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# Geoparks and Geosites

*Imre Szarvas*

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## *C1.- TRAINING COURSE*

Grupo de Desarrollo Rural Subbética



Junta de Andalucía  
Consejería de Agricultura, Ganadería,  
Pesca y Desarrollo Sostenible



UNIVERSITY OF  
BUCHAREST  
—VIRTUTE ET SAPIENTIA—

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# Geoparks and Geosites



## Content:

About the Geotur guide  
Geosites  
Evolution of the Geopark initiative  
UGGp program in Europe, the EGN  
Good environmental practices  
The 17 SDG







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# Geoparks and Geosites



The guide is an important participant in geotourism, an authentic protagonist on the field interpretation of the geoheritage. Part of the guide's task is to enrich the visitor experience and protect the resource while guiding. If visitors have a deeper awareness of and connection with geoheritage they are much more likely to value and preserve it.



It is important to make the interpreter able to understand the geopark movement and its potential in the regional and local developments with management challenges and to equip the guide with skills in order to be able to effectively take part in the heritage preservation, to become an active and qualified ambassador of his/her own geopark.







# Geoparks and Geosites



## What is a Geosite?

Global Geosites Program – Asier's presentation

*Geoheritage site - Geosite – Geomorphosite - etc*

*Geotope (coined my analogy of biotope, the geological component of the abiotic matrix of an ecotope) – Biotope (living place unit for a given community of organisms).*

The geosite is the cornerstone of the Geopark, should possess a relevant intrinsic value, has to be representative of the geodiversity as well as managed and protected.

It is the geosite (and its adjoining visitor facilities), where the quality of the visitor's experience determines the success of geotourism.

One of the main tasks of geotourism is the transfer and communication of geoscientific knowledge (and ideas) to the general public, geosites are the best authentic fields for that. Most of the geosites as outcrops can be found in rural areas, but more and more urban geosites have been recognized.







# Geoparks and Geosites



76 Geosites: 5 international, 40 national, 31 regional significance





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# Geoparks and Geosites



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks



The Geopark term is evolving, now it is a kind of informal term to describe complexes of geosites, or even small geosites within a well-defined area that are promoted for sustainable economic gain. Although the UNESCO Global Geoparks are in the front line and their recognition is the greatest, but they represent only the peak of the geoparks community, geoparks are developed at local and country level besides the global level (with regional branches).





## **The main landmarks of the geoparks' development** *(after Gonzalez-Tejada)*

1988: The first international meeting on geoconservation (Netherlands). One of the results of this meeting was the establishment of the European Working Group on Earth Science Conservation, which evolved in 1993 into ProGEO (*The former European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage, which now goes global*).

1991: *Signature of International declaration of the rights of the memory of the Earth at the First International Symposium on the Conservation of our Geological Heritage in Digne (France).*

1993: *Publication of the Malvern Resolution at the International Conference on Geological and Landscape Conservation in Malvern (UK).*

1996: *Proposition of Geopark initiative at the 30th International Geological Congress*

1996: *"Development of geotourism in Europe" Project financed by LEADER II.*

1999: *First proposition of UNESCO Geoparks Programme.*

2000: *Creation of European Geoparks Network with 4 members.*

2000: *Nomination of National Geoparks in China.*

2000-2001: *Feasibility studies on developing a UNESCO Geosites/Geoparks Programme deciding not to pursue it but to support ad hoc efforts with individual Member States.*



# Geoparks and Geosites



- 2001: Signature of Convention of Cooperation between UNESCO and the EGN.
- 2004: Establishment of the Global Geopark Network (GGN) including 17 European and 8 Chinese Geoparks at the First Global Geopark Conference in Beijing (China).
- 2007: Creation of the Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN).
- 2009: Creation of the African Geoparks Network (AGN) by African Association of Women in Geosciences (AAWG) in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) in cooperation with IUGS and UNESCO.
- 2012: The UNESCO Global Geoparks initiative proposed during the 37th UNESCO General Conference.
- 2014: Establishment of legal statute of GGN as non-profit organisation subject to French legislation.
- 2015: The International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme (IGGP) approved during the 38th UNESCO General Conference, label for the UNESCO Global Geoparks achieved.
- 2017: Creation of the Latin America and the Caribbean Geoparks Network (GeoLAC).
- 2019: Creation of the Transnational UNESCO Global Geoparks Forum by 4 UGGp.
- 2019: Creation of the African UNESCO Global Geoparks Network by 2 UGGp.







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# Geoparks and Geosites



Movers of the Geopark Movement





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# Geoparks and Geosites



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks

A UNESCO Global Geopark (UGGp) is a single, unified geographical area where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. A UGGp uses its geological heritage, in connection with all other aspects of the area's natural and cultural heritage, to enhance awareness and understanding of key issues facing society, such as using our earth's resources sustainably, mitigating the effects of climate change and reducing natural disasters-related risks.







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# Geoparks and Geosites



United Nations  
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UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks

By raising awareness of the importance of the area's geological heritage in history and society today, UGGps give local people a sense of pride in their region and strengthen their identification with the area.

UGGps are established through a bottom-up process involving all relevant local and regional stakeholders and authorities in the area (e.g. land owners, community groups, tourism providers, indigenous people, and local organizations). This process requires firm commitment by the local communities, a strong local multiple partnership with long-term public and political support, and the development of a comprehensive strategy that will meet all of the communities' goals while showcasing and protecting the area's geo heritage.





# Geoparks and Geosites



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks

A totally new era started with the creation of the “UNESCO Global Geoparks” (UGGp) designation. The introduction of international governance with “top-down” directives from UNESCO is a new challenge to the “bottom up approached” GGN. The UGGps in contrast to other UNESCO designations are “bottom up born territories”. This innovative approach to the protection and sustainable use of Earth heritage by the UGGps is incomparable with the other site designations based on an international convention (like World Heritage) or an intergovernmental programme (like MAB).

The UGGps are managed locally with a strong involvement of local authorities, communities and stakeholders. This bottom-up approach represents a basic principle of UGGps and it was accepted unanimously by the member states at the General Conference in 2015. Implementation of this principle leads to the increase in territorial identity (place attachment) of the local inhabitants and whole communities as well as mobilization of their social responsibility regarding the Earth heritage protection.







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**169** UNESCO  
Global  
Geoparks  
**44** Countries  
**1** Global  
Geoparks  
Network

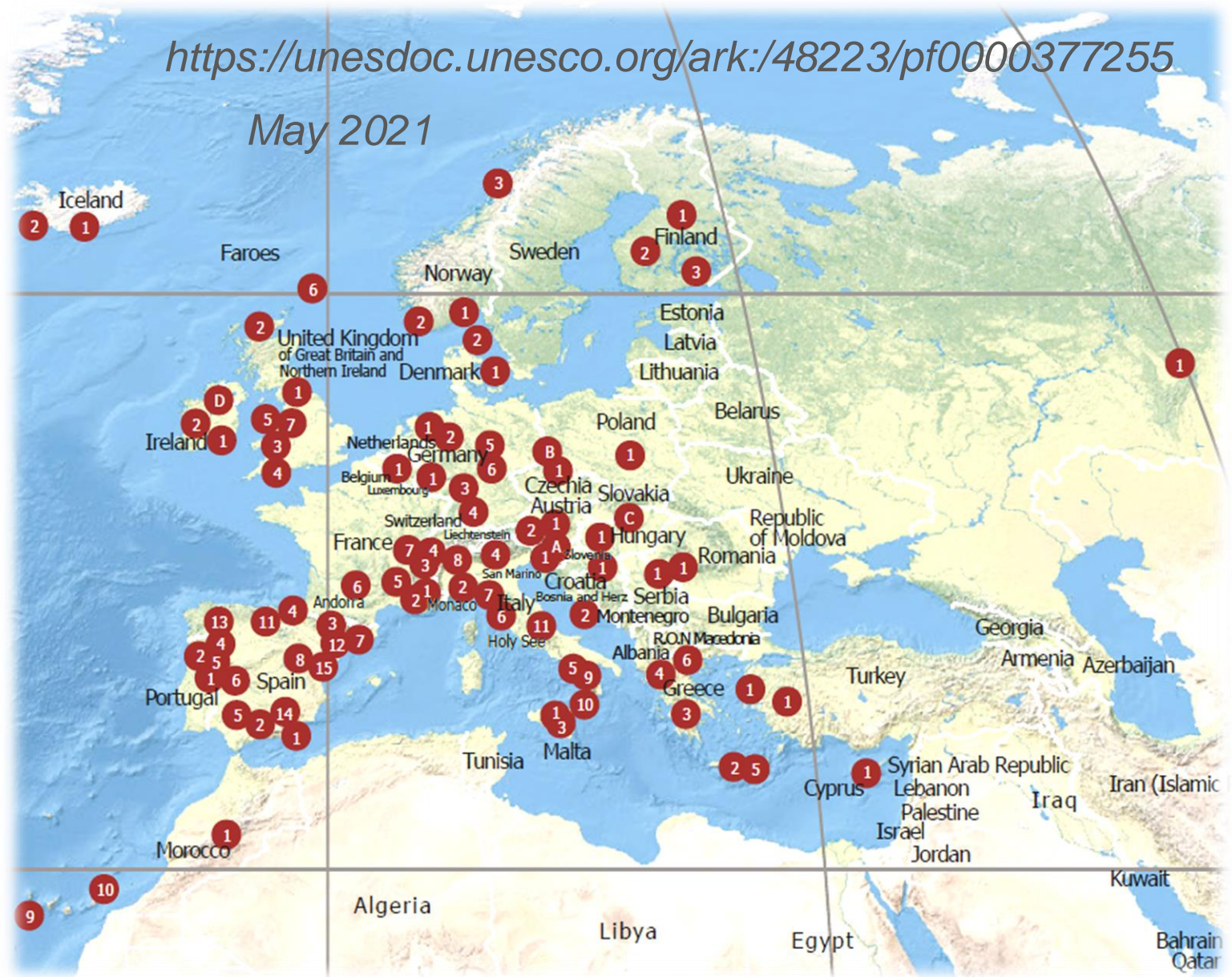


# Geoparks and Geosites



<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377255>

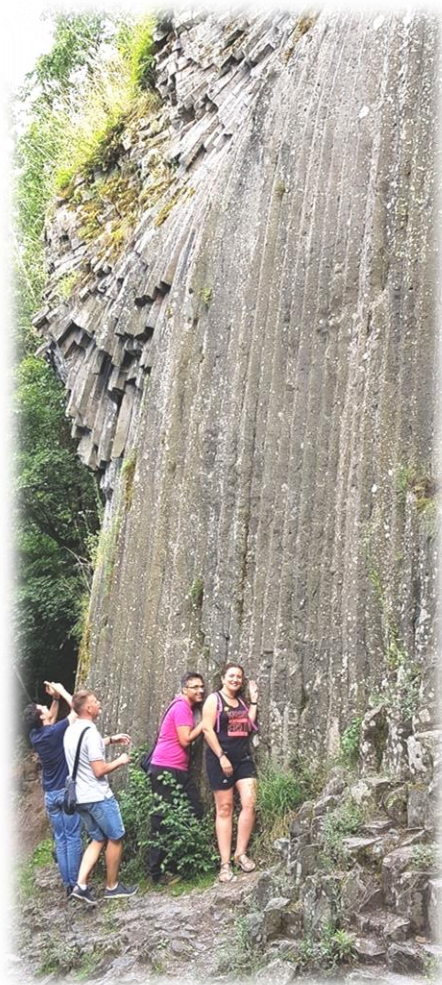
May 2021







## The 4 fundamental features of a UNESCO Global Geopark



### 1. Geological heritage of international value:

In order to become a UGGp, the area must have geological heritage of international value. This is assessed by scientific professionals, as part of the “UNESCO Global Geopark Evaluation Team”. Based on the international peer-reviewed, published research conducted on the geological sites within the area, the scientific professionals make a globally comparative assessment to determine whether the geosites constitute international value.

### 2. Management:

UNESCO Global Geoparks are managed by a body having legal existence recognized under national legislation. This management body should be appropriately equipped to address the entire area and should include all relevant local and regional actors and authorities. A UGGp requires a management plan, agreed upon by all the partners, that provides for the social and economic needs of the local populations, protects the landscape in which they live and conserves their cultural identity. This plan must be comprehensive, incorporating the governance, development, communication, protection, infrastructure, finances, and partnerships of the UGGp.





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# Geoparks and Geosites



## 3. Visibility

UNESCO Global Geoparks promote sustainable local economic development mainly through geotourism. In order to stimulate the geotourism in the area, it is crucial that a UGGp has visibility. Visitors as well as local people need to be able to find relevant information on the UGGp. As such, UNESCO Global Geoparks need to provide information via a dedicated website, leaflets, and detailed map of the area that connects the area's geological and other sites. A UGGp should also have a corporate identity.





# Geoparks and Geosites



## Intentional Letter for Twin Geoparks

### 姊妹公园意向书

Lushan UGGp, China and Novohrad-Nógrád UGGp, Hungary and Slovakia are willing to be sister geoparks in order to have better cooperation in the future to develop the geopark and to protect the geological remains.

中国庐山世界地质公园和匈牙利、斯洛伐克的拉瓦卡-诺格拉德世界地质公园，为了更好地在建设地质公园和保护地质遗迹开展合作，一致同意结为姊妹地质公园。

The cooperation will include the following aspects:

合作包含以下方面：

1. Exchanging information and sharing best practice related to the experience on conserving the geological remains  
交流分享双方地质遗迹保护经验
2. Exchanging of the management related experience  
交流地质公园管理相关经验
3. Exchanging of experience on promoting geo-science, cultural aspect and tourism of the geopark  
交流地质科普、促进文化与旅游发展经验
4. Collaboration of publicity for the sister geopark  
开展姊妹公园宣传合作

## 4. Networking:

A UNESCO Global Geopark is not only about cooperation with the local people living in the UGGp area, but also about cooperating with other UNESCO Global Geoparks through the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), and regional networks for UNESCO Global Geoparks, in order to learn from each other and, as a network, improve the quality of the UGGp label.

Working together with international partners is the main reason for UNESCO Global Geoparks to be a member of an international network such as the GGN.

Membership of the GGN is obligatory for UNESCO Global Geoparks. By working together across borders, UNESCO Global Geoparks contribute to increasing understanding among different communities and as such help peace-building processes.







# Geoparks and Geosites



Active networking with the other UNESCO Global Geoparks and the active participation in networking at the global, regional, national and local level is a key responsibility of a UGGp.

A UNESCO Global Geopark should actively participate in the following activities:

1. The General Assembly of the GGN
  - Annual General Assembly for Accounts (by digital communication)
  - Ordinary General Assembly (parallel to the International Geoparks Conference)
2. The Coordination Committee Meetings of the Regional Geopark Networks
3. The International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks (every 2 years)
4. The Regional Geopark Conferences or Symposia (every 2 years)
5. The National Geoparks Forum or Committee
6. Digital information meetings (Digital Fora, Seminars etc.)
7. Capacity building activities (courses, exchange of staff, knowledge exchange activities)
8. Geopark thematic Working Groups
9. Common promotional activities





## **Expected annual administrative actions from a GGN member:**

1. Prepare the Geopark's Annual Report and submit it to the GGN

[http://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/?page\\_id=4851](http://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/?page_id=4851)

[http://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Novohrad\\_Nograd\\_UGGp\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://globalgeoparksnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Novohrad_Nograd_UGGp_Annual_Report_2020.pdf)

2. Pay the annual GGN Membership Fee

3. Send the written opinion on the GGN Annual Accounts and Budget







# Geoparks and Geosites



The GGN is an Independent Body ruled by democratic Statutes and Rules of Operation, subject to the decision of the General Assembly of its members. The GGN is the partner of UNESCO collaborating with UGGp Secretariat for the UNESCO Global Geoparks. The GGN supports the program providing extra-budget funds and strong in-kind contribution to the UGGp. The GGN serves also as the financial mechanism for the collection of the Global Geoparks annual contribution to UNESCO.

The operation of the UGGp, have been beneficial to the UNESCO in so many aspects, like giving high visibility of UNESCO in local communities through national and regional medial publishing articles and news on UNESCO Global Geoparks and their activities.

During its development the GGN quality standard constantly increased, after the UNESCO recognition fundamental features were described the new applicant has to meet with.





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# Geoparks and Geosites



The GGN is constituted by all the existing UNESCO Geoparks on Earth, which are organized regionally inside expanding regional networks.



## **EGN / EUROPEAN GEOPARKS NETWORK**

was created by 4 members in 2000



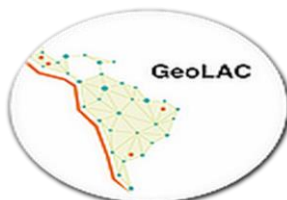
## **APGN / ASIA PACIFIC GEOPARKS NETWORK**

was created in 2017



## **AUGGN / AFRICAN UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARKS**

The decision to create the AUGN was announced in Rabat (Morocco) in November 2019. Today AUGN is constituted by 2 UNESCO Geoparks in 2 Nations.



## **GEO LAC/ Latin American and Caribbean UNESCO Global Geoparks**

was created in 2017







## The founders of the EGN:

At the end of the 90's, four European protected areas of natural beauty decided to work together in order to benefit from the Leader II program. The objective of this program was to support innovative local development projects in deprived rural areas. In this way, the Vulkaneifel Natural Park in Germany, the Maestrazgo – Aliaga Geologic Park in Spain, the Haute-Provence Geological Reserve in France and the Petrified Forest of Lesbos in Greece came to establish a system of transnational cooperation based around geotourism.

In 2000, these 4 partners became the founders of the European Geopark Network (EGN), and received the support of UNESCO in 2001.

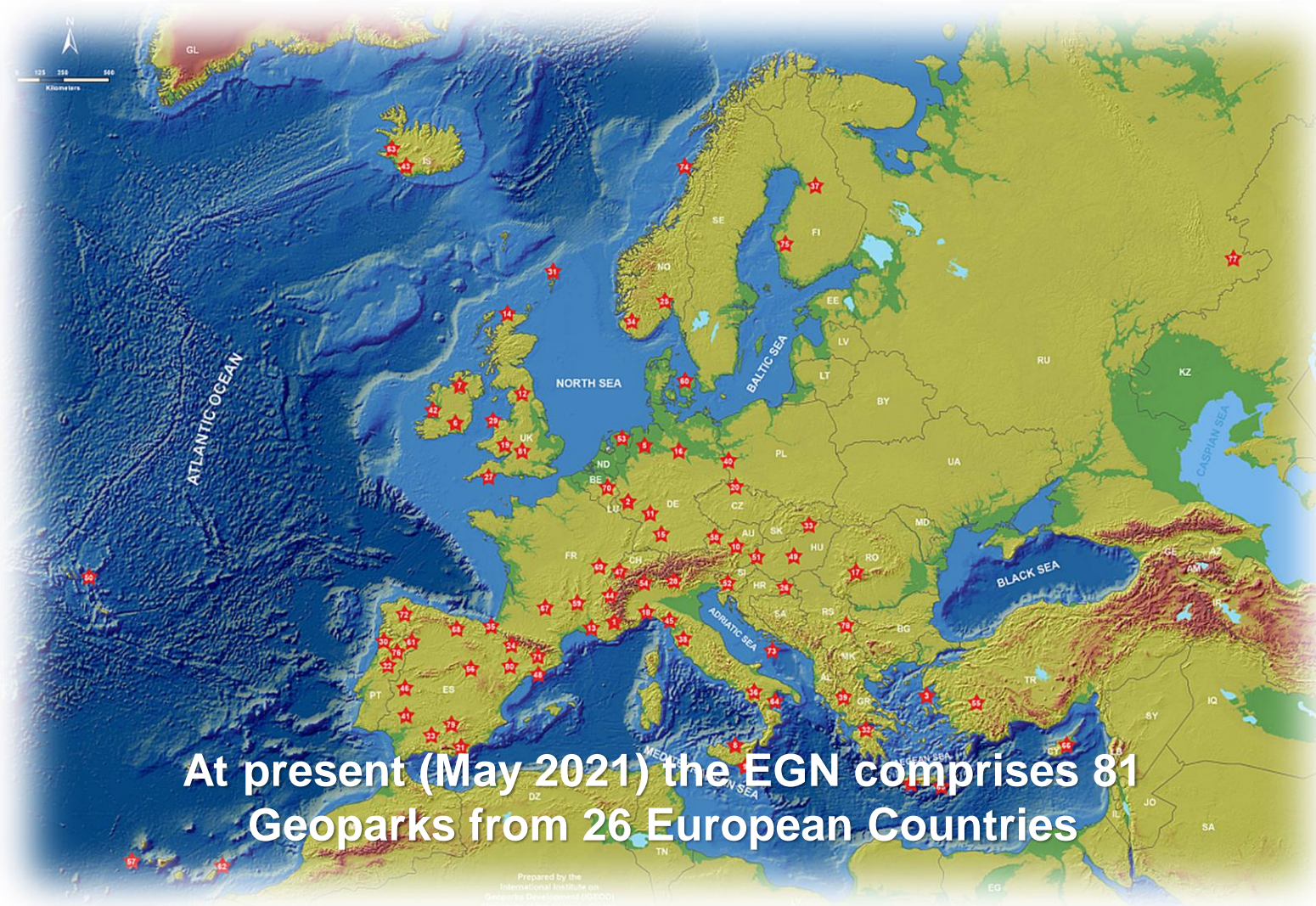
Membership has increased over time, but this is not a one way progress. Since it is limited to a period of 4 years, a revalidation process takes place, a former member might lose its membership status, such events have happened, failed geoparks got excluded from the EGN.





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# Geoparks and Geosites



**At present (May 2021) the EGN comprises 81  
Geoparks from 26 European Countries**



At the beginning of 2020, when celebrating its 20th anniversary, the EGN as a regional affiliate of the GGN had 75 members on their list, representing 26 countries, including 4 transnational UGGPs amongst them.







# Geoparks and Geosites



## The European Geoparks Network

The EGN is the regional network in Europe of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), it includes all the GGN members located in Europe.

The Statutes of the Global Geoparks Network is the basic document of the EGN with the EGN Rules of Operation. The internal Rules of the GGN, and the Code of Ethics define and complete these Statutes.

The use of the EGN name, acronym and logo is restricted to functions authorized by, and for the benefit of the EGN and its members.

The EGN coordination cellule is the official contact office for the EGN, its location can be modified by a decision of the EGN Coordination Committee. At present the Coordination Cellule of the EGN is in the Haute Provence UNESCO Global Geopark, France.





# Geoparks and Geosites



The Coordination Committee is the only decision making committee of the EGN, regarding regional issues. The CC meets regularly, at least twice a year, each time hosted in a different Geopark, to discuss the Network's progress and to coordinate joint programmes and activities between members.

The CC comprises the 2 official nominated representatives of each Geopark, GGN Individual members from Europe plus the representatives of UNESCO, IUGS and IUCN.



The Advisory Committee is made up of specialists in sustainable development and the enhancement and promotion of geological heritage. These specialists include representatives of the zones that originally initiated the EGN plus elected members and representatives of international structures working in the area of enhancement of geological heritage (UNESCO, IUGS, IUCN). The Advisory Committee provides advice on all issues concerning strategy, external relations and the nomination and integration of new zones within the network. The AC has no decision making ability.







# Geoparks and Geosites



The real strength of the EGN is shown by the year-long activities, productive networking of its thematic working groups (GGN - EGN National Fora, GGN-EGN Funding, Volcanic, Fossils, Mining, Intangible Heritage, Educational, Geohazard, Sustainable Development, Tourism and Communication).



The financial burden of networking as a member of the GGN in Europe:  
Beside the costs of the geopark's 2 delegates' obligatory attendance of the annual meetings and the membership fee (1500 € in 2021) and covering the 2 re-evaluators' costs in every 4 years, the EGN member has also to cover an annual promotional fee (500 € in 2021) for the publication and distribution costs of the EGN magazine, the operation of the EGN website and other EGN promotional activities.





# Geoparks and Geosites



## Good environmental practices in Geotourism

The UNESCO Global Geoparks develop 'best practice' models and quality requirement for the Geoparks, so that they can integrate the conservation of geoheritage into their sustainable regional economic development strategy. Geoparks are being established in order to get closer to real economical development of local communities in a sustainable way, generally by enhancing sustainable geotourism and supporting other economical as well as cultural activities.

The European Geoparks Week (EGN Week), taking place at late May early June each year, is a European – wide festival of Geoparks aimed at raising public awareness of geoconservation and promotion of the geoheritage as well as events aimed at informing the widest audience about geotouristic and educational activities in the geoparks.

Volcano Day in Europe – EGN Week – 1st of June, 2019







# Geoparks and Geosites



## Best practices reward of the GGN

In 2016, after the UNESCO recognition the GGN decided to establish the Best Practices Award, which aims to promote, enhance and encourage the development of innovative initiatives inside the Global Geoparks of UNESCO. The award recognises pioneering practices and initiatives that contribute to a more effective and dynamic network, set fantastic exemplars for others to follow and emulate, and create greater public recognition of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.

## Geopark products, GEOFood and other initiatives

Geoproducts are innovative, marketable local products in the service of the soft geotourism, which are deeply connected to the territory, sustainably contribute to the local development in partnership with its geopark, and raise the awareness towards the geological heritage protection of the area. Branded geoproduct offers must be quality services, like activities (guiding, biking, summer schools etc), market objects ( fossil cookies, souvenirs, etc) and infrastructure, they have to comply with the key requirements of the geopark. The producer's partner role of the geopark is to assure the quality standard of the geoproduct and the sustainable conditions in which the marketing, producing and selling process takes place.





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# Geoparks and Geosites



UNESCO Global Geoparks and  
Sustainable Development Goals 2030



SDG	Content	Relevant Geopark Project(s) Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark	Photo for illustration
	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Through its partners the Geopark employs previously unemployed local people for maintenance of the infrastructure and natural resources. The Geopark advocates environment friendly tourism and regional development</li> </ul>	
	End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark promotes local agricultural produce and sells them, beside organizes local markets at gateways and visitor centers of the Geopark</li> </ul>	
	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark protects natural resources and interprets those assets in a healthy environment, partly through guided nature tours for all ages</li> </ul>	
	Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark and its partners take part in adult training and manages guided tours for all ages</li> </ul>	
	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark and its partners have women in the leadership, and among the local staff women have important roles within the management structure</li> </ul>	
	Ensure access to water and sanitation for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geopark partners bottle mineral water and sell it in Geopark visitor centers, besides free access to drinking water is available at those places, springs are protected, sewage system is installed everywhere</li> </ul>	

	Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Renewable thermal and solar energy are used at Geopark buildings and infrastructure, there is a new initiative to use electric cars and establish electric filling stations at visitor centers</li> </ul>	
	Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark promotes local craft and produce, and sells them in gift shops of the visitor centers. The Geopark is the regional leading force for geotourism, contributing to the well-being of the local population</li> </ul>	
	Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geopark buildings are environment friendly and tend to provide opportunities for high-tech innovations for the interpretation of geological heritage</li> </ul>	
	Reduce inequality within and among countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark through its partners employs women and gipsy people for the same salary as earned by men of white population in both countries of the crossborder geopark</li> </ul>	
	Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Nograd county seat, Salgótarján, as the main stakeholder of the Geopark takes part in the Modern Cities Program with the focus on Geopark details. Through special programs the Geopark involves local people to know and partake in the preservation of Geopark heritage</li> </ul>	
	Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark promotes bio products and educate people to lessen environmental impact, how to make the ecological footprint smaller</li> </ul>	
	Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark is active in raising public awareness towards environmental issues, organizes actions against pollution</li> </ul>	
	Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No present marine environment within the geopark</li> </ul>	
	Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geopark partners are the nature conservation agencies in both Slovakia and Hungary as well, the Geopark promotes their activities concerning protection of habitats and biodiversity</li> </ul>	
	Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark is a transborder Geopark uniting once separated communities and landscape again with the motto: "ancient world without borders"</li> </ul>	
	Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Geopark has common projects with Slovak and Hungarian partners and contributes to the work of the Global Geoparks Network, like in the case of this very topic</li> </ul>	

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Transforming our world, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for people, the planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. It has 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets in it .

The operation of the UGGps partly through good environmental practices and their consequences, have been beneficial to the UN even before the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was declared.







# Geoparks and Geosites



The Geotur guide should be able to do concerning his/her own Geopark:

Characterise the geological heritage and identify its geosites of international importance.

Recognize and enlist such geosites and with a holistic approach describe them.

Identify and characterise the main geotourism destinations.

Know about the leading management body, identify the main stakeholders and recognise those who are responsible for the most important on the spot, geosite management.

Thematically link some geosites to corresponding geosites of other geoparks and give ideas on multi-days long routes as geoproducts.

Investigate how the Geopark fulfils now the demands of the 4 fundamental features of a UNESCO Global Geopark. Invent a new or recognise an existing best geopark practice and describe them.

Identify some existing and potential geoproducts.

Identify some geopark actions taken in harmony with the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and enlist some good environmental practices as examples.





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# Geoparks and Geosites



Links to visit and watch beside UNESCO, GGN and EGN websites:

Tangible and intangible cultural heritage in UNESCO Geoparks - course by Guy Martini

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2PbhIHT6rk>

Oxford University Museum of Natural History – Promoting geodiversity online workshop

<https://www.geodiversityday.org/outcomes>

