Norvegica	Norway	2006	84	Vestjylland	Denmark	2021
27	Papuk	Croatia	2007	85	Saimaa	Finland	2021
28	English Riviera	UK	2007	86	Aspromonte	Italy	2021
29	Adamello Brenta	Italy	2008	87	Grevena-Kozani	Greece	2021
30	GeoMôn	UK	2009	88	Majella	Italy	2021
31	Arouca	Portugal	2009	89	Ries	Germany	2022
32	Shetland	UK	2009	90	Platåbergen	Sweden	2022
33	Chelmos-Vouraikos	Greece	2009	91	Mëllerdall	Luxembourg	2022
34	Novohrad-Nograd	Hungary/Slovakia	2010	92	Buzău Land	Romania	2022
35	Magma	Norway	2010	93	Salpausselkä	Finland	2022
36	Basque Coast	Spain	2010	94	Kefalonia-Ithaca	Greece	2022
37	Cilento, Vallo di Diano e Alburni	Italy	2010	95	Lavreotiki	Greece	2023
38	Rokua	Finland	2010	96	Sunnhordland	Norway	2023
39	Tuscan Mining Park	Italy	2010	97	Cabo Ortegal	Portugal	2023
40	Vikos-Aoos	Greece	2010	98	Mourne Gullion Strangford	UK	2023
41	Muskau Arch	Germany/Poland	2011	99	Schelde Delta	Belgium/Netherlands	2024
42	Sierra Norte de Sevilla	Spain	2011	100	Biokovo-Imotski Lakes	Croatia	2024
43	Burren and Cliffs of Moher	Republic of Ireland	2011	101	The South Fyn Archipelago	Denmark	2024
44	Katla	Iceland	2011	102	Impact Crater Lake	Finland	2024
45	Massif des Bauges	France	2011	103	Armorique	France	2024
46	Alpi Apuani	Italy	2011	104	Normandie-Maine	France	2024
47	Villuercas Ibores Jara	Spain	2011	105	Meteora-Pyli	Greece	2024
48	Chablais	France	2012	106	Bükk Region	Hungary	2024
49	Central Catalonia	Spain	2012	107	Land of Extinct Volcanoes	Poland	2024
50	Bakony-Balaton	Hungary	2012	108	Oeste	Portugal	2024
51	Azores	Portugal	2013	109	Volcanes de Calatrava	Spain	2024
52	Karavanke/Karawanken	Slovenia/Austria	2013	110	Costa Quebrada	Spain	2025
53	Idrija	Slovenia	2013	111	MurGeopark	Italy	2025
54	De Hondsrug	Netherlands	2013	112	Fjord Coast Regional and Geopark	Norway	2025
55	Sesia-Val Grande	Italy	2013	113	Arran	UK	2025
56	Kula-Salihli	Turkey	2013				
57	Molina and Alto Tajo	Spain	2014				
58	El Hierro Global	Spain	2014				



Chelmos Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece Walking on the Ocean: Reviving Heritage through Community and Geology in Chelmos Vouraikos Geopark



Vesini
Traditional
stone-built
village.

Vesini is a small, stone-built traditional village located on the southwestern borders of the Chelmos Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark, perched at 865 metres on the flanks of a mountain range in a picturesque natural environment. It has a history of at least 350 years of agricultural and livestock production, as well as traditional carpet weaving by the women of the community. In the 19th century, the village flourished with 450 inhabitants, but it was gradually abandoned in later years. Today, there are no permanent residents, yet the descendants' love for their ancestral land has never faded.



Folded Vesini radiolarite beds

ocean (Neotethys Ocean) from the accumulation of microscopic radiolarian shells. This fascinating story of the Vesini Radiolarite Geosite was presented to the members of the local Vesini Cultural Club. It was received with surprise, curiosity, and was enriched with local stories: children throwing stones into deep ravines to listen for their echo, or shepherds and their animals finding shelter in the hollows of ancient chestnut tree trunks rooted in the acidic radiolarite soil. Since then, the people of Vesini have embraced this story as part of their cultural identity.

The old stone-built school and several traditional houses have been restored. In the summer, the village alleys fill with the joyful voices of children and the scent of bread baked in wood-fired ovens.

The village is built on radiolarites—rocks that formed 174–145 million years ago at the bottom of a deep

Several events followed, including presentations on how these rocks traveled from the ocean floor to the mountaintop over geological time, educational games outside the old church, feasts with traditional delicacies, storytelling by elderly residents, and discussions about the village's future infrastructure, all sharing a common goal—its revival.

However, one particular event stood out, showcasing the community's appreciation for the Geopark and their enthusiasm for using this newfound knowledge. The hiking event "Walking on the Ocean" was organised in June 2025 by the Vesini Cultural Club and the Kalavryta Hiking Group. A group of enthusiastic participants of all ages, wearing handmade T-shirts featuring the geosite logo, trekked through the dense chestnut forest to the village church. Members of the Geopark's scientific team accompanied them, exchanging knowledge about this remarkable place. The event ended with homemade bread and local wine, and a shared promise to continue working for the preservation and promotion of this unique destination—a place where people will return, again, and again.

Hikers "walking on the ocean" of Vesini radiolarites' geosite. The participants are wearing handmade t-shirts with the geosite's logo.



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Nature & Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen, Austria «Seven Elements – The Path» ceremoniously opened in the Gesäuse

New spiritual long-distance hiking trail in the Nature & Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen



Group photo with the mayor, the church, the Gesäuse Tourism Association, and the Nature and Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen.

© B. Nachbagauer – NUP Eisenwurzen

At a press conference on the 27th September 2025, the Seven Elements Path, a new spiritual long-distance hiking trail through all four nature park municipalities – from Altenmarkt to Wildalpen – was officially opened. This cooperation between the Nature and Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen, the Pastoral Care Area Eisenwurzen, and the Gesäuse Tourism Association combines hiking and enjoyment of nature with mindful reflection and spiritual exploration across 7 stages, 126 km, and 6,100 meters of elevation gain.

The new Seven Elements Path leads in seven days through the Nature and Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen, connecting the municipalities of Altenmarkt, Landl, Sankt Gallen, and Wildalpen. The landscape offers space for peace, contemplation, and renewal. In air, fire, earth, and water, the human being, time, and spirit are reflected – forming the seven elements – and their connection can be experienced along the way. Wayside crosses, shrines, and churches give the trail depth and invite hikers to consciously pause and reflect.

Oliver Gulas-Wöhri, Managing Director of the Nature and Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen:

"Many thanks to everyone involved in realising this long-distance hiking trail. For me personally, it is a model project where the entire region was and continues to be significantly involved – tourism, the pastoral care area, local residents, young and old, municipalities, landowners, and alpine associations. May this trail offer everyone a spiritual and walkable

nature park experience."

**Preserving valuable cultural heritage
Loretta Kain from the Pastoral Care Area Eisenwurzen:**

"Through the close cooperation between the pastoral care area and the Nature and Geopark, a special idea has become reality: for the first time in the nature park region, over 300 Christian small monuments have been mapped, documented, and thematically prepared. This not only preserves a valuable cultural asset but also makes it accessible for future generations and experienceable along the long-distance trail."

Jaqueline Egger, Managing Director of the Gesäuse Tourism Association:

"A long-distance hiking trail that not only connects the places of the Eisenwurzen but also nature, culture, and people – that is a flagship project! It strengthens local value creation and shows that tourism can go hand in hand with culture, the church, municipalities, and residents. That's why we are very happy to support this project: because it fits who we are, it connects us, and it creates something unique that makes the Styrian Eisenwurzen even more tangible."

The travel guide accompanying the long-distance trail includes, in addition to the description of each stage, questions for reflection, Bible verses, and space for personal notes.

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Danube GeoTour Plus | Danube GeoTour Plus
The Seven Elements Path was implemented as part of the Interreg Danube Geotour Plus project, in which a total of nine geoparks are developing diverse and unique geopark experiences. The project is co-financed by the European Union.

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GeoMôn UNESCO Global Geopark, Wales, UK So why do we need to think about this GeoMôn Geopark



Fig.1. The Watch House, is generally open 5 days a week, April to October, between 11am - 4pm. Staffed by our dedicated team of volunteers and trustees.

"Engaging with communities" is often easier said than done. But why does it matter? How can we genuinely and effectively connect with the communities in our geoparks?

Community engagement is not just about gathering data or making an offer based on assumptions. It should bring local insight to shape our strategies and actions - ensuring they are relevant, inclusive, and sustainable - and build our credibility as a valued partner. For communities, however you define them, true engagement can be a catalyst for empowerment. New skills, deeper environmental appreciation, pride in heritage, enhanced business, access to activities and more. Stronger bonds emerge when communities are active participants.

Successful engagement is a dialogue, not a monologue. We should be open, inclusive, and able to provide the thread from local voices to and from local and global platforms like UNESCO. GeoMôn is now emphasising how the whole island benefits from our UNESCO Global Geopark status. This is opening-up new relationships, influence, and support. We must demonstrate genuine engagement to be fully credible.

A fieldtrip in GeoMôn Geopark.



Key Questions for Reflection

1. Purpose: Are we engaging because we have to - or

because we want to? Authenticity drives success: genuine listening, open to new influences, involving others, giving feedback, continuous communication.

2. Audience: What do we mean by "a community" and who exactly do you need to build a relationship with? Local farmers, schools, community groups, or businesses for example? Tailor your language, tools, and goals to their world. Take your message to them, do not assume people will come to you until they know you.
3. Skills: Do we have the right tools? A lecture will not inspire children; a hands-on workshop might. Who in your geopark could help you? Test your approach on a sample group if you are launching a new initiative or business plan.
4. Partnerships: Who in the community can amplify your message or share resources, and what can you do for them?
5. Balance: Social media expands reach, but face-to-face builds trust. At GeoMôn, our volunteers—many without geological expertise—inspire visitors to our centre through enthusiasm and listening, and are proud to be part of a UNESCO Global Geopark. Local residents and businesses might feel proud to be part of it too in different ways.
6. Value Exchange: association with a UNESCO Global Geopark can benefit businesses and v/versa; or a school through educational resources; people can improve health and wellbeing from joining walks and activities or becoming volunteers.
7. Learn from Others: What can we learn from other geoparks? Share stories—trials and tribulations—to inspire and improve. The geopark is enriched by other people's viewpoints.
Tell us what you think - let's keep learning together:
info@geomon.co.uk
GeoMôn Anglesey Geopark, www.geomon.co.uk

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Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark, Slovenia Gastronomy in Idrija Geopark



Renowned Slovenian chef Uroš Štefelin.

Photo by Bojan Tavčar.

In the Idrija UNESCO Global Geopark, we have devoted significant attention in recent years to developing the collective trademark Geopark Idrija – Idrija Selected, which was established to connect local providers and jointly present a wide range of high-quality products, and services from the Idrija Geopark area. It includes products based on innovation, quality, tradition, and the heritage of the local environment. The thematic focus of the Idrija Selected collective trademark is on culinary offerings and handicraft, which is why training, consultations, and evaluations involve producers of handicrafts, unique and industrially designed products, agricultural and culinary products, dishes, and beverages served in a restaurants, events with a culinary note, as well as tourist programmes and experiences.

Currently, we have already certified 95 food products, ranging from various dairy products, honey, bread, pastries, coffee, tea, meat products, spirits, and more, prepared by providers from the Idrija Geopark area. With the aim of encouraging local restaurants to use local ingredients in the dishes they prepare, and with the desire to enhance the culinary offerings at events in the Geopark, this year we focused on organising workshops to educate interested participants in this direction.

For this purpose, we invited renowned Slovenian chef Uroš Štefelin and his right-hand colleague Marcela Klofutar. Uroš is the chef at Hiša Linhart in Radovljica and a recipient of both a Michelin star and a Green Michelin star for sustainability. For decades, he has explored Slovenian cuisine and showcases the richness of Slovenia through his



The result of the workshops is a collection of recipes for new street food dishes made from local ingredients.

Photo by Bojan Tavčar.

dishes. He is known for reviving forgotten Slovenian recipes and giving them a modern touch, which made him an ideal facilitator for our workshops.

At Gostišče Barbara in Idrija, we organised three workshops for restaurateurs, farmers, rural women's associations, and rural entrepreneurs. The first workshop focused on getting to know the providers, their offerings, and their interests. Uroš presented examples of best practices in networking and cooking without waste. Based on the available ingredients, he prepared suggestions and recipes for dishes that were prepared and tasted in the following two workshops.

Uroš's passion for cooking inspired all participants. The workshops were not only an insight into high-level gastronomy but also a source of inspiration for everyone involved. Participants left the workshops enthusiastic, full of impressions and new ideas, and new connections and business collaborations were formed among them.

The result is a collection of recipes for new street food dishes made from local ingredients, which will enrich events and gatherings in Idrija Geopark.

The workshops were carried out within the Danube GeoTour Plus project, co-financed by the European Union.

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The Danube GeoTour Plus (RGB)_logo.



Katla UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland

Working together to save fulmars in Katla Geopark



Each fall, Arianne Gäwiler (on the right) and her family visit Katla Geopark to save fulmars and take them to the nearest river, where they continue their journey to the sea.

Photo by Arianne Gäwiler.

Over the last few years, Katla Geopark has been focusing on engaging more with the local community. One of these projects is especially close to our hearts and is called The Fulmar Project. It started several years ago when the Geopark, along with BirdLife Iceland, The Icelandic Road Administration, Katla Centre, and the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland started to work together to try to rescue fulmars, educate visitors about fulmars, and to work with and encourage the local community to rescue young fulmars.

Fulmars are seabirds that can live up to 45 years and have several large colonies in the cliffs within Katla Geopark. At the end of August each year, the younglings start to fly from their nest and head out to the sea. When they start their journey, they try to glide out to sea, as most of them cannot fly as they are too heavy and they have been unable to train their wings in the nest. When the distance between the cliff and the sea is long, or the wind is unfavorable, they often land before reaching the sea. Then their instinct is to seek out rivers and streams, which then would help carrying them towards the ocean.

Sadly, many fulmars mistake roads and drainage ditches as rivers, and will sit there waiting to be carried by the stream as if it was a normal river. This puts them in harm's way, especially due to traffic. Many birds are runover by cars each year, as the fulmar does not perceive the danger and does not move off the road. To save them, they need to be taken to an actual river or to the nearest beach.

The project has been very successful with several important steps made to try to raise awareness in the local community and to visitors about fulmars. Information flyers, in both English and Icelandic was made readily available. Posters are published on social media with detailed instructions about how to go about rescuing fulmars and even a short "how to rescue fulmars" video is accessible via a QR code. The local community also has a Facebook page where people can post about fulmars in need of rescue and share advice and experiences. Signs are now also placed along the roads that fulmars tend to land on each year

BABY FULMARS NEAR/ON THE ROAD

HELLO!

I am a baby fulmar, I leave my nest in August and sometimes I am unable to fly to the coast on my first try.

So you might see me sitting on the road, thinking it is a river that will bring me to the sea. If you see me on the road, please slow down and if possible help me, as I will not move.

If you want to rescue me, please take me to the nearest calm river or coastline, but please be mindful of other vehicles on the road and watch the video with guidelines by reading the qr code.

You can also send an e-mail to info@katlageopark.is and let them know about me.

THANK YOU

Fuglavernd
KATLA GEOPARK
UMHVERFIS STÖPNUM ENVIROMENT AGENCY

in-an attempt to inform drivers about the risk they pose to the birds.

The project has led to the decrease in the deaths of young fulmars, a population that is already struggling. Hopefully the project is here to stay and that in the future all young fulmars will make it safely to the sea.

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The poster made for the project, informing visitors about fulmars and more information on

Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain

Rofe to Rofe (*Lapilli to lapilli*). We make the path in Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands Geopark



Walking through the result of recent volcanism.



A lecture about the underwater geological heritage of the Geopark.

Ten years after its designation, the Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark has designated its tenth anniversary as an opportunity for collective recognition and for giving visibility to scientific, institutional and community collaborations built over a decade. The commemorative programme was not designed as a simple calendar of celebration, but as a sequence of technical, educational, and participatory actions, unfolding both under open skies and within shared indoor spaces, aimed at strengthening alliances and sharing achievements in geoconservation, research, awareness-raising, and citizen participation.

This commemoration placed special emphasis on volcanic risk management, through the study and dissemination of recent eruptive cycles. Meetings and field-based exploration activities made it possible to transfer scientific knowledge directly to the landscape, reinforcing historical strategies of coexistence with risk and consolidating a culture of risk as a pillar of territorial identity.

The identity and culture linked to this volcanic territory were also conveyed through the cinematic perspective of José de León Hernández, allowing an emotional journey through the recent history of the island and the experiences of those who learned to live alongside fire.

Subterranean and anchialine ecosystems constituted another strategic axis of the programme. The Túnel de la Atlántida, the longest known submarine volcanic tube, was presented as an important site for research into its palaeoenvironmental evolution. The importance of involving citizens in scientific processes was also addressed as a key element for knowledge and protection, highlighting initiatives such as the citizen science project Portal Anquialino.

Within the submarine heritage, the results of monitoring campaigns of submerged Sites of Geological Interest (Lugares de Interés Geológico – LIG), initiated in 2021, were presented. These actions generated scientific documentation and educational materials, including the book “*Tesoros bajo el mar*”, strengthening new forms of scientific outreach and literacy.

Terrestrial Sites of Geological Interest were also highlighted through reflections on the pathways that link science, management, and education, helping to build a more conscious and respectful relationship with the territory. This work resulted in the publication of the book “*Tesoros geológicos de magma, viento y agua*”.

The programme also recognised the international role of Lanzarote as a natural laboratory and planetary analogue site, with the Geopark serving as a setting for astronaut training programmes, the development of lunar simulants and participation in space missions, demonstrating the opportunities that emerge from scientific cooperation networks beyond this planet.

In closing, the final event functioned as a space for collective encounter to recognise achievements and future challenges, reaffirming that collaboration is the foundation for continuing to expand knowledge, strengthen citizen participation and consolidate cooperation networks for the future of the Geopark. Together, rofe to rofe, we make the path.

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A boat trip to celebrate the anniversary in the Chinijo Island.



Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi UNESCO Global Geopark, Finland

We Are Geopark: Building Local Identity Through Cooperation and Cosmic Encounters in Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi Geopark

In the heart of South Ostrobothnia, Finland, where forests meet crystal-clear waters, lies Impact Crater Lake Geopark Lappajärvi – a place born from an asteroid impact, but built by people. As part of a global grassroots movement, our Geopark’s strength lies in cooperation across communities, businesses, and generations. Our 2025 motto, “*Me olemme Geopark – We Are Geopark*,” reflects a shared commitment to foster local identity through cooperation.

For us, education and collaboration are the cornerstones of building a strong local identity. To create a resilient community, we work hand in hand with local institutions, businesses, and especially schools across the four municipalities of our Geopark. Among these, Järvisseudun Ammatti-Instituutti (JAMI) – a vocational institute with a hundred-year legacy and deep local roots plays a vital role. At JAMI, students learn diverse programmes from tourism and environment to agriculture, mechanics, cuisine and more. These young people are our future guides, storytellers, and keepers of heritage.

JAMI Geopark Week 2025: Learning Beyond the Classroom

From September 29 to October 3, 2025, JAMI and Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi Geopark co-hosted the first-ever JAMI Geopark Week, an immersive educational experience for tourism and environmental studies majors. The event gathered both local and international students from Vietnam, Myanmar, Iran, Russia, and Germany. This initiative transforms nature into an outdoor classroom, promoting the values of the Geopark while cultivating curiosity, connection, and community.

The week’s programme provided an inspiring blend of experiences to discover our cosmic origins from an asteroid impact and to explore the region’s rich geological and cultural heritages. Students learned about local architecture, including the legacy of world-renowned Finnish architect and designer Alvar Aalto (1898–1976), rowed tradi-



Rowing traditional church boats across the Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi.

All photos by Thi Khanh Dung Nguyen.

tional Finnish church boats on Europe’s largest crater lake, hiked along the crater rim, studied biodiversity, enjoyed pristine groundwater and Finnish “grill and chill”. What made the week truly special were the hands-on learning moments guided by experts such as Ulla Laukkala (Chair of the Finnish Guide Association), local nature expert Petteri Karvinen, Heli Hämäläinen (Ostrobothnia Chair of the Finnish Nature Conservation Association) and our Geopark’s geologist Teemu Öhman.

These “cosmic encounters” where students touched ancient rocks, learned our history, tasted local food, and drew inspiration from regional artists, scientists, and experts, are moments where local identity ignites, and grassroots communities take root.

Together Forward

JAMI Geopark Week 2025 marks only the beginning. The collaboration between JAMI and Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi Geopark has laid the foundation for long-term partnerships and future educational projects that continue to connect people, professions, and places – the essence of what it means to be a Geopark.

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Field excursion to Pyhävuori (the “Holy Mountain”) and Uhrikivi (“Sacrificial Stone”, a mushroom-shaped paleo-sea stack on the right) focussing on the geological history and the myths of the crater rim area.



Geoscience session at the Meteorite Center located in the Kivitoppu Resort, exploring the origins of Impact Crater Lake Lappajärvi and the characteristics of various impact-related rocks.

Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece The new Antissa Educational Centre:

Utilizing natural heritage, contributing to local revitalization in Lesvos Island Geopark

A new chapter in the activities of the Lesvos Island UNESCO Global Geopark, realized by the Natural History Museum of the Petrified Forest to promote the natural heritage of Lesvos began with the gradual operation of the new Antissa Educational Centre.

The Centre was given to the Museum by the Municipality of West Lesvos. The Lesvos Island Geopark's goal is to utilize the Centre and attract schools from all over Greece to implement educational programmes, as well as to host students and researchers from Greek and foreign Universities to carry out academic activities focusing on the natural heritage of Lesvos!

1. Summer Educational Programmes for Children - A Summer Full of Discoveries

During the last summer, the Antissa Educational Centre became a place of exciting knowledge for children. The space was "flooded" with children's voices, questions, laughter, and moments of real discovery during the implementation of the summer educational programmes. The Museum's staff organised the programmes "Geological Monuments of Lesvos", "Introducing the Volcanoes", "I Learn about the Caves and Underground Karst Structures", "I Know the Rocks of Lesvos", "Geoparks: Protecting the Heritage of Our Planet", and "I Learn about the Geoparks of Greece and Cyprus", giving children the opportunity to explore the natural wealth of Lesvos in an experiential and attractive way.

2. Hosting young groups - students and volunteers

3. The Centre also hosted also groups of young people who came to Lesvos to undertake academic activities on natural heritage. A group of Scouts from Athens were hosted in Antissa and participated in activities in the Petrified Forest and the protected areas of Western Lesvos, attended a seminar on fossil conservation, and learned firsthand the process of preserving fossil logs, attended nature observation activities in the field and discussed the role of scientific research in preserving the natural heritage. Students from the China University of Geosciences Beijing learned about the geological heritage, the Petrified Forest, the volcanic features



Children visiting the Antissa Educational Centre.



A view of the UNESCO Global Geoparks exhibition.

of Lesvos, visited Museum in Sigri and the Nissiope Marine Park. 3. Visits of delegates of International Conferences and Scientific Meetings

At the same time, the operation of the Educational Centre places Antissa on the map of conference tourism. In recent months, delegates of from five international conferences and scientific meetings held in Lesvos visited at the Center the exhibition "Memories of Gaia - Global Geoparks of Greece and Cyprus

Epilogue

The Natural History Museum of the Petrified Forest of Lesvos looks forward to the cooperation of all local authorities and civil society actors in order for the new Antissa Educational Center Centre to unfold its true potential, to contribute to the promotion of natural heritage through educational activities and to the empowerment of the local community. And at the same time, that a local community in Western Lesvos can be an example of how local society, science, and education can work hand in hand for a better future.

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Children are given a guided tour through the Geopark's exhibition.
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Children enjoy a summer educational activity.



Maestrazgo UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain Guardians of the Territory: Children for Palaeontological Conservation in Maestrazgo Geopark

In celebration of the International Geodiversity Day 2025, primary school students from the municipalities of Mas de las Matas, Castellote, and Galve participated in a series of educational activities aimed at promoting scientific awareness of the Maestrazgo UNESCO Global Geopark's palaeontological heritage. The initiative, entitled "Guardians of the Territory: Children for Palaeontological Conservation" sought to foster curiosity and responsibility among young learners toward the natural and cultural legacy.

The students attended an outreach talk focused on fossils and their conservation, illustrated with local palaeontological examples. The sessions were carried out by the Fundación Conjunto Paleontológico de Teruel-Dinópolis (Aragonese Museum of Palaeontology). Following the lecture, participants engaged in a hands-on workshop where they created molds and replicas of fossils, allowing them to experience firsthand some of the techniques used in palaeontological research and preservation. Through this combination of theory and practice, the programme not only conveyed scientific knowledge but also inspired a lasting interest in the natural sciences and the protection of geological heritage.

The initiative emphasised that the conservation of palaeontological heritage depends on both knowledge and community involvement—particularly that of younger generations. By connecting scientific education with local identity, the project highlighted how understanding and valuing geodiversity can strengthen a sense of stewardship for the environment.

The activities - led by specialists from the Fundación Dinópolis -, were organised as part of the international commemoration established by the Commission on Exact and Natural Sciences during the 41st General Conference of UNESCO, which



Figure 1. Young "Guardians of the Territory" exploring fossils and learning about palaeontological conservation in the Maestrazgo UNESCO Global Geopark. © R. Ferrer (FCPTD)

proclaimed October 6th as the International Geodiversity Day. This global observance aimed to raise awareness about the essential role of geological diversity in sustaining both natural systems and human societies.

The programme was funded by the Instituto de Estudios Turolenses as part of its Cultural and Scientific Outreach Activities. It also benefited from the collaboration of Colegio Valero Serrano in Mas de las Matas and the Olea and Teruel 1 rural schools (CRA) in Castellote and Galve, respectively.

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Figure 2. The activities sought to inspire young audiences and nurture an appreciation for paleontological heritage. © M.P. Castellano (FCPTD)

Massif des Bauges UNESCO Global Geopark, France

Discovery trails to promote the starry sky in Massif des Bauges GeoPark



Fig 1. The Evening Star, a sculpture by Maxime Cadoux. Photo by L. Alpigraphie.



Fig 3. Giant deck chair: a prime spot for contemplation. Photo by L. Alpigraphie.

The night sky in Les Bauges is remarkable for its quality, protected by the surrounding mountains and characterised by relatively scattered villages. This heritage is not entirely the result of chance, as between 2019 and 2022 the Geopark undertook several initiatives to limit light pollution. The municipalities have been supported in installing more environmentally friendly public lighting through practical guides and a study aimed at creating a “dark sky corridor” linking the Bauges and Chartreuse mountain ranges.

In 2024 and 2025, a new milestone was reached: no longer just protecting, but also promoting the starry sky. With a budget of €125,000, a network of four sites was designed in collaboration with local astronomy associations. The aim is to offer residents and visitors alike a sensory and educational experience that highlights the sky and the geological, cultural, and natural features of the Bauges. In Aillon-le-Jeune, an original trail creates a dialogue between the visible constellations and the fauna of the massif. As

they walk through the forest, visitors discover metal sculptures representing foxes, eagles, lynxes, and even bears—the latter evoking a species that has disappeared from the area. Each installation explains the connections between the animal and its constellation, offering a dual interpretation that is both naturalistic and astronomical. In Le Châtelard, near the Garin family’s mountain refuge, the experience is more contemplative. A huge deckchair has been installed to invite visitors to look up at the sky. Audio headsets are available, allowing visitors to listen to a story about the cowherd constellation, nicknamed the “cattle keeper.” This story directly echoes the pastoral traditions that still characterise the region’s identity today.

The initiative also highlights local expertise. Much of the work was carried out by local craftsmen. The sculptures by Maxime Cadoux, an artist and luthier, are a particularly good example of this local expertise in combining celestial heritage and artistic creation.

Through these developments, the Geopark aims to offer accessible and attractive places where poetry and science come together. The sites are designed to welcome families and school groups, as well as those who are simply curious, whether they are passionate about astronomy or complete novices. Showcasing the night sky thus becomes a lever for raising awareness, but also a vehicle for fostering attachment to the region. Through this approach, the Massif des Bauges affirms its desire to combine preservation and cultural discovery, transforming the night into a resource to be shared with as many people as possible.

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Fig 2. An orrery, or how to learn about ephemerides. Photo by L. Alpigraphie.



Mëllerdall UNESCO Global Geopark, Luxembourg

Biodiversity Hotspots: Preserving Luxembourg’s Orchard Heritage in Mëllerdall Geopark



Orchard Meadow in spring.

©NGPM/Photostudio C.Bosseler.

In the Mëllerdall Geopark, traditional orchard meadows are characteristic features of the cultural landscape. Depending on the geological substrate, a wide variety of fruits thrive here – including apples, plums, pears, cherries and more. These orchard meadows not only make a unique contribution to regional gastronomy, they also have a great importance for nature conservation, as they provide a habitat for many rare animal and plant species. Historically, orchard meadows also served as pastureland for cows and sheep, contributing to local meat production.

Unfortunately, the number of fruit trees in Luxembourg declined steadily over the past hundred years. At the beginning of the 20th century, more than one million fruit trees were counted, largely thanks to the thriving apple export business. Today, only a fraction of these trees remains: it is estimated that about 80% have been lost. As orchard meadows

are among the most species-rich biotopes in Central Europe with up to 5,000 different species, the Natur- & Geopark Mëllerdall is committed to preserving these biodiversity hotspots.

This is where the project “Natura 2000 verbindet” (Eng. Natura 2000 connects) comes in. It aims to link habitats by introducing more structural elements such as fruit trees, hedges, and flower borders into the landscape. Restoring and planting orchard meadows is one of the main measures of the project. Installing nesting aids and bird boxes, as well as creating clearance cairns or dead hedges are also part of the project. Since 2021, 2,000 fruit trees have already been planted and 3,000 fruit trees have been professionally pruned. As most plantings take place on private land, the success of the project depends greatly on the support and cooperation of local landowners.

In the Mëllerdall region, more than 340 fruit varieties have been identified, including no fewer than 138 apple varieties, such as the ‘Triumph aus Luxemburg’. They differ not only in shape and colour, but also in taste and uses, which are as varied as their names. The project helps to preserve this remarkable genetic diversity, placing a particular focus on planting local varieties. To support local growers and enhance the value of orchard fruit, a digital platform was created as part of the project. Here, producers and consumers can connect to counteract food waste by using orchard fruit that would otherwise often go unharvested. The platform (kierfchen.lu) also aims to raise public awareness of the ecological value of orchard meadows, which provide much more than just fruit.

The importance of the culture of orchard meadows (Lux. Kultur vun de Bongerten) in Luxembourg’s history is underlined by its inclusion in the national inventory of intangible cultural heritage on 17 October 2025.

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Young apple tree with a livestock protection cage.

©NGPM/Jill Lucas.



Fruit varieties in the Mëllerdall region.

©NGPM/Anne Lommel.

Molina Alto Tajo UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain

The signing of a Twinning and Collaboration Agreement Between UNESCO Global Geoparks Lushan, China and Molina Alto Tajo, Spain.



Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal

Participatory Democracy: A Pillar of Sustainability in Naturtejo Geopark



On September 6, 2025, A delegation from the Lushan UNESCO Global Geopark in China, en route to Chile to participate in the Global Geoparks Conference held in the Kütralkura Geopark, Chile, visited the Molina Alto Tajo Geopark to sign an agreement under which, the UNESCO Global Geoparks Molina Alto Tajo, Spain, and Lushan, China, signed a twinning and collaboration agreement. This collaborative project has great potential benefits for both Geoparks, as they are located in the two countries with the most UNESCO Global Geopark member territories.

The actions undertaken by Lushan and Molina Alto Tajo within the framework of this collaboration agreement will focus, firstly, on tourism promotion, which is expected to generate a significant exchange of visitors between the two geoparks, and

secondly, on leveraging the geological heritage of both areas to disseminate knowledge of Earth's history. This will be achieved through the geological events recorded in the outcrops of these territories, understanding and contextualizing current environmental changes, as well as the measures to be taken to mitigate the effects of climate change and the associated natural hazards. Membership in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network facilitates the development of these types of collaborative projects, which are enormously beneficial economically, socially and culturally.

One moment of the partnership celebration.

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The agreement signing ceremony.



The Chinese delegation visiting La Hoz Gorge Geosite.



One of the many public demonstrations organised through social media by «Citizen Movement for Beira Baixa» in front of the National Parliament.

This autumn, the opening of a public consultation was announced for the installation of a mega-scale photovoltaic power plant in the territory of Beira Baixa. The Sophia project from a London-based multinational integrated energy company BP, with an estimated investment of €590 million and an installed capacity of 867 MWp, involves the occupation of hundreds of hectares with solar panels as well as the construction of 33 kilometres of very high-voltage power lines, crossing sensitive areas of the Naturtejo UNESCO Global Geopark.

Added to this project are a further 14 projects of similar scale. Two hydrogen production plants will contribute to the deep and irreversible industrialisation of the rural landscape.

Under the banner of energy transition and sustainability, these projects involve in fact the sterilisation of the landscape. They also pose a serious threat to ecosystems and undermine the ancestral way of life rooted in a symbiotic relationship between communities and their territory. At its core, this is a model of centralised and massive production, driven by major investment funds and capitalist ambition, which disregards the region's identity, collective memory, and ecological value.

An unprecedented civic movement emerged in response to this threat. In just a few weeks, dispersed communities organised themselves into a broad and

plural movement in defense of the environment, the local economy, and the landscape. Through popular assemblies, petitions, public debates and direct engagement with governmental authorities, environmentalists, farmers, business owners, researchers, local associations, and ordinary citizens young and elderly, found common cause. Enabled by social media, this movement managed to organise itself quickly and in a coordinated manner, forcing public authorities to break their institutional silence and join this movement.

More than an opposition to a specific infrastructure, this movement became a call for national reflection on the model of energy transition that the EU intends to pursue.

The civic movement stresses that it is not opposed to renewable energy but advocates more balanced alternatives: the use of degraded industrial sites, buildings' rooftops and decentralised smaller-scale systems that do not jeopardize protected landscapes or local communities. The energy transition, they argue, must take place, but without sacrificing the very environment it claims to protect.

In this context, the Sophia project has come to symbolise two opposing models for the future. One involves a centralised, industrial and capitalist model that occupies agricultural land and affects ecosystems. The other model, also defended by the Naturtejo Geopark, is grounded in education, science, landscape awareness, nature-based tourism and sustainable local development. While the first promises swift cold gains, the other patiently cultivates a sense of belonging, responsibility, and enduring sustainability.

The response to the Sophia Project in the Beira Baixa territory shows that civil society can organise itself with clarity, courage and vision, and that a truly sustainable transition cannot be measured solely in megawatts produced. It must respect ecosystems, ensure territorial justice, involve communities, and integrate the landscape, history and identity that make each territory a unique place. These are the values promoted by the Geopark.

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Public debate organised by Naturtejo about the impacts of the project Sophia at the Raiano Cultural Centre, Idanha-a-Nova.



Oeste UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal

GeoSchool:

Inspiring Young Minds Through the Oeste Geopark's Educational Programme



Children display the GeoSchool's logo on their rucksacks.

The Oeste UNESCO Global Geopark (Portugal) has achieved remarkable success with the first edition of its educational programme GeoSchool, an initiative designed to bring the wonders of Earth sciences, biodiversity, and cultural heritage closer to the classroom. More than 500 students from four schools across Geopark territory took part in this pioneering programme, which aims to foster curiosity, environmental responsibility, and local pride among young people.

GeoSchool was launched with a clear mission: to connect students and teachers with the geological, biological, and cultural richness of the Oeste Geopark, encouraging learning through exploration and hands-on experiences. From interactive field trips to creative classroom workshops, the programme offers a wide range of activities tailored to different educational levels, ensuring both accessibility and engagement.

Throughout the school year, participating schools had the opportunity to take part in field activities across the region's most emblematic sites — from the stunning coastal cliffs of Caniçal, Peralta and Santa Cruz to the karst landscapes of the Cesaredas Plateau. These excursions were complemented by guided visits to interpretation centres and museums, where students learned about fossils, rocks, and the dynamic processes that have shaped the region for millions of years.

In addition to outdoor learning, GeoSchool introduced educational kits and digital resources to support teachers in integrating Geopark themes into their curricula. These materials included classroom games,

thematic videos, and scientific experiments, all designed to make geology and environmental science fun and accessible. The Oeste Geopark's team also delivered teacher training sessions, equipping educators with tools and knowledge to continue developing Geopark-related content throughout the year.

The success of this first edition has already paved the way for future growth. Building on positive feedback from schools and families, the Oeste Geopark plans to expand GeoSchool with new themes, including marine geology, renewable energy, and climate action. The ultimate goal is to make GeoSchool a model for education for sustainable development, aligning with UNESCO Global Geopark values and promoting the active participation of young generations in the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

By engaging over 500 students in its first year, the Oeste Geopark's GeoSchool programme stands as a shining example of how learning rooted in place can inspire lifelong respect for the planet — and empower students to become true guardians of their territory.

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Rocha?
Educational Kit,
with examples
of rocks with
models of
dinosaurs.



Flying the flag for Oeste Geopark's GeoSchool.



Ore of the Alps UNESCO Global Geopark, Austria

Community involvement on different levels in the Ore of the Alps Geopark



Lecture on the topic of 'UNESCO – global orientation and local impact.' Reports from practice by Mag. Martin Fritz.

© Horst Ibetsberger.

The Ore of the Alps UGGp organises an annual lecture series in the Stadtsaal (city hall) Bischofshofen as the venue for larger events and the lecture hall at the Geopark Visitor Centre for smaller events. The cooperation with the municipality of Bischofshofen is exemplary – Deputy Mayor Eva Bischofer is a member of the board of the Ore of the Alps UGGp Association.

A particularly pressing issue today, namely contemporary energy supply (green energy), and here in particular in the Geopark municipalities, was addressed in 2025. There was a lecture on this topic, followed by a discussion entitled: Energy management and control of power plants in times of energy transition. There was lively interest from the audience, as several run-of-river power plants are located on the Salzach River in and immediately adjacent to the Geopark area. These power plants ensure a sufficient supply of green energy.



Along the ore trail from Hüttau via Bischofshofen and Mühlbach am Hochkönig to St. Veit im Pongau, there are numerous drinking water springs.

© Horst Ibetsberger

Every autumn, the Geopark regulars' tables take place in the four Geopark communities of Hüttau, St. Veit im Pongau, Bischofshofen and Mühlbach am Hochkönig. Here, too, current topics are discussed, such as 'Water supply in the Geopark – sometimes too much, sometimes too little'. These events are the Geopark's contribution to educating the public, with questions such as «Why and how? What precautions can each individual take?

Every year, a series of lectures is held in collaboration with GeoComPass Salzburg (Salzburg Geographical Society). Ore of the Alps UGGp has been a partner of GeoComPass Salzburg for many years. The venues are either the OVAL in Europark Salzburg or the Faculty of Natural and Life Sciences / University of Salzburg. The motto 'Geopark goes Salzburg' has the great advantage that more than 200,000 people live in the catchment area of the city of Salzburg. The well-attended lectures are intended to bring the Geopark 'from the mountains to the city'. Mag. Martin Fritz, Secretary General of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, provided information about the tasks and programmes of UNESCO. In December 2025, Prof. Helmut Habersack reported on 'The significance and development of large rivers using the example of the Danube, the Niger and the Mekong.' Prof. Habersack has held the UNESCO Chair for Integrative River Research and Management since 2014 and is Chairman of the Geo/Hydro-Science National Committee at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

All these types of community involvement are cornerstones of the Ore of the Alps UGGp. The aim is to appeal equally to the local population and to external interest groups. In addition, the cross-cutting subject matter should be of interest to young and old alike.

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Dr. Gert Furtmüller
discusses the topic of 'Water supply in the Geopark – sometimes too much, sometimes too little' with local residents at the Geopark regulars' table.

© Gert Furtmüller



Orígens UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain The Godfather a Rock programme empowering local communities for the conservation of Geological Heritage in Orígens Geopark

Geological heritage is a fundamental scientific resource for understanding and interpreting the Earth's history and evolution. It also provides insights into current geological processes, particularly those related to geological hazards and global change. The protection of the geological heritage in Spain is evolving, with opportunities to further strengthen coordination between national and local legislation.

In this context, the Spanish Geological and Mining Institute (IGME-CSIC) launched in December 2017 the nationwide programme *Apadrina una roca* ("Godfather a Rock"). This initiative promotes geoconservation through citizen volunteering. Over nearly eight years of operation, the programme has proven to be a valuable tool, having managed and produced 1,186 reports. It has become a key initiative for the conservation of geosites included in the Spanish Inventory of Sites of Geological Interest, which forms part of the National Inventory of Natural Heritage and Biodiversity.

Participants in the programme "sponsor" a rock outcrop by visiting it periodically and producing a short report on its state of conservation. By committing to monitor a geosite, volunteers help increase vigilance and detect potential impacts.

Orígens UNESCO Global Geopark became in 2021 an active member of the programme by providing support for volunteers' work and trying to attract new godfathers throughout monthly publications in social networks and presentations to local communities describing the geosites in surrounding areas. Furthermore, Orígens Geopark recorded tutorials to guide participants in how to become a member of the "Godfather a Rock" programme. Orígens Geopark currently has 73 volunteers sponsoring 44 geosites.

In addition, a research and development project was submitted to the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology (FECYT) grant scheme in



2024, namely, New Technologies for the "Godfather a Rock" Citizen Science Programme. This project aims at improving user interaction, facilitating contributions, and increasing the number of volunteers participating in the programme through the development of a mobile phone app. Orígens Geopark was selected as the pilot study area to test the mobile phone app, which is expected to improve interaction and communication among participants, increase the efficiency of monitoring activities, and encourage broader public engagement. It is envisaged that these improvements will contribute to more effective and coordinated protection of geological heritage while also supporting informed decision-making in the public sphere.

The "Godfather a Rock" programme strengthens the connection of the local population with their nearby geological heritage, deepening their sense of identity with their territory. The contribution of local communities in monitoring and protecting geological heritage - which ultimately informs decisions related to the prevention of geological hazards - clearly illustrates how conscious, informed, and motivated citizen participation can play a key role in building a better future.

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Pollino UNESCO Global Geopark. Italy Pollino Geopark supports new Composters for local communities



The composter.

The management of organic waste is frequently a big problem for the Geopark's villages. Firstly because the composting facilities are often far removed from the village, so a huge cost is involved in transporting waste; secondly the small size of the communities and the consequent small production of waste does not allow managing the service in the "normal" way, but requires a solution based on their scale of organic waste production.

In this framework the Pollino UGGp, thanks to funding from the National Ministry of the Environment, launched a public announcement aimed at providing a financial contribution for the purchase of a community composter for the municipalities in the Geopark.

Consequently, four municipalities have received funding: Fardella, Viggianello, Francavilla in Sinni, San Severino Lucano, involving the total sum of €544,000.

Providing local composting represents an intelligent solution for organic waste management in small communities, because it contains waste cycle management within the village's territory.

The benefits for the municipality are many, starting with eliminating the costs of transporting or-

ganic waste for processing in large composting plants. This is an important saving, because the organic fraction is the largest component, both in terms of weight and, the high rate of frequency required for waste collection.

In addition the compost produced is suitable for the maintenance of the municipal green areas or for the needs of the inhabitants. But above all it is of direct benefit to the citizens by providing the possibility to reduce waste tax and/or devolve the saved expenditure for use in other public services.

Further advantages are provided by the possibility to dispose wet waste in the machine at any time, thus avoiding having to keep inconvenient and hygienically unpleasant waste at home and not least by increasing civic sense of the responsibility and awareness for contributing to the protection of the environment.

The positive effects for the environment are evident. The compost is an effective fertiliser of long duration, it raises the carbon content of the soil and by making it soft and porous increases water retention. Due to the on-site composting process it reduces the transport costs and consequently the connected CO2 emissions.

The compost is produced through a completely natural process that does not release additional methane or CO2 gas into the environment.

System sanitation is ensured by the high temperatures that develop as a result of the aerobic process.

The zero kilometre composting, is an example of the circular economy in which organic waste re-enters the natural cycle with a huge benefit for the environment.



The mayor of Fardella explains how the composter works on the inauguration day.

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Ries UNESCO Global Geopark, Germany

Geopark Ries Celebrates 20 Years: Communities and Municipalities Power a Shared Future



From the very outset, the Geopark Ries has drawn its strength and vision from the active engagement of the communities, municipalities, and districts within its borders. What began as an ambitious initiative of the District of Donau-Ries—whose motto is “Think globally, act locally”—has grown into a vibrant partnership shaping both regional identity and sustainable development. The establishment of the Geopark in 2004 was not only a leap forward for economic progress through sustainable tourism but also a decisive commitment to protecting the unique geological, natural, and cultural heritage of the Ries impact crater and its landscapes.



This shared sense of identity and ownership is visible even in the “Lucky Strike” logo of the Ferienland Donau-Ries tourism association, which regards the Geopark as a cornerstone of regional character. Crucially, this vision has always depended on direct participation: The Geopark’s professional management is continuously supported by five dedicated expert teams representing geology, nature, human history and culture, economy, and tourism. These teams, made up of associations, organisations and interested citizens, ensure that diverse voices shape planning and decision-making. Today, 54 of the region’s 58 municipalities are active members of Geopark Ries e.V.—a registered association—reflecting an enduring culture of collaboration.

Crucially, Geopark Ries works exclusively with local authority partners for infrastructure projects: Municipalities take responsibility for maintenance, while the Geopark coordinates development and expansion of geosites, trails, and educational facilities. This approach enables wide coverage, balanced service, and avoidance of over-tourism so that communities across the region benefit.

Examples of this partnership are found in landmark sites like Amerdingen’s “Geotope of Silence,” restored from a former quarry, or Daiting’s “Iron Ores and Laminated Limestones,” which highlights geology and heritage for locals and visitors alike.

Looking ahead, Geopark Ries has launched a new cycle of participative workshops to plan its next decade together with its municipal and expert partners. After two decades of co-creation, Geopark Ries stands as a testament to the transformative power of community partnership. With continued commitment and shared vision, the Geopark aims not only to preserve the past but to co-create a vibrant, resilient future—where everyone who lives, works, or visits the Ries can discover, learn, and belong.

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Local leadership: Twenty-two municipalities collaborated to develop the 128-km Ries Panorama Trail, connecting culture and nature across the crater rim.

Photo by Dietmar Denger.

Celebrating geology: Daiting’s «Iron Ores and Laminated Limestones» Geotopes showcase how municipalities create living links between geology, economy, and local culture.

Photo by Dietmar Denger.

Restoring nature: The Amerdingen «Geotope of Silence»—once a quarry, now a sanctuary—was transformed through community conservation.

Photo by Dietmar Denger.



Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark, Finland

Art as a tool for promoting geological knowledge and local heritage and culture in Saimaa Geopark



Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) is located in Southeast Finland. It covers the southern part of Lake Saimaa, the largest lake in the country. With its beautiful landscapes, lively towns and idyllic villages Saimaa Geopark provides a great setting for local life and great potential for geo-tourism.

The Geopark wants to strengthen the local pride and increase the area’s appeal. One of the important actions in year 2025 been taking part in an on-going Innovation platform for art, technology and sustainable tourism project. The project is a collaboration between three universities and three UNESCO Global Geoparks (Saimaa UGGp, Salpausselkä UGGp and Lauhanvuori-Hämeenkan-gas UGGp). The project is funded by the European Union.

The aims of the project are to create an innovation platform that will integrate aspects of visual arts, technology, and sustainable tourism, to increase competences in multidisciplinary teamwork and to model cooperation between professionals in the fields of visual arts, technology and sustainable tourism in Geopark areas.

The project activities include training and pilot workshops in Geopark areas. In Saimaa UGGp the first training and workshops were held in spring and early summer in 2025. These included webinars and workshops held in Savitaipale municipality. Saimaa UGGp personnel were involved as experts to inform participants about the origin of the area’s

landscape, and also took part in the workshop.

As a results of the workshops, a lot of ideas emerged, and will be further developed. Ideas and thoughts included themes like intangible art, gamification, environmental and art education, and art trails. One of the results of the project was an art exhibition in the city of Lappeenranta during the summer of 2025. The exhibition was partly inspired by the geosites Kärnäkoski Fortress and its surroundings, where a part of the workshops were held. The ideas will be further developed in the project, which continues until April 2027, and new projects will also be developed. The new ideas include a geological timeline, that combines geological information, art education, and environmental education.

Other important activities related to the Geopark and art in the area is the Saimaa Film Festival. The Film Festival is a new event that brings together the culture, people, art, and nature. It was held for the first time in 2025 and will be held again in the summer of 2026. The festival makes unique use of the Saimaa environment: most of the screenings are held by the Saimaa waterway and in the shelter of historic fortresses. This offers the audience a unique and international experience of enjoying high-quality films in the beautiful nature of Saimaa Geopark.

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Aerial view of the Kärnäkoski Fortress. Photo: Saimaa Geopark.



A screening of the Saimaa Film Festival, held by the Saimaa waterway.

Photo: Saimaa Film Festival / Katri Lätt.

A view of Lake Saimaa. Photo: Saimaa Geopark.

Sierras Subbéticas and Villuercas-Ibores-Jara UNESCO Global Geoparks, Spain Geocentres for Cultural Identity in Sierras Subbéticas and Villuercas-Ibores-Jara Geoparks



“Groups of Educational Centres” is a grant programme from the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport to promote groups of public schools from different regions in Spain. This collaboration involves developing and implementing joint projects that foster sustainability, inclusive education, educational innovation, and the consolidation of collaborative educational networks. This aligns perfectly with the philosophy of UNESCO Global Geoparks’ educational projects, namely to promote knowledge of their heritage (geological, natural, and cultural), its conservation, and the sustainability of their identity.

La Jara Rural School Group (CRA; Villuercas-Ibores-Jara UGGp) and Los Alcalá Galiano Primary School (CEIP; Sierras Subbéticas UGGp) are developing educational projects to strengthen knowledge about their geoparks, preserve their values, and offer opportunities that encourage people to remain in the territories. Their approach includes the preservation of traditions, human values, and intergenerational exchange. They aim to educate students committed to their region and aware of its challenges and opportunities, comparing their reality with other geoparks.

Both schools, within the framework of the Ministry’s call for proposals and the support of both geoparks, are developing the educational project «Geocentres for Cultural Identity» during 2024-2025/2025-2026 school years. Starting with knowledge of the resources in the immediate surroundings of the schools, they will move towards a more comprehensive understanding of the territory, allowing them to address the major sustainability challenges they will face in the future with a broader perspective. This joint project addresses the social, cultural, economic, and natural aspects of each geopark, bringing them together to find collaborative solutions.

This work includes activities carried out regularly throughout the two school years (exchange of handwritten letters, creation of articles for both school magazines -print and/or digital, appearances on both schools’ radio programmes, virtual escape rooms about the heritage of each geopark, etc). All of this is aimed at promoting both territories within schools, but also to the wider educational community.

The final activity of the 2024-2025 school year was a visit to the CEIP Los Alcalá Galiano school of the CRA La Jara during the EGN Week and the Sierras Subbéticas UGGp Geo-collab-



oration Day. Not only students but also families and locals attended to both performances: “Geopaca Folk-Traditions of Yesteryear” and the host “Beneath the Waters of Time”, as well as to participate in other activities focussed on collaboration, learning about geoparks, and exchanging best educational practices. This year, during the Carnaval de Ánimas (in February), a festival of regional tourist interest, the visit will be reciprocated, with both schools participating in this and other activities during two more days full of enjoyable moments.

This cooperation will allow the entire educational community of both centres to appreciate their respective realities and seek alliances and synergies to establish sustainability measures for their geoparks.

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Photos of different project activities. Top left: Geopaca delivering letters from the students of CRA La Jara to those of CEIP Los Alcalá Galiano. Bottom left: mural with maps of both geoparks created at CEIP Los Alcalá Galiano. Right: moments during the Geo-coexistence Day.



Sobrarbe-Pirineos UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain Working with Communities to Protect our Landscape and Future in Sobrarbe-Pirineos Geopark



The spectacular view of the landscape including the Mediano Reservoir from the Samitier geo route.

Photo by Sonia Sampietro.

Sobrarbe-Pirineos UGGp is a living landscape where people, nature, and heritage are deeply interconnected. In recent years, this balance has been threatened by large photovoltaic and battery-storage projects proposed within the Geopark’s territory. In response, the Geopark has worked with local authorities and community associations to defend a model of sustainable development that supports climate objectives without compromising the territory’s resources. Sobrarbe is firmly committed to renewable energy. However, the large-scale industrial projects promoted by external companies involve a scale and locations incompatible with a territory whose main resource is precisely its landscape and its natural and cultural heritage.

The proposed energy infrastructures are not intended for local self-sufficiency, but rather to produce and store energy for other regions. This replicates a historically unequal model in which sparsely populated rural territories absorb the impacts while the benefits are concentrated elsewhere. This is even harder to justify considering that Spain has extensive areas of abandoned or degraded industrial land that could be restored for such installations, avoiding the occupation of traditional agricultural landscapes, heritage areas, and sites of high geological and ecological value.

The impact on Sobrarbe would be profound, undoubtedly affecting the landscape and interpretation of its geological heritage. Moreover, high-quality agricultural land—an especially scarce resource in a mountain Geopark—would be irreversibly transformed, undermining local farming. Likewise, key activities such as hiking and cultural and nature-based tourism would lose their appeal in the affected areas, directly harming the local economy, which depends heavily on ecotourism.

Regarding battery-storage plants, concerns are even greater: there are currently no sufficiently reliable studies or consolidated protocols to prevent and manage risks such as fires, thermal runaway events, or episodes of air, soil, or water contamination. Legislation likewise requires updating. International experience shows that these facilities involve significant risks that demand technical and emergency-response measures not available in rural territories.

For all these reasons, the Geopark has supported a coordinated response to projects that, when considered collectively, would irreversibly transform the landscape, fragment ecosystems, and damage the scenic quality that forms the economic, identity-based, and tourism foundation of our Geopark. Sobrarbe has built its future on agriculture, livestock farming, and high-quality ecotourism rooted in well-preserved landscapes and close relationships with local communities. Large industrial energy complexes are incompatible with this widely supported sustainable development strategy, which is fully aligned with the SDGs.

Through public meetings, technical support, formal objections, and direct communication with residents and visitors, the Geopark demonstrates that the energy transition is only just when it respects the communities who inhabit the territory. Sobrarbe-Pirineos UGGp thus works toward a future in which renewable energy coexists harmoniously with the landscape, heritage, and ways of life that make this territory unique.

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La Fueva Valley is part of the Geopark’s network of self-guided Geo-Routes, allowing visitors to explore its unique geology



The spectacular view from the ruins of Samitier. Castle

Photo by Sonia Sampietro.

Sunnhordland UNESCO Global Geopark, Norway

The Crazy Geologist in Sunnhordland Geopark



The Crazy Geologist in action!



ble, soapstone, pyrite, chlorite shale, granite, gold, quartz, copper, and even a meteorite (replica) — all tell a unique tale from Sunnhordland's 11,000-year cultural history.

A playful manuscript was written where each rock was given a "personality" and voice, narrated with a slightly crazy attitude. The geologist also drew a colourful cross-section of the Earth's crust with a volcano on top, which was later printed as a 1.5 x 2.5-metre carpet – the "Rock Cycle Carpet" – allowing both the Crazy Geologist and the students to literally walk the cycle.

The rock cycle story is told through the life of "Rocky," who lives with his family in the magma of the Earth's mantle. Inspired by his grandfather's tales — who once went through a rock cycle himself — Rocky dreams of seeing the mysterious light and strange creatures on the other side of the Earth's crust. His journey takes him and his stone sister upward through the volcano – his sister transforming into granite on the way up, and he into eruptive rhyolite used by Stone Age people for arrowheads – before being eroded and carried by a river down the hills to become a tiny clay particle on the seabed, later compacted and transformed into schist, joining shells that turn into layers of marble, and finally melting back into magma again.

The role was developed and rehearsed over two days at the Geopark's office, with a local actor bringing the Crazy Geologist to life – complete with his stones, carpet, and an interactive quiz finale. The first two performances took place at our local pilot "Geopark School," with whom we have a cooperation agreement. The response was enthusiastic!

Now, the Crazy Geologist is ready to tour all eight municipalities of our Geopark – always adapting the performance slightly to reflect the geology of the specific area he visits.

Presently, we collaborate with a professional actor, but we plan to take on the role ourselves in the future when time and resources allow. The Crazy Geologist is our playful and efficient tool to spark curiosity among young students – helping them discover the wide wonders of geology, and the unique stories within our Geopark.

Yihaa!

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TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark, Germany

Using the 10th anniversary as a UNESCO Global Geopark to improve TERRA.vita Geopark's outreach

Full attention from our young audience!

Public relations and events for the 10th UGGp anniversary. (A) Advertisement at the County's House and (B) Prof. Dr. Harald Lesch presenting the impact of climate change during the "Climate Dialogue".



Together with 119 other Geoparks, the TERRA.vita was also designated a UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) on 17th November 2015. In 2025, TERRA.vita celebrated the anniversary with events and intensive public relations work in all media.

As the largest TERRA.vita event to mark the anniversary, the nationally famous astrophysicist and television presenter Prof. Dr. Harald Lesch led an interactive "Climate Dialogue" with 300 students from eleven schools in the Geopark area at the "Wissenswerkstadt" in Bielefeld. Several smaller events, such as guided tours offered by the TERRA guides, took place under the anniversary motto. Furthermore, a special dinosaur rally introduced children to the dinosaur finds in Geoparks worldwide on the "Family Day at the Dinosaur Tracksite Bad Essen-Barkhausen". About 478 people attended this event.

Another presentation on climate change, but also on solastalgia and climate denial connected to the climate crisis, was presented by the Geopark's geologist Tobias Fischer as part of the "Teuto Talks" organised by the

Media campaign for the 10th UGGp anniversary in NDR programmes. Presentation in the radio programmes (A) "Hallo Niedersachsen" and (C) "Die Plattenkiste" and in the television show "NDR Nordtour" (B, D).



nature conservation NGO "Arbeitsgemeinschaft Natur Tecklenburger Land – ANTL e. V." As the first TERRA.vita event, the lecture was interpreted live for the deaf and participants with impaired hearing. About 42 people, including four with impaired hearing, attended the talk.

In addition to press releases, social media campaigns, and information on the website and in the event calendar, an oversized advertising banner served as a reminder at the county's courthouse building of the 10th anniversary. A major media campaign on television and radio was run in collaboration with "Norddeutscher Rundfunk" (NDR). The NDR is a regional public German television and radio covering the federal states of Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. As a result, TERRA.vita was featured for an hour on the NDR 1 radio show "Die Plattenkiste" has been visited by the NDR 1 programme "Hallo Niedersachsen" during the "Lower Saxony Event Day" in Osnabrück, and was accompanied for two days by the film crew of the television programme "NDR Nordtour". The latter programme is broadcast on Saturdays at 6 p.m., which is a good time slot, and reaches over 240,000 viewers.

With this multifaceted approach of educational and advertising events, the anniversary was used to familiarise people in the region with the tasks of geoparks, but also to further increase the awareness of TERRA.vita Geopark among tourists and local people. The measures were a great success, as they were engaged with schools in the Geopark area, educational partners, and local volunteers.

Tobias Fischer – Natur- und Geopark TERRA.vita - Tobias.Fischer@Lkos.de

Our "Crazy Geologist" is now ready to visit schools across our Geopark!

The idea behind this character was to create a vivid and slightly eccentric figure who could make the somewhat heavy word geology more engaging and accessible for children aged 10 to 13. The performance lasts around 45 minutes and focuses on three main parts:

- a) characteristic rock types of Sunnhordland and their historical uses,
- b) the rock cycle, and
- c) a final quiz based on what the students have learned.

Together with the costume designer at our regional theatre – also one of our Geopark partners – we created a costume filled with pockets containing different rock specimens, each with a story linked to our region. Jasper, greenstone, rhyolite, mar-

The Rock Cycle Carpet – a must for every geopark!



Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece Storied Landscapes in the Vikos-Aoos Geopark



In the Vikos-Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark, an ongoing study is revealing how geological features are not just physical formations, but are deeply intertwined with local culture and identity through place names. The research, which uses an ethnographic approach, views the region of the Geopark as a “natural and cultural laboratory” where the subsoil “speaks” through the language of toponyms. It argues that geological heritage is transformed into a cultural experience when it is preserved in the names of places, paths, and bridges, carrying the collective memory and narratives of local communities.

The preliminary findings of the study show that numerous geologically significant formations are deeply embedded in the collective memory of the area. It shows that geological formations are not just static physical features; they are actively “inhabited, narrated, and symbolically appropriated” by residents. The Rock of Ai-Lias (The Prophet Elijah stone) is located near Pyrgos village. This 72-metre-high limestone rock is more than a physical formation; it is a sacred protector and a monument of meaning. Local legends, such as one about a mother who miraculously survived a leap from the rock while fleeing Ottoman Turks, have cemented its symbolic role as a refuge. The chapel built on its slope further exemplifies how the community sacralised the site, transforming a natural feature into a place of worship and memory. Mavropetra (The Black Stone) is a marine sedimentary

rock, located near the remnants of the old village of Pournia, it embodies the convergence of oral myth and geological science. A local myth recounts that the rock is all that remains of a submerged city, echoing the scientific confirmation that the region was once an ancient sea basin or formed the landslide prone areas of the Smolikas mountainsides. The presence of a 19th-century rock painting of Christ Pantocrator adds another layer of meaning, making the site a sacred landscape where “tectonic memory” and religious imagination fuse. The Rock of Hoja constitutes a prominent limestone boulder in the Konitsa plain that was once detached from the Konitsa fault foot wall and now serves as a geosite of “emotional geology”. It is a site for parting where families experienced “living separation”, a term for the pain of saying goodbye to loved ones leaving for work abroad. The rock became a monument of emotion, absorbing the sorrow and whispered promises of those who left and those who stayed behind. Finally, the Kokkino Lithari (Red Rock) above Papigo village is visible from afar. The reddish coloration of this rock face is due to iron and manganese oxidation. Locals do not see it as a neutral object; rather, it is a site of refuge and revelation. The rock also served a practical purpose as a natural sundial for villagers. These examples demonstrate how geology and culture are deeply intertwined in the Vikos-Aoos Geopark, with geological features becoming «storied places» that preserve community narratives about their environment.

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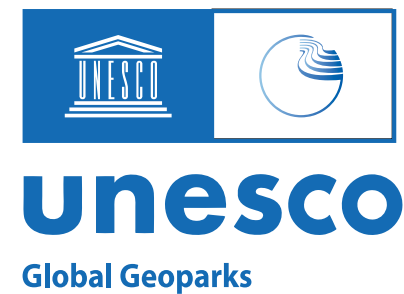


“Mavropetra” (Black Stone) near Pournia village (Konitsa region).



The “Kokkino Lithari” (Red Rock) above the Papigo village (Zagori region).

The Rock of ‘Ai-Lias’, over the village of Pyrgos (Konitsa region)..



UNESCO designated 16 new Global Geoparks in 2025

UNESCO designated 16 new geoparks, bringing the total number of sites in the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network to 229 in 50 countries. The network now covers an area of almost 855,000 km².

The UNESCO Global Geoparks Programme, which in 2025 celebrated its 10th anniversary, brings together territories recognized for their rich geological heritage – rock formations, mountain or volcanic ranges, caves, canyons, fossil sites or ancient desert landscapes – which bear witness to our planet’s history, evolution and climate. These sites are also places for conservation and environmental education, where local and indigenous communities can promote their culture and know-how.

In ten years, UNESCO Geoparks have become models for the conservation of geological heritage. But their role goes much further: they support educational projects, promote sustainable tourism and keep the knowledge and traditions of these territories alive through the active participation of local and indigenous communities. This is the case, for example, in Iceland’s Katla Geopark, where local schools are actively involved in the scientific research that is carried out on this landscape, which preserves the memory of volcanic and glacial systems through its lava flows and black sand beaches.

Each year, new sites are added to the network by decision of UNESCO’s Executive Board, after an evaluation of the applications by the Global Geoparks Council made up of international experts.

The 16 newly designated geoparks are located in China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea – marking its first geopark and contribution to the protection of the shared mountain range with China –, Ecuador, Indonesia, Italy, Norway, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia — hosting its first two geoparks —, Spain, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

UNESCO continues to promote the programme in areas where geoparks are less common, notably in Africa, the Arab States and Small Island Developing States. UNESCO does this by facilitating expert missions, tailored training sessions and individual consultations on both a national and local scale, to guide the preparation of applications for UNESCO Global Geopark status.

The new UNESCO Global Geoparks are:

- Kanbula UNESCO Global Geopark, China
- Yunyang UNESCO Global Geopark, China
- Mt Paektu UNESCO Global Geopark, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
- Napo Sumaco UNESCO Global Geopark, Ecuador
- Tungurahua Volcano UNESCO Global Geopark, Ecuador
- Kebumen UNESCO Global Geopark, Indonesia
- Meratus UNESCO Global Geopark, Indonesia
- MurGEopark UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy
- The Fjord Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, Norway
- Danyang UNESCO Global Geopark, Republic of Korea
- Gyeongbuk Donghaean UNESCO Global Geopark, Republic of Korea
- North Riyadh UNESCO Global Geopark, Saudi Arabia
- Salma UNESCO Global Geopark, Saudi Arabia
- Costa Quebrada UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain
- Arran UNESCO Global Geopark UK
- Lang Son UNESCO Global Geopark Viet Nam



Kanbula UNESCO Global Geopark,
China



Yunyang UNESCO Global Geopark,
China



The Fjord Coast UNESCO Global Geopark,
Norway



Danyang UNESCO Global Geopark,
Republic of Korea



Mt Paektu UNESCO Global Geopark,
Democratic People's Republic of Korea



Napo Sumaco UNESCO Global Geopark,
Ecuador



Gyeongbuk Donghaean UNESCO Global Geopark,
Republic of Korea



North Riyadh UNESCO Global Geopark,
Saudi Arabia



Tungurahua Volcano UNESCO Global Geopark,
Ecuador



Kebumen UNESCO Global Geopark,
Indonesia



Salma UNESCO Global Geopark,
Saudi Arabia



Costa Quebrada UNESCO Global Geopark,
Spain



Meratus UNESCO Global Geopark,
Indonesia



MurGEopark UNESCO Global Geopark,
Italy



Arran UNESCO Global Geopark
UK



Lang Son UNESCO Global Geopark
Viet Nam

Arran UNESCO Global Geopark, Scotland, UK Scotland in Miniature Joins the European Network



The Geopark encompasses the entire Isle of Arran in the south west of Scotland, covering an area of 438.8 km² on land and 508 km² of sea. Although only accessible by boat, we are just two hours from the city of Glasgow, yet offer a unique and genuine Scottish island experience. The island is home to only 4,600 people, known as “Arranachs”, but welcomes nearly half-a-million visitors annually.

Famously dubbed “Scotland in Miniature”, Arran contains a microcosm of Scotland’s geological history spanning 600 million years. The island is bisected by the Highland Boundary Fault, separating the oldest metamorphic rocks and granite peaks of the north from the younger sedimentary landscapes of the south. It boasts world-class geosites, including Hutton’s Unconformity – a location pivotal to James Hutton’s 18th-century concept of deep time. Elsewhere there are spectacular coastal exposures of Paleogene dyke swarms and sills.

Arran’s outstanding geodiversity underpins rich and varied habitats. The mountainous north supports nationally-significant populations of golden eagle, hen harrier, and red deer; while the forested south includes fertile farmland and heather moorland. Arran is a haven for endemic flora, hosting three very rare tree species: the Arran Whitebeams (*Hedlundia* spp.). A significant offshore area is a Marine Protected Area, established through a pioneering community campaign led by the Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST), protecting vital seagrass and maerl beds formed by slow growing calcified coralline algae.



The view from Kildonan dyke swarm looking towards the islands of Pladda and Ailsa Craig. This geosite provides textbook examples of a dyke swarm and associated igneous features. The Geopark boundary extends 3 nautical miles offshore from here, encompassing the South Arran Marine Protected Area.

(Photo credit: Paul Kay)

Human history is deeply interwoven with our geo-heritage, from Neolithic standing stones at Machrie Moor to historical sandstone quarries and lime kilns. Landmarks like 13th century Brodick Castle reflect the island’s strategic past. Today, the granite-filtered water is crucial to Arran’s renowned whisky distilleries, linking ancient rock to modern craft. Dairy farming has long been an important industry and Arran exports award-winning cheese and ice cream.

Arran Geopark is established as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). It is governed by a volunteer board and managed by a professional team; working in partnership with local charities, businesses, and statutory authorities. Our partnership model ensures it remains a genuinely community-led initiative.

Our work actively aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Key initiatives include large-scale native woodland restoration and upland peatland repair, contribute significantly to carbon sequestration and ecosystem resilience. We integrate conservation with sustainable economic development, supporting geotourism and local enterprise.

We are truly thrilled to join the European Geoparks Network and look forward to sharing our community-driven model and learning from our peers across Europe.

Malcolm Wilkinson, Geopark Operations Manager – Malcolm@arran-geopark.org.uk



Community volunteers planting native trees for biodiversity and climate resilience as part of a landscape-scale project by Geopark partner National Trust for Scotland. The range of the island’s endemic Whitebeam trees is being extended as part of this project to ensure their future.

(Photo credit: National Trust for Scotland)



The rugged mountains of the north of the island – Cir Mhor (799m) and Ceum na Caillich (758m) viewed from the glaciated valley of Glen Rosa. The rugged granite peaks are Paleogene intrusions that have been a playground for mountaineers since the birth of the sport

(Photo credit: Paul Kay)



Costa Quebrada Geopark UNESCO Global Geopark, Spain Costa Quebrada Geopark: Where Earth, Identity, and Pathways Meet



Sunset over the mouth of the Pas River at Valdearenas Beach.

Photo by Isabel Curado Fernández.



Late summer at Pozo Tremeo, an inland lake of the Costa Quebrada Geopark.

Photo by Isabel Curado Fernández.

On the northern coast of Spain, the UNESCO Global Geopark Costa Quebrada is a living landscape — a place where the Earth and the sea have shaped each other for millions of years. It is a natural laboratory where the history of our planet becomes visible, and where cultural heritage adds soul to a breathtakingly beautiful setting — inviting locals and visitors alike to discover and enjoy it.

Stretching across 345 square kilometers in the region of Cantabria, in northern Spain — 270 Km² on land and 75 Km² in the sea — Costa Quebrada is much more than coastline: it extends inland to embrace green valleys and rural landscapes, linking eight municipalities: Santander, Santa Cruz de Bezana, Piélagos, Miengo, Suances, Santillana del Mar, Polanco, and Camargo. The entire area lies upon the great folded structure of the San Román–Santillana Syncline, formed from Cretaceous and Palaeogene rocks that reveal over 100 million years of Earth’s history in their layers.

That is what makes Costa Quebrada so special: a landscape where the layers of limestone, marl, and sandstone read like the pages of an ancient book, revealing the immense forces that once raised mountains and opened ancient seas. Its folds, faults, and vertical strata stand as witnesses to tectonic phenomena of international significance. The towering cliffs, sea stacks, and wave-cut platforms are not just spectacular to look at — they are living proof that the planet is still in motion. This Geopark is, in every sense, an open-air classroom where sci-

ence, education, and conservation come together for everyone’s benefit.

But Costa Quebrada is far more than its geology. It is a place where people live, where traditions and nature coexist, and where local communities are key to preserving its values. Along the coastline, striking landmarks greet travelers: the Urros de Lienres, stone sentinels facing the Atlantic; the rugged cliffs of La Arnía, carved by relentless waves; Covachos Beach, which reshapes itself with every tide; and the imposing cliffs of Tagle, soaring like fortress walls against the sea. Nearby, the small hermitage of Santa Justa — tucked inside a cave by the Cantabrian shore — captures the harmony between human devotion and the raw beauty of the landscape.

Inland, the Geopark holds other treasures. In Polanco lies Pozo Tremeo, the only natural lake along Cantabria’s coast, surrounded by biodiversity and local legends. In Camargo, El Pendo Cave shelters Palaeolithic paintings that form part of UNESCO’s World Heritage, offering a glimpse into the spirituality of the region’s earliest inhabitants. In Santillana del Mar, the world-famous Cave of Altamira — the “Sistine Chapel of rock art” — preserves extraordinary images of bison, deer, and handprints painted around 30,000 years ago, powerful symbols of universal human creativity.

Adding yet another layer of meaning, the Northern Route of Santiago de Compostela — also a World Heritage Site — crosses the Geopark, turning it into a meeting point of nature, culture, and spirituality.

Ultimately, the UNESCO Global Geopark Costa Quebrada is a place where the Earth reveals its memory, where communities keep their roots alive, and where international recognition underscores the need to preserve not only an extraordinary landscape, but also the identity of those who call it home.

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The Canto del Diablo, an iconic symbol of the Costa Quebrada Geopark and a striking testament to its exceptional coastal geomorphology.

Photo by Isabel Curado Fernández.



Fjord Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, Norway

The Rise and Fall of the Caledonian Mountain Range:

Discover the Wonders in Fjord Coast Geopark



Map of the Fjord Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, with the location of the Visitor Centre marked. The area was awarded UNESCO Global Geopark membership in 2025.

The Fjord Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, the first combined regional territory and Geopark in Norway, is situated at the mouth of the majestic Sognefjord and stretches across five municipalities along Norway's western coast. It is home to a population of 9,013 people, spread across approximately 1,480 square kilometres, and boasts an impressive variety of natural and topographical features. The area includes islands and fjords, forests and waterfalls, and alpine mountains.

To the north rises Blægja, the Geopark's highest peak at 1,304 metres above sea level. When compared with the deepest point of the Sognefjord, at 1,225 metres below sea level, the park's total vertical range reaches an impressive 2,529 metres. Coastal heathlands are found along the shoreline and on islands throughout the region, serving as vital grazing areas for the Old Norse sheep. The Geopark actively works to maintain these landscapes, which are classified by the authorities as a critically endangered habitat and must be preserved through grazing and regular controlled burning. Along the coast, there are also nature reserves and protected landscapes that are particularly important for seabirds.

The ancient Caledonian mountain range in Scandinavia shares striking geological similarities with the modern Himalayas. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Fjord Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, where rock formations reveal many of the same features and deep-crustal processes found beneath today's Himalayan peaks. Like the Himalayas, the Scandinavian Caledonides were formed through rapid continental collision



Photo by Fjordkysten & Sunnfjord.

between Baltica and Laurentia during the Silurian and Early Devonian periods, approximately 425–395 million years ago. This makes the region one of the finest ancient analogues of a Himalayan-type mountain belt.

The Geopark's exceptional geology offers outstanding opportunities for research, ranging from eclogites formed deep within the mountain roots to sediments deposited in ancient intramontane basins. Remarkably, this unique geological diversity is concentrated within just a few kilometres, all contained within the compact landscape of the Geopark.

Geology has also profoundly shaped local industry. Archaeological excavations in Solund show that stone axes were produced here around 7,000 years ago. In nearby Hyllestad, high-quality stone for millstone production was discovered in the 8th century AD. The quarries were located close to the sea, allowing efficient export by boat, with Denmark among the principal destinations.

During the Viking Age (c. 800–1050 AD), the Dalsfjorden area served as an important chieftain's seat. Viking boatbuilders were exceptionally skilled, enabling long-distance voyages. Ingolf Arnesson from Askvoll, believed to have founded the first permanent settlement in Iceland in 874, began his westward journey from Dalsfjorden.

Chalcopyrite mining began in Grimelia in 1761, employing around 60 workers, while Scandinavia's first aluminium smelting plant opened in Stongfjorden in 1906 and operated until 1945. Today, industry, fisheries, and aquaculture form the region's main sources of income, followed by agriculture, services, tourism, and public administration.

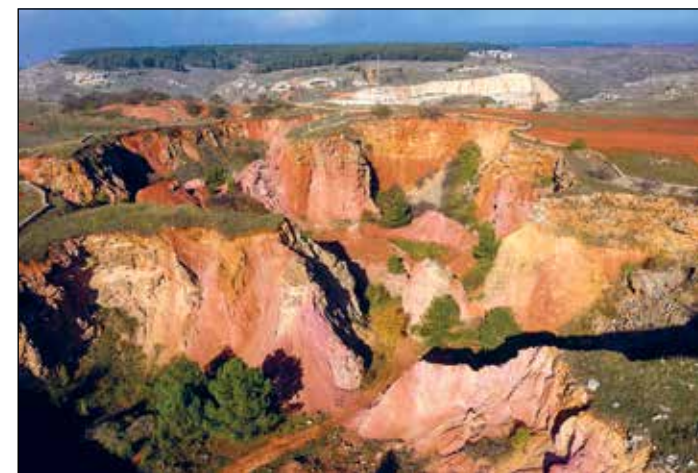
The Geopark has four visitor centres, known as "Ep-centres" and is governed by a nine-member board representing tourism, education, politics, and local communities. The park has around 100 members and partners, including businesses, organisations, and private individuals.

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MurGEOPark - UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy

MurGEOPark, the last piece of Adria, the (almost) lost continent



The bauxite mines of "Murgetta Rossa".

Photo by Domenico Martinelli.

The MurGEOPark - UNESCO Global Geopark is located in the eastern part of southern Italy (Puglia). It has an area of approximately 2,550 km² and a population of approximately 440,000 people. The managing body, the Alta Murgia National Park Authority, was established by Presidential Decree on March 10, 2004.

MurGEOPark includes the most remarkable part of the Murge Highland representing an "undeformed" sector of the Adria Plate, an ancient continental plate, involved in subduction/collision processes between the African and European continents that were initiated during the Mesozoic era and continue to the present day.

It comprises: i) the Alta Murgia area, where the Cretaceous evolution of Adria is spectacularly recorded thanks to the outcropping limestones of one of the biggest peri-Tethyan carbonate platforms (Apulia Carbonate Platform); and ii) the adjacent Premurge area, where the southwestward lateral continuation of the same platform, flexed toward the south Apennines Chain, represents the outer south-Apennines foredeep, whose Plio-Quaternary evolution is spectacularly exposed thanks to the presence of a thin wedge of shallow-marine deposits (a thin transgressive-regressive sedimentary unit).

Saint Michael's grotto, Minervino Murge.

Photo by Mario Brambilla.



Two palaeontological jewels of very different age, a Neanderthal skeleton preserved in speleothems and one of the world's widest surfaces of dinosaur tracks (with about 25,000 footprints) are highlights in the geological uniqueness of the area.

At the same time, the theme of the "murex", a latin word for «sharp stone» or "rocky wall", encompasses the close integration between environment, man, and traditional activities. The use of water in a karstic area, archaeological sites, unique stone architecture such as "Castel del Monte" castle - UNESCO World Heritage Site, caves used as places of worship such as Saint Michael's grotto, or sites for mineral extraction, such as the bauxite mines of "Murgetta Rossa", show the close relationships between man and geology and provide an opportunity to disseminate the geological values to a wider audience.

Here there is a natural balance between this silent landscape and traditional houses, dry-stone walls, agro-pastoral activities, traditional food products, and ancient routes of transhumance. This land is a treasure trove of biodiversity with different types of steppe and sub-steppe habitats, unique in Europe, in which about 124 wild species represent about 25% of the 500 indigenous species in Italy. Therefore, this «stone landscape» provides the basis for a strategy of sustainable development of the territory, based on the theme of "slowness" in a touristic key, through walking, horseback riding and cycling routes to discover Adria.

All these values underpin the updated 2026 - 2030 Action Plan of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) for MurGEOPark. Thanks to local forums and co-designed sessions with businesses, official guides, associations, schools, universities, and municipalities, 64 actions have been proposed, aimed at actively protecting the geo-bio-cultural heritage, developing related tourism provision, and promoting the destination strategy of the MurGEOPark.

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The Murge Alte Scarp.

Photo by Domenico Martinelli.





16-18TH SEPTEMBER 2026 - 18TH INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN GEOPARKS CONFERENCE
HOSTED BY SAIMAA UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

18th European Geoparks Conference

16-18th September 2026
Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark Finland

Conference Theme:
Lifelong learning, shared innovations, sustainable development and co-operation as a basis for developing Geoparks

The European Geoparks Conference will follow the tradition of a three-day event, with two days dedicated to keynote talks, oral presentations and workshops. The third day will feature field trips tours within the Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark. After or before the Conference there is also the opportunity to voluntarily explore other Geoparks in Finland.

The EGN Conference Geofair is a free exhibition section as part of the EGN conference. All EGN Geopark countries can reserve their own stand at the fair for free.

Abstracts Description

Abstracts accepted for oral or poster presentation should not exceed 1 page. Writing language: english. Deadline for submission of abstracts: May 31, 2026

The subject matter must be related to one of the following themes, specify the chosen theme, specify whether it is a presentation or a poster:

1. GEOPARKS IN A FRAGILE WORLD OF CHANGE

Climate change and disaster risk mitigation in UNESCO Global Geoparks: Mitigation and adaptation actions, innovation in Geoparks.

2. INNOVATION IN COOPERATION

Case studies exploring groundbreaking cooperation models and outcomes in Geoparks. Improving efficiencies, alternative approaches, radical solutions.

3. MARKETING AND ACTIVITIES FOR TOURISM TOMORROW

Good practice in communication and marketing in UNESCO Global Geoparks: new strategies, platforms and success stories for inhabitants and visitors.

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Building local economic development from the bottom up.

5. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Science and society; in, about and for UNESCO Global Geoparks.

6. EDUCATION FOR ALL

Zoom on working within national education systems, educational activity scope, developing different educational audiences and content.





18th European Geoparks Conference

16–18th September 2026

Saimaa UNESCO Global Geopark Finland