



Annex 3: Letters of Support from the Portugal UNESCO
Commission, Azores Government Authorities
and Relevant National and International Scientists





GEOAÇORES - Azores Geopark Association
Centro de Empresas da Horta,
Rua do Pastelero s/n - Angústias,
9900-069 HORTA - Açores
info@azoresgeopark.com

**Cellule de coordination du réseau des European Geoparks
Réserve Géologique de haute Provence**
B.P 156
04005 DIGNE LES BAINS- Cedex
FRANCE

The Board of the Azores Geopark Association, on behalf of all his associated institutions, has the pleasure of officially request the admission of the Azores territory to the European Geopark Network, and therefore, its recognition as European Geopark.

The founding members of this Association, the Azores Autonomous Region, through the Environment and Sea Regional Secretariat, and the four Local Action Groups of the Azores (ADELIAÇOR - Association for the Local Development of the Azores islands, ARDE - Regional Association for Development, GRATER - Association of Regional Development and ASDEPR - Association for the Rural Development and Promotion), and all his partners, are fully committed to the principles underlined in the Charter of the European Geoparks, and are committed to implement an effective cooperation in accordance with the Azores Geopark statutes and regulations and the memoranda of collaboration established among them.

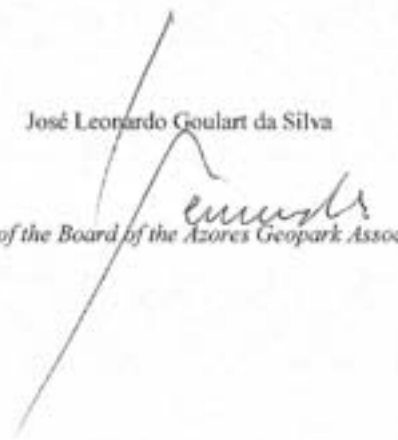
The international relevance of the geological heritage of the territory, its scientific, scenic and educational value and, simultaneously, the existence of a rich biodiversity and a remarkable cultural heritage, are the foundations for the implementation in the territory of sustainable development policies, strongly supported in environmental protection strategies, in general, and, in geoconservation, in particular. In addition, the brand geopark reinforces the outstanding geodiversity and geological heritage of the Azores, placing it at the service of the Azorean community sustained development, based on the geotourism and the nature tourism, and the promotion of an economic growth of the territory hold on its environmental values.

With the motto "9 islands – 1 Geopark", this application presents itself as pioneering, as it will be the first truly archipelagic geoparks's territory: all the 9 islands of the archipelago are part of the Geopark, are populated and have infrastructures and services to ensure the development of activities of the Geopark.

We believe that the cooperation and networking within the European and Global Geoparks will allow the exchange of experience and knowledge, promoting the implementation of new dynamics and processes that contribute to an ongoing improvement of the management of the Azores Geopark.

Horta, 31 October 2011

José Leonardo Goulart da Silva


President of the Board of the Azores Geopark Association



REGIÃO AUTÓNOMA DOS AÇORES
SECRETARIA REGIONAL DO AMBIENTE E DO MAR

Letter of Commitment

The international relevance of the geological heritage of the territory, its scientific, scenic and educational value and, simultaneously, the existence of a rich biodiversity and a remarkable cultural heritage, are the foundations for the implementation in the territory of sustainable development policies, strongly supported in environmental protection strategies, in general, and, in geoconservation, in particular.

For that, the Azores Government considered the creation and implementation of the Azores Geopark as a structuring project for the Azores Autonomous Region and included this aspiration in its programme for the period 2008-2012.

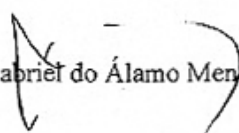
The Environment and Sea Regional Secretariat, as the main associated, commits to ensure the financing of the Azores Geopark activities, and make all the efforts to guarantee the success of this project.

The integration of the Azores Geopark in the European Geoparks Network will strengthen the links between geology, volcanic landscapes, biodiversity and cultural values of the Azores archipelago, including the secular and harmonious relationship between Nature and the Azorean Man. This holistic and integrative view will develop synergies and serve as an additional incentive for all the participants in the project.

Horta, 31 October 2011

The Environment and Sea Regional Secretary

José Gabriel do Álamo Meneses





REGIÃO AUTÓNOMA DOS AÇORES

O Presidente do Governo

Ponta Delgada, 7 de Novembro de 2011

Paulo José Leonardo

Acuso e agradeço o vosso ofício sobre o processo de candidatura da GEOPARQUE Açores à Rede Europeia e Global da Geoparques sob a égide da Unesco.

A relevância internacional do património geológico do território, o seu valor científico, cénico e educacional e, simultaneamente, a existência de uma rica biodiversidade e um assinalável património cultural, constituem os fundamentos para a implementação no território de políticas de desenvolvimento sustentável, fortemente suportadas em estratégias de protecção ambiental, em geral, e de geoconservação, em particular.

Neste sentido, o Governo Regional dos Açores considerou a criação e implementação do Geoparque Açores como um projecto estruturante para a Região e incluiu este desiderato no seu programa para o período 2008-2012, pelo que considero que a integração do Geoparque Açores na Rede Europeia de Geoparques permitirá a troca de experiências e de conhecimentos, promovendo a implementação de novas dinâmicas e processos que contribuam para a melhoria contínua da gestão do Geoparque Açores.

Consciente deste facto, venho desta forma apoiar a candidatura do Geoparque Açores à Rede Europeia de Geoparques.

*Com os melhores cumprimentos
do Paulo José Leonardo*

Ao Senhor
Presidente da Direcção da GEOAÇORES
Associação Geoparque Açores Edifício Adeliador
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n - Angústias

9900-069 HORTA



ENTRADA N.º _____
27, 10, 2011

PRESIDÊNCIA DO GOVERNO REGIONAL DOS AÇORES
DIRECÇÃO REGIONAL DA CULTURA

À

Geo Açores - Associação Geoparque Açores
Edifício ADELIAÇOR | Rua do Pateleiro s/n
9900-069 Horta

Sua referência

Sua comunicação de

Nossa Referência
SAI-
DRAC/2011/5722

Processo

Data
19-10-2011

Assunto: Candidatura às Redes Europeia e Global de Geoparques

Na sequência da instrução por parte da *Associação Geoparque Açores*, entidade sem fins lucrativos criada no arquipélago em 2010, de um processo de candidatura do *Geoparque Açores* à Rede Europeia de Geoparques, criada no ano 2000 e apoiada pela Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, Ciência e Cultura desde 2001, bem como à Rede Global de Geoparques, criada três anos depois desde logo com o apoio da UNESCO, a Direcção Regional da Cultura manifesta por este meio o seu apoio à iniciativa, que considera ser de relevante interesse para o arquipélago e a Região Autónoma dos Açores.

Com os melhores cumprimentos,

O Director Regional da Cultura



Jorge Augusto Paulus Bruno

RB



REGIÃO AUTÓNOMA DOS AÇORES
SECRETARIA REGIONAL DA ECONOMIA
GABINETE DO SECRETÁRIO REGIONAL

ENTRADA N.º

31, 10, 2011

Exmo. Senhor
Presidente da Direcção da
Geo Açores – Associação Geoparque Açores
Edifício Adeliaçor
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n – Angústias
9900-069 HORTA

Sua referência
0062/FG 05-01/09

Sua comunicação
2011.10.14

Nossa referência
SAI/SRE/2011/ 1115

Ponta Delgada
2011.10.21

**ASSUNTO: SOLICITAÇÃO DE CARTA DE APOIO À CANDIDATURA DO GEOPARQUE
AÇORES À REDE EUROPEIA E GLOBAL DE GEOPARQUES**

Escrevo-lhe, por incumbência de Sua Exa. o Secretário Regional da Economia a acusar a recepção e a agradecer o envio da vossa carta com a referência 0062/FG 05-01/09, datada de 14 de Outubro, na qual V. Exa. informa sobre o processo de candidatura da Geoparque Açores à Rede Europeia e Global de Geoparques sob a égide da UNESCO e cuja formalização decorrerá este mês.

O Geoparque Açores constitui-se, de facto, como um projecto transversal que permite destacar e, sobretudo valorizar a geodiversidade e o património geológico da Região, com particular relevância para o vulcanismo, onde as manifestações secundárias têm vindo a assumir um comportamento de atractividade científica, mas também turística do Arquipélago.

O Geoparque Açores caracteriza-se por estabelecer o equilíbrio entre a protecção e a promoção do património geológico, com o intuito de assegurar a sustentabilidade dos Açores do ponto de vista ambiental, socioeconómico e cultural.

No âmbito da sustentabilidade económica que este projecto procura promover, é de assinalar a vertente de desenvolvimento económico dos Açores assente no segmento do turismo de natureza.

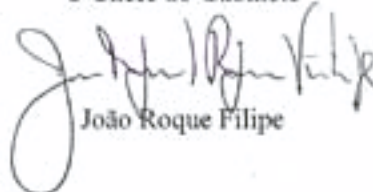


REGIÃO AUTÓNOMA DOS AÇORES
SECRETARIA REGIONAL DA ECONOMIA
GABINETE DO SECRETÁRIO REGIONAL

É, pois, com satisfação que nos congratulamos com esta candidatura da Geoparque Açores à Rede Europeia e Global de Geoparques pelo importante contributo que presta para o desenvolvimento sustentável da Região, uma vez que esta iniciativa permite aliar o conhecimento e conservação ambiental com o bem-estar das populações favorecendo, na globalidade, a melhoria da qualidade de vida dos Açorianos.

Com os melhores cumprimentos,

O Chefe do Gabinete



João Roque Filipe

Dist: SGC120/2011/4372

Exmo Senhor
Presidente da Direcção da
Geo Açores-Associação Geoparque
Açores
Edifício ADELIAÇOR,
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n, Angústias
9900-069 Horta

V/Ref.:

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675/2011

10/11/2011

ASSUNTO: Carta de apoio à Candidatura do Geoparque Açores à Rede Europeia e Global de Geoparques

Na sequência do v/Ofício nº. 0064/FG05_01/09, vimos por este meio endereçar a V. Exa. uma carta de apoio à candidatura mencionada em epígrafe

A Associação de Municípios da Região Autónoma dos Açores reconhece ao Geoparque Açores peculiares características naturais plasmadas na beleza ambiental que se verifica, em continuidade, por todo o território da Região Autónoma dos Açores.

A criação do Geoparque Açores reveste-se de importância acrescida não só pela qualidade de vida propiciada às populações locais, mas também pelo potencial de exploração de actividades turísticas, baseadas em princípios de sustentabilidade.

A conservação do património geológico e da geodiversidade dos Açores transforma-se numa prioridade, não só para a Região e para o País, mas também reveste-se de crucial importância para a Europa, no sentido em que se reconhece um valor incalculável ao património natural dos Açores e cujas

especificidades serão, indubitavelmente, parte integrante da riqueza natural da Europa.

A Associação Geoparque Açores tem vindo a primar pela potenciação, protecção e valorização do Património Geológico dos Açores, de tal modo que a 22 de Abril de 2011, foi atribuído à AMRAA, por via deste trabalho o prémio GEOCONSERVAÇÃO 2011, do grupo Português da ProGEO - Associação Europeia para a Conservação do Património Geológico.

Por via de todos os argumentos acima apresentados, a Associação de Municípios da Região Autónoma dos Açores apoia de forma evidente a presente candidatura do Geoparque Açores à rede Europeia e Global de Geoparques.

Sem outro assunto de momento, despeço-me de Sua Excelência, apresentando os protestos da nossa mais elevada consideração.

Com os melhores cumprimentos,



O Administrador Delegado
Nuno Filipe Medeiros Martins

27, 10, 2011



Mr. José Leonardo Goulart da Silva
President of Geo Açores
Association Geopark Azores
Edifício ADELIACOR
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n
Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
AZORES

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		RDP06.05SCMAB/10	2011/5481	20-10-2011

Subject: Aspiring Geopark Azores - Support of the Portuguese Commission for UNESCO

The Portuguese Commission for UNESCO wishes to hereby endorse the nomination of the Aspiring Geopark Azores, submitted by Geo Açores - Association Geopark Azores, to the European and Global Network of Geoparks supported by UNESCO.

Yours sincerely,



Fernando Andresen Guimarães
President

STATEMENT

The Portuguese Group of ProGEO (The European Association for the Conservation of the Geological Heritage) has been supporting all initiatives concerning the development of geoparks in Portugal. The Azores Geopark Project is the latest initiative in Portugal that is now applying to the European Geoparks Network.

During the last two years an enthusiastic team with the strong institutional support of the Azorean Regional Government is developing the project. All the nine islands of the Azores Archipelago have a rich geological heritage of international scientific relevance. The biodiversity and cultural values of these islands are also astonishing and are properly integrated in the geopark project.

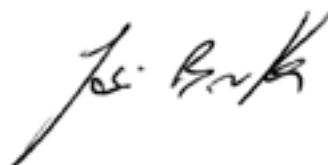
Being already worldwide recognized for its “green tourism”, the Azores Archipelago has also a great potential to be an amazing geotourism destination. The top-class volcanic landscape can attract both geoscientists and general public, which constitutes a major advantage for the development of the Azores Geopark.

In 2011, the Association of the Municipalities of Azores won the national contest for the Geoconservation Award. ProGEO-Portugal organizes this annual contest since 2004, in order to award the work done by municipalities on the promotion of local geoconservation.

Therefore, we recommend that the Azores Geopark Project should be accepted as the third Portuguese Geopark integrated in the European Geoparks Network.

Braga, 27th September 2011

ProGEO-Portugal



José Bernardo R. Brilha

Exmo. Senhor
José Leonardo Goulart da Silva
Presidente da Direção de
Geoparques – Assoc. Geoparques Açores
Edifício Adeliador, R. do Pasteleiro
9900-069 HORTA

V.ª Ref.ª

Nª ref. 2011/SAI/21466
2011/10/28

Assunto: Geoparque Açores

Exmo. Senhor, *Presidente*:

O Plano Estratégico Nacional do Turismo definiu o Turismo de Natureza como um dos 10 produtos em que, prioritariamente, deverá assentar a estratégia de desenvolvimento do Turismo nacional. O Turismo de Natureza reveste-se de particular importância para a estruturação e desenvolvimento da oferta turística dos Açores, tendo presente as características naturais únicas do Arquipélago que permitem consolidar uma oferta distintiva.

De acordo com estas orientações, o Projeto Geoparque Açores reúne condições para dinamizar de uma forma sustentável e efetivamente distintiva, um património geológico rico e diverso nas suas manifestações enquanto recurso natural com grande capacidade de projeção e afirmação turística do destino Açores.

Tendo como expoente máximo, a morfologia vulcânica e as manifestações secundárias de vulcanismo observáveis nas nove ilhas do arquipélago dos Açores, o Geoparque Açores projetará a história viva da formação dos territórios, a geodiversidade do território e zonas marinhas envolventes e o valor cénico de algumas das mais belas paisagens naturais.

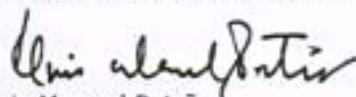


Todo este património encerra um indiscutível valor científico que merece ser conservado, aprofundado o seu estudo, mas também, partilhado através da promoção da interpretação integrada do território, dos valores naturais endémicos, da biodiversidade e das paisagens de beleza únicas, reforçando as condições de atratividade dos Açores e dinamizando as atividades de Turismo de Natureza de excelência.

Neste enquadramento, é com reconhecido mérito e interesse que louvamos a iniciativa da Geo Açores – Associação Geoparques Açores em promover a candidatura do Geoparque Açores à Rede Europeia e Global de Parques (EGN/Unesco).

Com os meus melhores cumprimentos, 

O Presidente do Conselho Directivo



Luis Manuel Patrão



FCTUC DEPARTAMENTO DE CIÊNCIAS DA TERRA

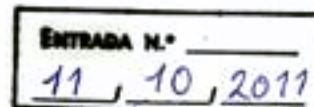
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS E TECNOLOGIA

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Exmo. Sr.
Presidente da Associação GEOAÇORES
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n – Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
Azores – Portugal

Dear Sir,

Through our colleague João Carlos Nunes, professor of the Azores University, we learned of the plans to purpose the Associação GEOAÇORES to become a partner of the European Geoparks Network.

We write you to express our strong support for this initiative because of the scientific importance of these oceanic islands, located in a particular geological setting, highly relevant for the understanding of the History of the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, due to its outstanding scenic content, the territory display an important volcanotourism potential and facilities, and local authorities have been developing, since a long time ago, natural heritage policies reflecting strong commitment with the principles established for the European Geoparks Network.

As Coordinator of the Planet Earth Committee – Portugal, I was delighted to hear from my colleague João Carlos Nunes about this plan, thus promoting, through the creation of the "Azores Geopark", the awareness of the structure, evolution, beauty and diversity of Earth System, as pointed in Paris Declaration, approved under the aim of the International Year of Planet Earth Launch Event in Paris (2008).

I must therefore congratulate you on this important initiative and look forward to when "Azores Geopark" is the third Portuguese member of the European Geoparks Network.

Coimbra, October, the 3rd, 2011

Professor Maria Helena Paiva Henriques
University of Coimbra
Coordinator of Planet Earth Committee - Portugal

Dear Sirs

Lisboa, 27 October, 2011

The Azores archipelago, with its 9 volcanic islands, is an unique worldwide example because of its mid-Atlantic location, distributed in 3 tectonic plates.

Since its formation in Miocene times, the Azores geology was marked by an intense volcanism and tectonics linked with the Atlantic opening. This is well represented today by its exceptional and numerous outcrops and beautiful volcanic geomorphology. We must also refer several marine and continental sedimentary formations with paleontological and stratigraphical importance.

Therefore, the Azores archipelago is an exceptional region with remarkable scientific, pedagogic and geotouristic importance, with all its spectacular examples of volcans, lava fields, fumaroles, thermal waters and volcano-sedimentary series.

Beyond this rich geological heritage, we must also consider the beautiful landscape and the associated biodiversity, both still well preserved.

In conclusion, all this exceptional natural heritage deserves an appropriate conservation and divulgation. In my opinion the best solution to reach this purpose is the creation of a Geopark, in similarity to what has been done in other Portuguese regions and in several countries.

I am happy to support this important initiative .

Yours faithfully



Miguel Magalhães Ramalho (Prof. Dr.)
Professor of Stratigraphy, Univ. Lisbon (Retired)
Director of the Geological Museum (L.N.E.G.)



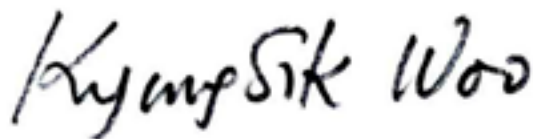
Exmo. Sr.
Presidente da Associação GEOAÇORES
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n – Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
Azores – Portugal

Dear Sir,

I was very happy to hear from my colleague, Joao Carlos Nunes that the Azores Geopark plan to join the European Geoparks Network. From my experience, I have no doubt that the Azores Geopark will be one of the most attractive geopark in the world.

As an advisory committee member of Asia/Pacific Geopark Network, I strongly believe that the Azores Geopark will be one of the best geopark in the future.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'KyungSik Woo' in a cursive, flowing script.

Kyung Sik Woo
Professor of Geology, Kangwon National University, Republic of Korea



Genova, Italy, 27 September 2011

Exmo. Sr.
Presidente da Associação GEOAÇORES
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n – Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
Azores – Portugal

Subject: Official candidature support of the Azores Geopark as European and Global UNESCO Geopark

The Geotourism Association, (established in Via G. Di Vittorio 22A, 16018 Mignanego (GE), Italy) supports the implementation of the initiative aimed at recognizing the Azores Islands (Portugal) area as a UNESCO GEOPARK since that territory has great relevant values either as a volcanic oceanic islands with peculiar global setting, either as a territory with relevant geosites, geological heritage policies, unique scenic volcanic landscapes and improving geotourism facilities.

Our Association, base in Italy, since the year 2005, adopted the Azores Island as one of the most important geotourist destinations for our summer travels. The choice is due to the perfect mix of scenic values, conservation condition, geological and scientific evidences.

Moreover, the geological and nature values together with sustainable development strategies already widely adopted by the Autonomous Region of Azores - make the islands a privileged laboratory for the implementation of promotion policies and socio-economic context for active measures to protect and enhance the environment.

For the above reasons, therefore, the Geotourism Association hopes recognition of the Azores Geopark as a European and Global UNESCO Geopark and considers this initiative as very important to promote the dissemination, training and development of scientific research in various disciplines of Earth Sciences.

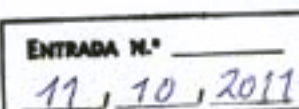
Geotourism Association

prof. Matteo Garofano



Associazione Geoturismo
www.geoturismo.it – www.geotourism.it – info@geoturismo.it
Tel. +39.338.76.83.188 - Fax 010.420.69.192
Via G. Di Vittorio 22A, 16018 Mignanego (GE) - Italy

29 September 2011



Exmo. Sr.
Presidente da Associação GEOAÇORES
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n - Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
Azores - Portugal

Dear Sir,

Azores Geopark Application

It is a pleasure to write in strong support of your application for Geopark status for the Azorian archipelago. I have been fortunate enough to visit the Azores on two occasions, taking in five of the nine islands - Sao Miguel, Terceira, Faial, Pico and Sao George. I have also visited many other geoparks around the world including:

Arouca Geopark, Portugal;
Naturtejo Geopark, Portugal;
North Pennines Geopark, England;
Lochaber Geopark, Scotland;
Gea Norvegica Geopark, Norway;
Hateg Dinosaur Geopark, Romania;
Langkawi Geopark, Malaysia;
Hong Kong Geopark, China.

I have also attended two European Geopark Annual Conferences, one Global Geopark Conference and two International Geological Congress meetings that have included sessions on geoparks. As a result of all this experience, I have no doubt at all that the Azores deserve international recognition for their outstanding volcanic geology and geomorphology. Their location in mid-Atlantic at the intersection of three tectonic plates and the wonderful examples of volcanoes, lava flows, calderas, craters, fajas, lava tubes and many other features could make the islands a significant geotourist destination and opportunity for geoscience education. The Capelinhos volcano and Visitor Centre alone are remarkable as are the views of Pico from throughout the archipelago. But outstanding geology alone is insufficient to warrant geopark status. What makes the Azores rather special are the clear links between geodiversity, biodiversity and the cultural life of the islands. I know, also, that the local communities of the Azores are fully behind the application to join the EGN and GGN.

In conclusion, this application has my very strong support, and I wish you every success with it.

Yours sincerely,

Murray Gray
Emeritus Reader,
Queen Mary, University of London,
United Kingdom

Visiting Professor,
University of Minho,
Portugal

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen
Incorporated by Royal Charter as
Queen Mary & Westfield College,
University of London

Exmo.Sr.
Presidente da Associação
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n - Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
Azores - Portugal

ENTRADA N.º

20, 10, 2011

10 October 2011

Dear Sir

For several years I have followed the establishment of the European Geoparks Network with a special interest in volcanic and geothermal environments. With great interest I heard from Professor J C Nunes about the preparations to apply for the *Açores Geoparque* to becoming a partner in the European Geoparks Network.

Through the research for my academic text books (*Volcano & Geothermal Tourism: Sustainable Geo-Resources for Leisure and Recreation, Earthscan; Health & Wellness Tourism: Spas and Hot springs, Channel View*), which focus on the geological heritage of volcanic environments and the use of geothermal resources for health, wellness and recreation, it has become obvious that these environments deserve special protection.

The *Açores Geoparque* has all the prerequisites in the form of environmental and cultural values for several important tourism sectors based on the principles of sustainability. Nature-based tourism is a perfect means to promote the geodiversity and geological heritage of the volcanic phenomena of the Azores. These geosites of the Azores in combination with the infrastructure already in place provides great potential for Geotourism, Ecotourism and Adventure Tourism.

Based on the sustainable use of geothermal resources in the form of natural hot and mineral springs the health wellness and leisure tourism sector will be able to further promote the protection of these natural phenomena as well as providing an economic benefit to the host communities.

Together with the Geoparks status, the geotouristic value of the volcanic landscapes and the existing infrastructure (including Visitor Centres, Museums and Interpretive Centres) the *Açores Geoparque* has the significant potential to be an outstanding destination for international visitors.

It is my pleasure to strongly support the application of the *Açores Geoparque* to become a member of the European Geoparks Network.

Yours sincerely



Patricia Erfurt-Cooper
PhD Candidate (submitted)

Excmo. Sr Presidente da
Associação GEOAÇORES
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n - Angústias
9900-069 HORTA
Azores - Portugal

La Laguna, October 5th, 2011

Dear Sir,

I was delighted to know through our colleague Prof. João Carlos Nunes, from the University dos Açores, that the association Geoçores is applying to become partner of the European Geoparks Network. I write to express my strong support to this initiative given the high importance of the Azores as one of the most relevant volcanic regions in Europe and one of the few still active in this area, with a high variety of volcanic structures such as abundant calderas, lava tubes and volcanic pits, geothermal sites and abundant fumaroles, hot springs and other active volcanic manifestations; and also given to the abundant and very active scientific and amateur local teams working on the study, divulgation and conservation of their geological heritage.

The Azorean people and authorities are aware of the peculiar global setting of their oceanic volcanic islands with such relevant geosites, and are very concerned with natural heritage policies necessary to preserve unique scenic landscapes that can be important to promote an already incipient volcanotourism. For all this effort and many other reasons, the Azores deserve to get the important support of being partner of the EGN.

Hoping a prompt declaration of the Geoparque Açores as member of the EGN, I send you my best wishes and cordial greetings.

Yours faithfully

Pedro Oromí
Professor of Zoology
Res. Group Subterranean Biology





United States Department of the Interior

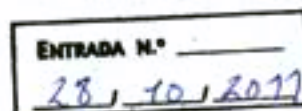
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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19 October 2011

Exmo. Sr.
Presidente da Associação GEOAÇORES
Centro de Empresas da Horta
Rua do Pasteleiro s/n - Angústias
9900-069 HORTA, Faial
Azores - Portugal

Caro Senhor:

I understand from Dr. João Carlos Nunes (Universidade dos Açores) that, after several years of hard work and coordination, final arrangements are being made to present the application to create a Azores Geopark as part of the European Geoparks Network. I am a volcanologist with more than four decades of experience with the U.S. Geological Survey in studies of eruptions and their associated hazards. In recent years, I have worked together with Dr. Nunes and the Universidade dos Açores on volcanologic topics of mutual interest, including the co-editing of a *Special Issue* of the *Journal of Volcanology and Geothermal Research* titled the "Volcanic Geology of the Azores Islands" published in 2006. During our collaborations, I have had the good fortune to visit many of the islands and have gained first-hand knowledge of many of the well-preserved volcanic landforms and other volcanic and geothermal features of the Azores.

The Azores archipelago occupies a unique geodynamic setting: located in what geoscientists term the "Azores Triple Junction," where the North American, Eurasian, and African-Nubia tectonic plates meet. Dynamic interactions between these plates, together with the involvement of an inferred mantle thermal plume ("hot spot"), over geologic time have produced countless earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that have produced the volcanic islands as they exist today. Truly, the Azores constitute a volcanic wonder land with its dramatic scenery—fresh lava flows, cinder cones, lava tubes and caves, volcanic lakes, rugged seashore, black sand beaches, and other attractions attributed to the islands' young volcanic history. An added bonus is the ecosystem with highly bio-diverse flora and fauna that has evolved on the volcanic landscape.

Although the Azores already are known for their scientific importance and volcanic beauty, the creation of an Azores Geopark within the European Geoparks Network would enhance the public awareness of this unique region with its outstanding geoscientific heritage and immense geotourism potential. Moreover, the concept, policies, and implementation of the Azores Geopark would contribute to the improved identification and protection of the key outcrops and scientific features, as well to geotourism expansion in an ecologically sustainable manner, to assure enjoyment by future generations. Thus, I strongly support the efforts being made through your offices to establish the Azores Geopark. I wish you every success in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Robert I. Tilling
Senior Research Geologist – Volcanologist
Scientist Emeritus, Volcano Science Center