

European Geoparks Network

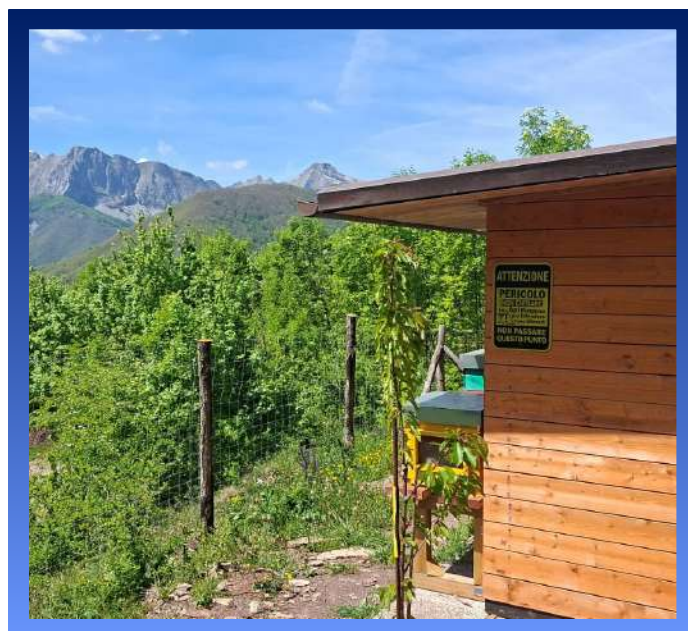
January - May 2026

«UNESCO Global Geoparks in Europe: Model territories for sustainability, resilience and future perspectives»

As model territories for the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development worldwide, the European UNESCO Global Geoparks contribute substantially to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Their community participation projects, their educational approaches, their protection activities for geodiversity and biodiversity, and altogether their endless creativity in bringing people and topics together in a holistic approach creates benefit for their territories. This includes conservation measures, scientific collaboration and regional sustainable development as well as nature-based sustainable tourism and regional to international networking. The overall aim is to protect, preserve and develop the UNESCO Global Geoparks together with their inhabitants and stakeholders as resilient and sustainable places today and in the future. In this newsletter 45 European UNESCO Global Geoparks give a glimpse of their activities towards this vision.

Apuan Alps UNESCO Global Geopark (Italy): connecting biodiversity and human wellbeing

As part of the Interreg Italy-France Maritime CamBio Via Pro project for the proactive protection of biodiversity, an educational trail exploring the world of honeybees has been created at the GeoPark Farm in Bosa di Careggine. The trail culminates in a wellness apiary, a specialised wooden hut designed to connect people with beehives in complete safety. The wellness apiary offers a therapeutic sensory experience based on two elements: inhaling the scents of the beehives (bee-aroma) and listening to the honeybees buzzing (bee-sound). Bee-aroma promotes relaxation and respiratory wellbeing, as well as an improvement in mood, thanks to the essential oils and other volatile substances released from the beehive. Bee-sound, due to the sound frequency emitted by the beating of the bees' wings (approximately 432 Hz), acts on the human central nervous system, inducing a state of deep relaxation, which helps reduce stress and insomnia and improve concentration and memory.





Azores UNESCO Global Geopark (Portugal): Bringing “Geodiversity and Geological Heritage” to the Senior Academy

A partnership between the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark and the Senior Academy of Santa Casa da Misericórdia in Angra do Heroísmo (Terceira Island) has led to the creation of a new course for the Academy in the school year 2025/26, titled “Geodiversity and Geoheritage.”

During the sessions, participants learn about different volcanic rocks and landforms, linking this knowledge with traditional stories and past uses. In this way, scientific understanding is enriched through local memory, creating a meaningful connection between geoheritage and cultural heritage.

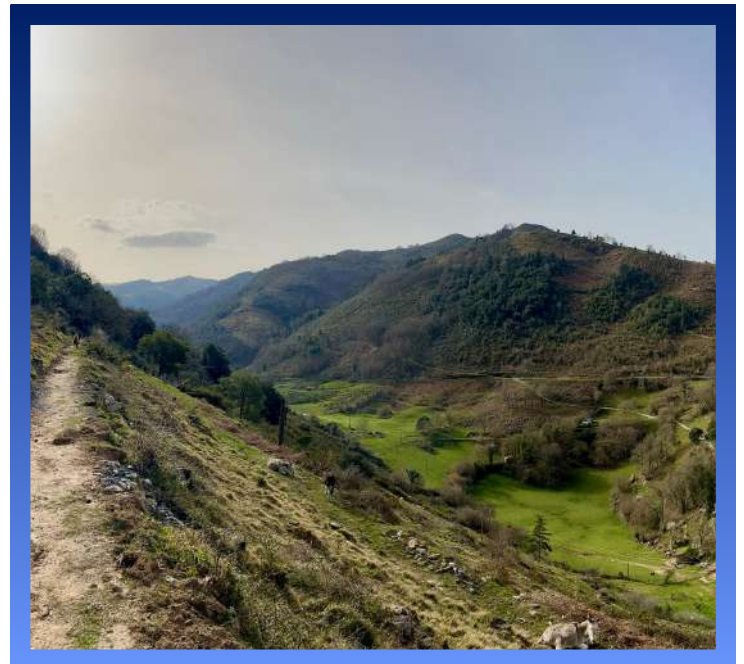
This initiative is not only valuable for the participants, but also for the Geopark team, who often end up learning just as much through the sharing of memories, experiences, and local knowledge. More than a formal class, it offers an opportunity to rediscover the islands, stimulating curiosity, memory and social engagement presenting the magnificent mosaic of geodiversity that characterises the Azores UNESCO Global Geopark.

Basque Coast UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): LASTUR GEO ROUTE - Unveiling the secrets of the hidden valley

Geoparkea has launched a new geo route that joins the previous Geo Route Network of the Basque Coast UNESCO Geopark, formed by seven routes that aim to showcase the natural and cultural heritage of the territory comprising the three municipalities of Deba, Mutriku and Zumaia.

This Geo Route, Lastur: the Valley of Water, includes eight sites of interest from Deba to Lastur through the water channel constructed in the early 20th century. This channel was designed to carry water and generate electricity with two hydroelectric power plants. Lastur Geo Route is a breathtaking and beautiful path that allows visitors to discover the karst structures of this hidden valley.

As on previous occasions, new material created to learn about and highlight the geological heritage of the Geopark is available in PDF format so that users can download it to their mobile devices and carry it along on their tours.





Sustainability, resilience, and future perspectives shape the development of the Bergstraße-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany)

The Geopark protects its unique geological heritage while promoting sustainable land use that preserves biodiversity and strengthens ecosystems. This creates a solid foundation for resilience in times of climate change. Economic resilience is supported through responsible tourism, regional products, and strong local value chains. By focusing on quality and authenticity, the Geopark ensures long-term benefits for communities without overusing natural resources. Education for sustainable development is a key driver: visitors and residents learn how landscapes evolve, how climate impacts them, and how sustainable choices can be made in everyday life. Looking ahead, the Geopark invests in biodiversity and climate adaptation, digital tools, and regional cooperation. These efforts open new opportunities while addressing environmental challenges. By linking local action with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Geopark demonstrates how a region can actively shape a sustainable and resilient future.

Reviving Dune Landscapes In Cabo de Gata- Níjar UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain)

Restoration actions are currently underway in the Cabo de Gata-Níjar UNESCO Global Geopark to recover two of its most emblematic and fragile geomorphological features: the Mónsul dune and the fossil dune of Los Escullos. These interventions aim to mitigate the impacts of intensive visitation and restore natural dynamics. The project includes the reorganisation of public access through the delimitation of authorised paths and the removal of informal trails that have contributed to erosion. Informative signage has been installed to raise awareness among visitors, while sand-trapping systems and revegetation with native species are helping to stabilise the dunes and promote their natural regeneration. In the fossil dune of Los Escullos, protective measures such as controlled access points and perimeter demarcation are being implemented to preserve its geological integrity. These actions reflect the Geopark's ongoing commitment to conservation, education and sustainable tourism management.





Calatrava Volcanoes Ciudad Real, UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): From Geological Heritage to Sustainable Transition through heritage interpretation

Calatrava Volcanoes. Ciudad Real, UNESCO Global Geopark has developed a model for territorial sustainability and heritage reactivation under a Sustainable Tourism Destination Plan supported by the National, regional and Ciudad Real Province County governments, funded by the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan from the European Union under NextGeneration-EU financial aid.

The project prioritises the adaptative reuse of existing infrastructures, transforming industrial and rural assets into heritage interpretation facilities. Altogether, nine locations have been converted into Geopark museums, visitor centres, or information points. Key actions include: the exhibition design School of Mining and Industrial Engineering in Almadén, an immersive musealisation of an old grain silo in Almagro, the restoration, as a museum, of the former coal mine in Puertollano. Additionally, the interventions encompass the restoration of the Clavería Palace in Aldea del Rey, the creation of an open-air tourism park at the Las Higuieruelas palaeontological site, and a visitor centre at Mortara Castle in Piedrabuena. This polycentric network strengthens local identity while fostering economic diversification and social cohesion. By integrating geodiversity, education and innovation, the geopark exemplifies how degraded or obsolete infrastructures can be reimagined as drivers of sustainable development, positioning the territory as a replicable European benchmark for future-oriented rural transition.

Catalunya Central UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): Geology starts here — introducing Earth sciences to children aged 3 to 6

Children naturally collect stones. They treasure them, carry them in their pockets, and wonder about them. This instinct is, in itself, a first act of geological inquiry — and it was the starting point for a new educational initiative at the Catalunya Central UNESCO Global Geopark.

In late 2025, the Geopark partnered with Lab 0_6 UManresa — an internationally recognised centre for early childhood science education — to develop a hands-on module specifically designed for children aged 3 to 6. In 2026, the module will be piloted in around ten schools across the Geopark territory, bringing geology directly into early years classrooms for the first time.

Rather than simplifying geology, the module trusts children's natural capacity for inquiry: observing, comparing, touching, and wondering. In doing so, it lays the foundation for a lifelong relationship with Earth heritage — one of the most powerful contributions a Geopark can make to a sustainable future.





Causses du Quercy UNESCO Global Geopark (France): Paléo'choc: the Geopark's chocolate bar

In 2025, the Geopark and the Lot Chamber of Trades and Crafts launched Paléo'Choc, a chocolate bar inspired by the Geopark's identity and made available to local artisan chocolatiers.

Drawing inspiration from the geological past of the Causses du Quercy, this original creation takes you on a journey through four major geological eras, each represented by an iconic animal: the cave bear, the Chalicotherium, the Entelodon and the sauropod. A fun, delicious and educational way to explore local palaeontology, taking a bite out of the history of the Causses du Quercy.

Conceived, designed and produced locally, the Paléo'Choc is a fine example of collaboration between local artisan chocolatiers and those working to promote the region's heritage. It reflects both the geological identity of the Causses du Quercy and the talent and creativity of the artisans of the Lot.

Natural Hazards, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change in the Chablais UNESCO Global Geopark (France):

The Chablais UNESCO Global Geopark works with over fifty official guides for public events, school visits and more. As key partners in the Chablais UGGp, the Geopark provides regular continuous professional development opportunities, notably training about new or evolving topics.

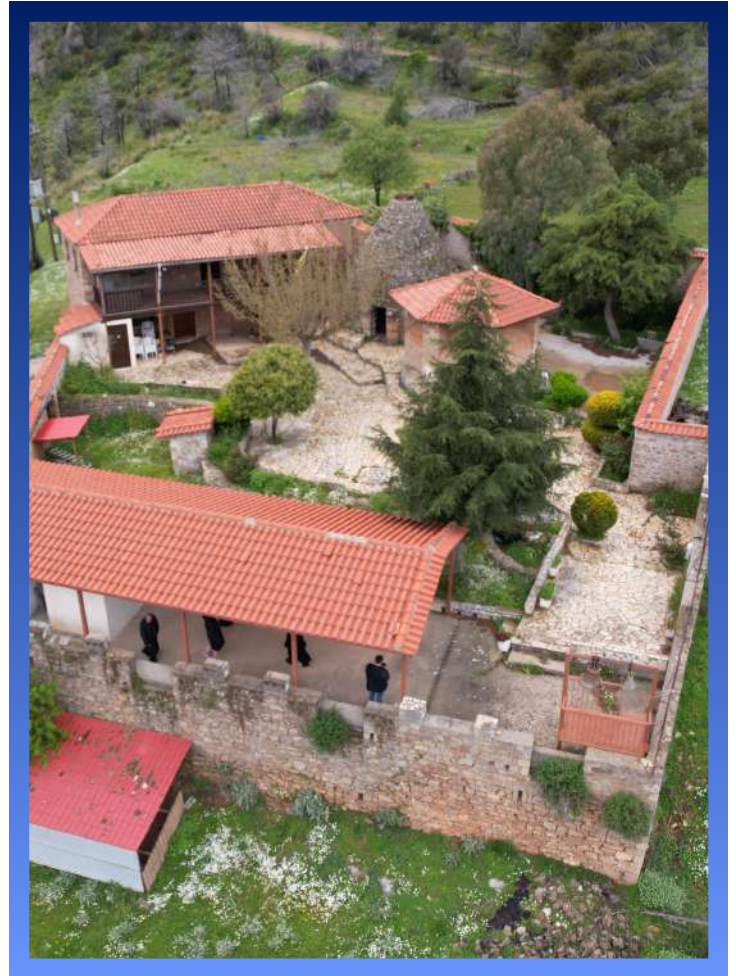
The latest themed training event drew together more than 20 guides to learn about natural hazards and risk reduction. A special focus was placed on how these hazards will evolve in a changing climate. Invited speakers included the Chablais UGGp, the local government agency CCPEVA, the Alpine Pole for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Mountain Restoration Service (RTM) of the National Forestry Office and Geolithe, a private company supplying applied geophysical solutions for natural hazard management.

With formal presentations, question and answer sessions, as well as discovery of different outreach tools, the day concluded with field visits focused on mountain risks, precautions and points of vigilance.



Chelmos Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark (Greece): "Sacred landscapes as tools for environmental awareness and community engagement in UNESCO Global Geoparks: the case of Gaia sanctuary and the Holy Monastery of Agia Triada Vouron"

On the occasion of International Mother Earth Day 2026, an interdisciplinary educational event entitled “From Gaia to Christian Tradition: Memories and Transformations of the Sacred Landscape” was organised. The initiative highlighted the strong links between geoheritage, cultural memory and environmental awareness through the interpretation of sacred landscapes within the Geopark. Students, educators and citizens explored the Holy Monastery of Agia Triada Vouron and the ancient Gaia sanctuary situated within the church yard, all are located in the geosite of international value “Vouraikos delta fan”. Shaped by intense tectonic uplift and seismic activity, this dramatic landscape inspired the establishment of sacred sites from antiquity to modern times, reflecting humanity’s enduring connection between powerful natural forces and the divine. Through contributions from geoscientists, archaeologists and representatives of the local Church, the event demonstrated how UNESCO Global Geoparks can promote sustainability and resilience by connecting Earth history with cultural identity, education and community engagement.



Copper Coast UNESCO Global Geopark (Ireland): Co-creating a regional biodiversity plan

Planning for a more biodiverse future. The Copper Coast Geopark has been working as an expert stakeholder with its local authority (Waterford City and County Council) to provide geological and geoheritage input into a biodiversity management plan for the region in which the Geopark is located. This plan will inform dozens of actions designed to improve the region's biodiversity through 2030 and improve the resilience of the area against threats to biodiversity.

Alongside a knowledge of how geology supports biology, the Geopark’s team were able to bring real experience of community engagement including trail development in a Special Protection Area to the working group. The output from this activity will be the first plan of its kind ever to be developed in the region. This will influence biodiversity for years to come.



Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark (Ireland/Northern Ireland): Peatland conservation and monitoring

As part of this cross border Shared Island funded project, a network of piezometers has been installed across Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark. Piezometers are essential tools for measuring groundwater movement and the stability of the water table which are important indicators of peatland health. They are positioned to monitor different peatland conditions impacted by climate change, erosion or past land use. The network includes a small number of innovative systems powered by plant root and soil microbe technology. These Plant-e piezometers are developed in the Netherlands and could prove to be vital to monitoring in remote difficult to access areas. By understanding the water table and how it functions we can develop and implement peatland restoration techniques which reduces flooding, locks in long stored carbon, support unique vegetation and wildlife, and enable damaged peatlands to recover from pressures such as drainage, fire, and historic turf cutting. Cuilcagh Lakelands UNESCO Global Geopark is committed to ongoing peatland conservation and raising awareness of the importance of climate action.

Djerdap UNESCO Global Geopark (Serbia): Promoting local heritage through international cooperation

As part of the Interreg Danube GeoTour Plus project, representatives of Djerdap UNESCO Global Geopark and the women's association Mission Kreativa from Kladovo, in cooperation with Hațeg UNESCO Global Geopark in Romania, participated in the Red Onion Festival in Baraști.

The event presented practice in cross-border cooperation and community engagement in promoting cultural heritage traditions and local identity of participating regions as an example of sustainable community-based tourism and resilience in rural areas. At joint exhibition stands, participants presented traditional crafts, handmade products, local food, games and traditional costumes. Mission Kreativa from Djerdap Geopark demonstrated embroidery weaving and knitting techniques and exchanged experiences with the women's association Santa Maria Orlea from Hațeg Geopark. The initiative strengthened the preservation of cultural identity, supported the development of sustainable tourism, increased the visibility of local products and improved international cooperation within UNESCO Global Geopark Network.





El Hierro UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): A Geopark that exemplifies the balance between sustainability and public engagement

Since its designation in 2014, El Hierro Geopark has continued to promote the island's geology in the most sustainable way possible by prioritising the local community.

A good example of this, was the volcanic photography competition organised for the residents of El Hierro, to install the winning photos at road junctions in the port and the airport. Prior to this competition, a guided walk was organised on February 2026 with the aim of enabling participants to learn to view the island's volcanic geomorphology from a more scientific perspective. The two winners were invited to visit the Geopark's Geological Interpretation Centre and Volcanological Interpretation Centre, accompanied by the institution's geologist.

These kinds of activities aim to raise public awareness of the island's geological heritage, with a focus on the local community, so that residents feel involved in their Geopark.

Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark (Portugal): Guarda Municipal Lithotheque

The Guarda Municipal Lithotheque, a public space dedicated to geological heritage interpretation, was created following a proposal by Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark as part of the Geodiversity Day celebrations. Officially inaugurated during the 826th anniversary of Guarda municipality, the initiative presents the exhibition The Rocks that Tell Our Story, offering visitors an accessible introduction to the geodiversity of the territory.

The project involved the refurbishment of a former newspaper kiosk that had stood vacant for years, recovering an element of urban memory and transforming it into a space for scientific outreach and community engagement. Today, the Lithotheque serves as an educational resource promoting geoliteracy and public awareness of geological heritage. Open day and night, the space is illuminated after dark, highlighting iron geosite illustrations created by sculptor Rui Miragaia.



Granada UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): First Landscape Charter

The Landscape Charter of Granada UNESCO Global Geopark is one of the first initiatives of its kind in Spain and the first Landscape Charter in Andalusia. It is an innovative, voluntary and participatory governance tool designed to build a shared vision for the territory's landscape.

Although UNESCO Global Geopark status represents international recognition of the exceptional geological, natural, cultural and scenic values of Granada Geopark, it does not in itself establish a specific conservation or landscape improvement regime. For this reason, the Charter plays a key role as a horizontal governance framework, based on the involvement of public administrations, socioeconomic stakeholders, associations and local communities.

In May 2026, the Geopark held a follow-up meeting to review its first year of implementation and formalise 24 new additions. The Charter now has 61 signatories committed to landscape conservation, management and enhancement.



Harz . Braunschweiger Land . Ostfalen UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): Geopark Hiking Challenge

In 2025 the Geopark successfully launched a Hiking Challenge under the motto „What’s your limit? Participants had to collect stamps across the Geopark in order to participate in a raffle where different prizes could be won. The prizes included tickets and vouchers from different Geopark partners such as museums, leisure facilities or visitor mines. All these establishments are primarily tourist destinations. Nevertheless, the hiking challenge was not exclusively for tourists, actually the number of participants from within the Geopark’s area was quite high. While hiking along signposted routes is a sustainable way of experiencing the Geopark, the prizes in the raffle aim for tourists to need to come back to the Geopark, while inhabitants of the area get a chance to visit places that they usually would not visit.

Hateg Country UNESCO Global Geopark (Romania): Nature Recovery as a Learning Experience for Communities and Visitors

The new Birdwatching Tower in the “Bretea Delta” is located along the Strei River in Hațeg Country UGGp, Municipality of Bretea Română. The initiative clearly shows how geoparks can support sustainable local development by restoring natural habitats, involving schools and communities in environmental action and creating long-term educational and ecotourism infrastructure.

Developed within the educational project “The Life Fairy and the Plastic Monster,” the tower transforms a former neglected river branch into a living outdoor classroom where visitors can observe water birds, restored habitats and the effects of ecological recovery. Recent monitoring identified several new waterbird species, including a pair of swans with eight cygnets, highlighting the rapid natural regeneration of the area.

The initiative combines nature conservation, environmental education and community involvement. Schools, local authorities and volunteers work together to protect the Strei River while creating new opportunities for geotourism, outdoor learning and public engagement. The tower demonstrates how small-scale local actions can generate long-term environmental and social impact.





ITB 2026 Overview: Summary of the GGN and UNESCO Global Geoparks participation at ITB Berlin 2026

The 60th-anniversary event hosted 97,000 attendees and 5,601 exhibitors, generating €47 billion in business. Focused on sustainability and AI, the event featured Angola as the host country under the theme "Leading Tourism into Balance."

Key Outcomes for the GGN: The Geoparks received strong political backing, solidifying their status as model regions for sustainable tourism and regional development. Feedback was highly positive, highlighting the effectiveness of lightweight promotional materials like QR-code flyers, the GGN map and the GGN Travel Guide. A press conference and a parliament visit contributed significantly to the importance of the GGN.

Future Improvements & ITB 2027: To strengthen the GGN brand, organisers identified a need for more member participation to share awareness-raising duties. Planning is already underway for ITB 2027, where the Maldives will be the host country under the slogan "Travel & Tourism in Motion."

Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark (Austria/Slovenia): RIDE THE EARTH – UNESCO Global Geoparks Bike Destinations

An initiative for collaborative cycling development in UNESCO Global Geoparks

Ride the Earth is a collaborative initiative connecting UNESCO Global Geoparks that already offer – or plan to develop – cycling experiences such as Mountain Biking, gravel road cycling and e-bike tourism.

The initiative aims to strengthen cooperation between geoparks through shared promotion, knowledge exchange and future international projects. Cycling is becoming one of the most sustainable ways to explore geoparks, especially with the rapid growth of e-bikes. It allows visitors to discover larger parts of a geopark while connecting landscapes, heritage and local communities.

Several geoparks have already expressed interest in the initiative. The next steps include collecting expressions of interest, online coordination meetings, development of shared communication materials, and preparation of future international project applications.

Geoparks interested in exchanging ideas or participating in future cooperation activities are welcome to get in contact.

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Dušan Štrucl – Dixi, Initiator of the Ride the Earth proposal, Partner of Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark, dixi@bikenomad.com www.bikenomad.com





Resisting coastal erosion in Katla UNESCO Global Geopark (Iceland)

Coastal erosion is a large problem in Katla Geopark and last winter there was an unusual four-month period with waves from the south-east. This led to an extreme erosional event at Reynisfjara Black Sand Beach, where the beach width and height decreased significantly. The landowners of Reynisfjara beach battled the erosion, often under extreme circumstances with several metre high waves crashing nearby. The erosion of the beach had unearthed several large boulder fields, which were then used to strengthen the beach ridge where most of the erosion occurred to try to prevent further damage to infrastructure on the backshore and erosion into a nearby mountain side. Their effort worked, significantly reducing erosion in the area. Erosion of this magnitude at Reynisfjara has not happened in the last 100 years, but with climate change, these events might become more frequent. That would result in drastic changes at Reynisfjara, and other coastline areas, within Katla Geopark.

Educational Animated Videos Bringing Geology to Life at Kefalonia-Ithaca UNESCO Global Geopark (Greece)

The Kefalonia-Ithaca UNESCO Global Geopark has developed a new educational digital tool consisting of ten short animated videos, each about three minutes long, designed for children and adults. The project was carried out in collaboration with the University of Patras and a specialised partner in educational animation.

Its main objective is to present key geosites and geological phenomena of the Geopark in a simple, engaging, and scientifically accurate way. Through these videos, viewers learn how caves form, understand sinkholes, explore the Monoliths, and discover Rudists, the characteristic fossils of the area. The series also introduces general geological topics, such as volcanoes, helping audiences better understand Earth's processes.

Combining science with storytelling and modern visuals, the videos make geology accessible and enjoyable. They will be used in schools, visitor centres, presentations, and online platforms, supporting the Geopark's educational mission and promoting geoheritage awareness.



Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): 'Teacher Pahoehoe' to the rescue!

The Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UGG launched its newest educational workbook, titled 'The Teacher Pahoehoe' to help students discover why their island is a unique place in the world. Through this didactic tool, children explore the island's formation and the secrets of the 1730-1736 and 1824 eruptions. Following the learning by doing approach, the notebook includes craft materials that transform geology into a creative and tangible experience. The goal is for new generations to understand and value their geological heritage, making scientific learning a fun, participatory adventure for everyone, proving that youth education is the cornerstone of fostering long-term resilience and a sustainable future.



Mining Trails Connect Europe's Communities and Heritage in Maestrazgo UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain)

The first European Mining Trails Day was celebrated on May 9, bringing together mining regions across Europe to highlight their shared industrial heritage, landscapes, and community identity. Organised by the Federation of Saint Barbara Mining Trails (MINES.B project), the initiative encouraged people to walk mining routes simultaneously in different countries, promoting sustainable tourism and awareness of Europe's mining legacy. Participating territories from Spain, Slovenia, Belgium, Portugal, Slovakia, France, and Italy joined the event. In Spain, the Comarca Andorra-Sierra de Arcos region selected the Corta Gargallo Mining Trail, located within the Maestrazgo Cultural Park UNESCO Global Geopark (honorary member of the Project), for the celebration. Guided walks explored topics such as geology, palaeontology (in partnership with Fundación Dinópolis), environmental restoration (Centro Minero Endesa and Osmojo), history, and local economy. Residents also learned about the Mining Trails Project while sharing a symbolic connection with other European citizens walking similar routes.

Massif des Bauges UNESCO Global Geopark (France): Explaining the water resource, a proposal for cooperation

The Bauges Massif and the French Geoparks wish to engage in a cooperative initiative to develop awareness-raising and educational tools about water resources. This resource, often poorly understood yet so essential for human communities and life in general, represents a real opportunity for Geoparks. An opportunity to position ourselves as places of excellence in the interpretation and communication of natural resources and the effects of climate change.

The Bauges Massif is developing this approach locally with all water stakeholders. The objective of this cooperation is to create effective educational tools to raise awareness and encourage action. Initially envisioned in our national language in order to be extended to French-speaking territories, this initiative could also be shared with other territories in English or other languages.

Any Geoparks already engaged in or interested in these objectives are invited to contact us. Together, we can build the foundations of this cooperation by combining our strengths.

Contact: Dr. Christophe Lansigu, c.lansigu@parcdesbauges.com.





Monts d'Ardèche UNESCO Global Geopark (France): A new exhibition in the Monts d'Ardèche Geopark Visitor Centre dedicated to the link between humans and animals

Beautiful Beasts: Up Close with the Wild. A source of food, beliefs and stories... animals have always fascinated humankind. And sometimes a bond is formed. It is this encounter between animals and artists through the ages that the exhibition “Beautiful Beasts”, presented since this spring in the Monts d'Ardèche Geopark Visitor Centre, explores. A dialogue between reproductions of prehistoric works, Guillaume Mazille's wildlife photographs and performances by the artist Abraham Poincheval. Separated by millennia but united by a shared curiosity, prehistoric and modern artists cast a sensitive eye upon the animal world: postures, the “animal gazes” and anatomical details reveal a profound understanding of living creatures. The exhibition aims to encourage us to change the way we view animals and to reconsider humanity as just one species among many! This exhibition is presented in partnership with the Aven d'Orgnac Grand Site de France, the Cité de la Préhistoire and the World Heritage Site la Grotte Chauvet.

More information: www.parc-monts-ardeche.fr/geoparc-unesco

Recré'Actions: co-creating climate-resilient schoolyards in Normandie-Maine UNESCO Global Geopark (France)

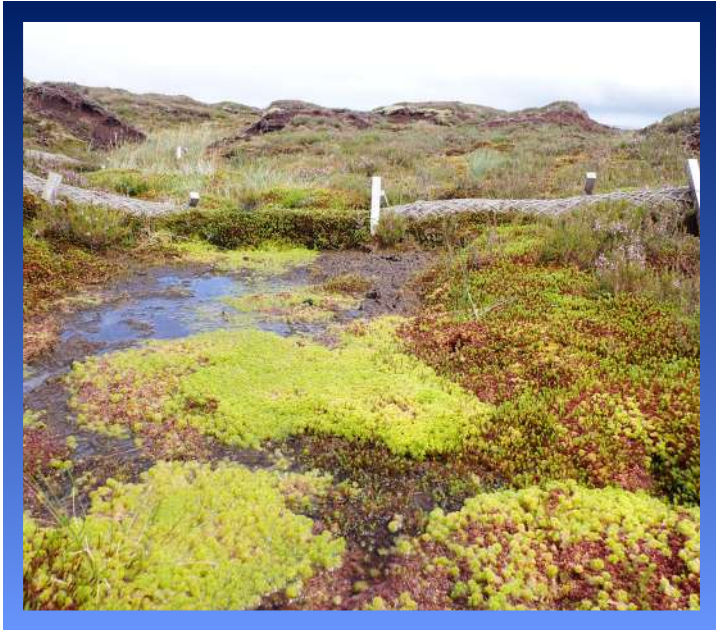
In the UNESCO Global Geoparks framework, the Normandie-Maine Geopark is advancing an inspiring initiative: Recré'Actions. Supported by regional and European funding, this programme reimagines school playgrounds as living laboratories for sustainability, resilience, and community engagement.

Traditionally dominated by concrete, schoolyards are being transformed through co-design processes involving pupils, teachers, local authorities, and families. Together, they envision greener, more inclusive spaces that foster wellbeing while addressing climate challenges. Key interventions include soil de-sealing, tree planting, biodiversity restoration and the creation of cooling microclimates.

Beyond physical transformation, Recré'Actions strengthens local cohesion and empowers younger generations to reconnect with nature. Each selected school benefits from expert guidance, participatory workshops and educational activities, ensuring solutions are both ambitious and grounded in local realities.

By turning everyday spaces into models of ecological transition, Normandie-Maine demonstrates how Geoparks can lead tangible, community-driven responses to today's environmental challenges.





20 years of peatland restoration in the North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark (United Kingdom)

This year, the North Pennines National Landscape and UNESCO Global Geopark's peatland programme celebrates 20 years. Restoring damaged peatlands is good for wildlife, good for water quality and management, and good for storing carbon. Globally peatlands cover only 3% of the Earth's surface but store twice as much carbon as all the world's forests combined. The Geopark contains 27% of England's blanket bog. Since 2006, over 50,000 hectares of degraded peat has been restored using techniques such as building dams, reprofiling slopes, spreading brash and seeds and re-planting to block drains and re-vegetate bare peat. The team has pioneered new techniques and taken a collaborative approach, working closely with landowners and managers and local contractors and bringing millions or pounds of investment into this nature-based solution.

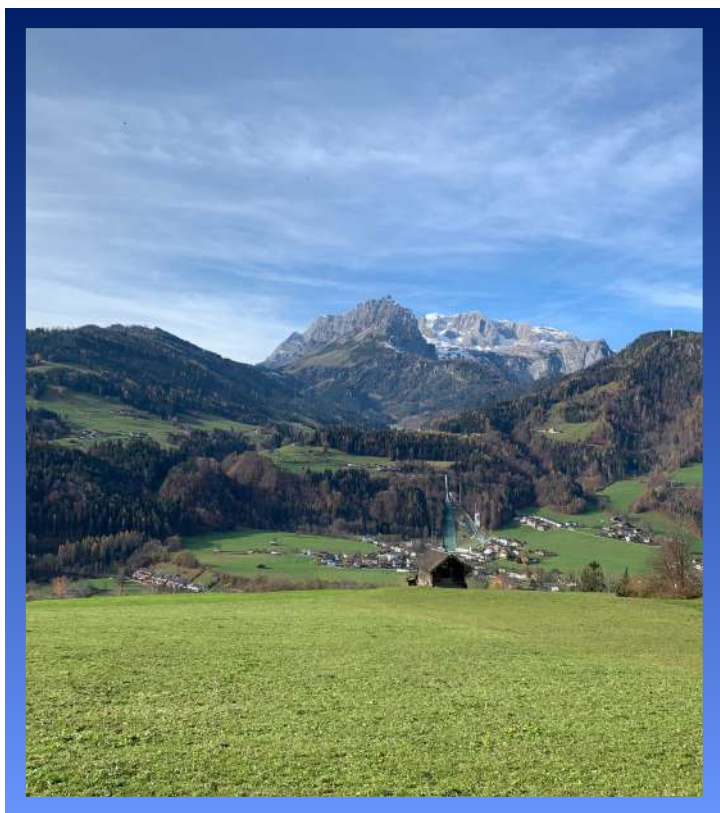
Oeste UNESCO Global Geopark (Portugal): The GeoEscola project as key initiative to shape future generations

Oeste Geopark's GeoEscola project of stands out as a key initiative in shaping future generations. The programme currently involves more than 1,200 students from 8 school clusters across the territory, promoting a direct connection between the school community and the region's geological, natural and cultural heritage.

Through educational activities, field trips, workshops and hands-on experiences within the territory, GeoEscola encourages participatory learning closely linked to local conditions. The project raises awareness among younger generations about sustainability, nature conservation and the value of local resources and traditions, while strengthening the sense of belonging and territorial identity.

More than simply transmitting knowledge, GeoEscola contributes to educating more aware, resilient and future-ready citizens, highlighting the role of UNESCO Global Geoparks as living territories of education, innovation and sustainable development.





Ore of the Alps UNESCO Global Geopark (Austria): Exhibition about positive effects of mass movements for biodiversity

The Earth System Science project of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, “movemont.at”, was completed in the first half of 2026. The project investigated various areas affected by a wide range of landslides within the three Austrian geoparks, examining their hazard potential, geomorphological activity and their positive aspects, which have rarely been described. One example of the latter is the creation of new habitats for plants and animals. Today, fossilised mass movements often form the basis for flat, easily habitable areas in the mountains, just as their deposits are frequently used as bulk raw materials. The Ore of the Alps UNESCO Geopark is dedicating an exhibition to this topic, which will be on display at the Geopark Visitor Centre in Bischofshofen as well as in the museums of the Geopark communities. The interdisciplinary project was carried out by the Universities of Salzburg and Graz in collaboration with the geoparks. The Department of Environment and Biodiversity at the University of Salzburg was responsible for the biodiversity studies in landslide areas. Further information can be found at movemont.at or at geopark-erzderalpen.at/projekte

Photo: Horst Ibetsberger

NECLIME Explores Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark UNESCO Global Geopark (Croatia)

The NECLIME international scientific network recently held its Annual Meeting in Zagreb, organised by the Croatian Geological Survey (HGI-CGS), the Croatian Geological Society (HGD), and the University of Zagreb. Focused on the evolution of Cenozoic climates and ecosystems, the event culminated in an excursion to the Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark.

Participants explored several significant Miocene fossil sites, witnessing firsthand how these geological archives serve as a foundation for understanding environmental resilience. The field trip sparked significant interest, with several researchers proposing new, detailed studies on Papuk’s unique palaeontological heritage. By bridging deep-time climatic data with modern conservation, this collaboration highlights Papuk UGGp as a model territory. It demonstrates how geological research informs our future perspectives on sustainability and the long-term evolution of continental ecosystems within the European Geoparks network.





Platåbergen's UNESCO Global Geopark (Sweden): "Gyllene Spiken", viewpoints and local tasting

The Governor of Västra Götaland, Sten Tolgfors, visits Platåbergen's UNESCO Global Geopark

The visit took place on September 5th at Mt Hunneberg. Here Charlotta Bang, from the Geopark's partner Bergagården Foundation, presented the geosite "Gyllene Spiken" and talked about the Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP) for the base of the Floian Stage, 477.7 million years ago, of the Ordovician Period. The visit continued to one of the mountain's viewpoints for a local tasting experience organised by Sven-Erik Larsson, project manager at Platåbergen's Geopark. Sven-Erik gave a presentation about what the different bedrock layers of a tablemountain look like and how he selected food with some connection to these bedrock layers.

Photografer Liselott Hallblad

Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark (Greece): Skiing at the highest summit of Crete?

Pierra Creta is a ski mountaineering race held bi-annually in Psiloritis UGGp, Crete, Greece. It was organised for the first time in March 2014 and, since then, it has become a point of reference between athletes internationally! Psiloritis UGGp has supported the event over the years, providing accommodation for the race's registration desk in the Visitors' Centre or introducing the area to the participants through the organisation of parallel events. This year, Pierra Creta was conducted between 5-7 March and received more than 200 participants from 16 different countries. Psiloritis UGGp, as an active and constant supporter of the organisation, conducted a guided tour for interested athletes in the Visitors' Centre and the village of Anogia (urban geomorphology, local culture) and produced the event's participant-bag, choosing the following motto as the take-home message: "Every drop counts! No snow. No water. No life."



Ries UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): UNESCO Global Geopark model for sustainability and resilience

Beginning on Earth Day with a formal ceremony, UGGp Ries celebrates 20 years as a National Geopark preserving the internationally significant Ries Crater. This National Geopark status marked a decisive milestone in the development of the Ries Geopark, laying the foundation for its later recognition as a UNESCO Global Geopark and the region's international visibility.

To celebrate the anniversary, the Geopark is offering a range of activities throughout the year to strengthen its ties with the local community in a sustainable way. Articles on key Geopark topics will be published at www.geopark-ries.de, and a lecture series is offered to all interested listeners. In addition, the social media campaign "My favorite place in the UNESCO Global Geopark Ries" invites residents and visitors to share their favorite places in the Geopark, with prizes to be won. The anniversary programme will culminate in the opening of a traveling geological exhibition this fall.

Photo: Marco Kleebauer



A living laboratory for sustainability and resilience in the Rocca di Cerere UNESCO Global Geopark (Italy)

Rocca di Cerere UNESCO Global Geopark actively contributes to the mission of the European Geoparks Network by promoting education, community engagement, and sustainable development rooted in its unique geological and cultural heritage.

During this period, the Geopark has strengthened its educational and outreach activities by involving schools, local communities, and social organisations in hands-on experiences focused on environmental awareness and territorial identity. A key example is the Earth Day celebration at the Pergusa Visitor Centre, where students and community members participated in tree planting activities and sensory workshops on aromatic plants, linking nature, wellbeing, and sustainability.

Through initiatives that combine science communication, experiential learning, and social inclusion, the Geopark continues to serve as a living laboratory for resilience and sustainability. These actions reinforce the role of UNESCO Global Geoparks as model territories where education, nature conservation, and community participation contribute to shaping a more sustainable future.

Sierras Subbéticas UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): New partners for high quality sustainable tourism

Sierras Subbéticas UNESCO Global Geopark continues to strengthen its commitment to sustainable tourism through the expansion of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST). Recently, the Geopark welcomed 11 new members, including five tourism enterprises and six Tourist Information Offices. This milestone reflects a collective effort following a structured training and adaptation process based on best environmental and quality practices, with no cost for participating entities. The initiative responds to a long-standing demand from the tourism sector, highlighted within the Sustainable Tourism Fora. With these new additions, Sierras Subbéticas becomes the third territory in Andalusia with the highest number of ECST-certified companies, reinforcing its leadership in sustainable tourism. The accredited businesses, including accommodation providers and tourism services, will now be integrated into Spain's Ecotourism Product Club, promoting a model that links conservation, local development and resilience for the future.





Sobrarbe-Pirineos UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage while enhancing its future viability within a rapidly changing socio-economic context

In 2024 and 2025, two major research projects were carried out in the Sobrarbe-Pirineos UNESCO Global Geopark, focusing on transhumance and traditional boxwood craftsmanship. Both initiatives were developed under a dual approach: safeguarding intangible cultural heritage while enhancing its future viability within a rapidly changing socio-economic context.

These studies document traditional knowledge, practices, and landscapes, while also identifying opportunities for innovation, transmission, and sustainable development. By linking heritage conservation with contemporary challenges, they reinforce the role of UNESCO Global Geoparks as living territories where culture and sustainability intersect.

Both publications will be released in print in June 2026, contributing to wider dissemination and supporting local communities in preserving and reactivating their cultural heritage.

Styrian Eisenwurzen UNESCO Global Geopark (Austria): Eisenwurzen Dark Sky Reserve – One of the Largest Dark Sky Places Worldwide

The Eisenwurzen Dark Sky Reserve is a community supported initiative located within one of Austria's largest contiguous protected landscapes. Coordinated by the Nature and UNESCO Global Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen, the project brings together six protected areas with some of the highest International Union for Conservation of Nature protection categories and 20 municipalities to reduce light pollution and protect the natural night sky and nocturnal biodiversity.

Covering 2,396 km², including a 975 km² core zone with strict lighting regulations, the area is among the largest dark sky regions of its kind. In March 2026, it was officially certified as a Dark Sky Reserve by DarkSky International, making it the fourth largest in Europe and one of the ten largest worldwide. The reserve preserves nocturnal habitats, supports biodiversity, and allows visitors to experience truly dark nights where the Milky Way remains visible to the naked eye.

Find out more at www.naturnacht.eisenwurzen.com.

Photo: Andreas Hollinger





Sunnhordland UNESCO Global Geopark (Norway): Sustainable Waterway Tourism in UNESCO Areas

This NORA funded project aims to transform tourist transport on waterways in UNESCO-designated areas by promoting zero-emission solutions. Partners are Sunnhordland UGGp (Norway), Vatnajökull National Park (Iceland) and The Faroese Environment Agency. Through the evaluation of innovative boating technologies and stronger cooperation between national parks, geoparks and boat operators, the initiative seeks to modernise transport systems while reducing environmental impact.

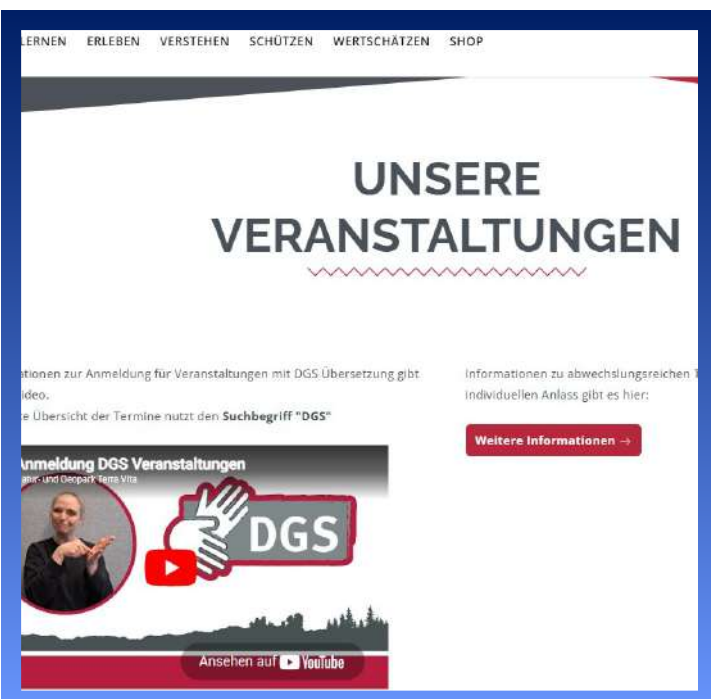
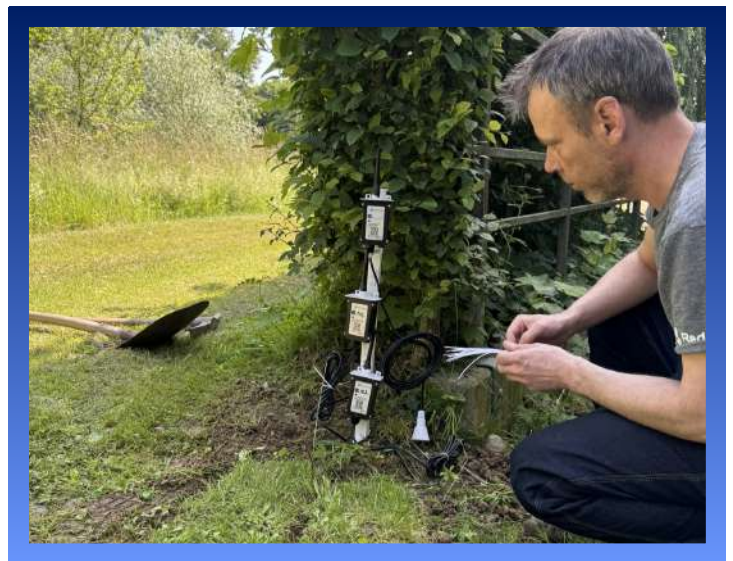
Key outcomes include a sustainable cooperation framework, a practical handbook for transitioning to zero-emission vessels, and a replicable model for greener tourism. The project supports local communities, the tourism sector, and the boatbuilding industry by creating new opportunities and strengthening competitiveness.

Aligned with the SDG's and the Nordic Council of Ministers' Vision 2030, the project contributes to climate action, sustainable cities, and responsible consumption. By fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing across the North Atlantic region, it aims to establish a thriving, environmentally responsible tourism model for the future. Photo: AI generated.

Swabian Alb UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): Students learn to collect, analyse, and interpret scientific data using soil sensors

In 2025, eight Geopark schools within the UNESCO Geopark Swabian Alb were equipped with two soil sensors. These measure soil temperature and moisture at depths of 10 cm and 40 cm respectively. The data is transmitted in real time to a digital platform and is also linked to weather information from the German Weather Service.

This enables students to identify correlations between weather conditions and the measured soil parameters. The soil sensors and the collected data sets can be used in a variety of ways: whether in Year 5 when studying 'working with data' or in Year 10 when analyzing technical systems – there are no limits to creativity. Photo: Theresa Mangold



TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): Digital modernisation - New website, calendar of events and online features

TERRA.vita's website has been modernised and migrated to a new platform to ensure better technical support and to improve its performance in light of the growth in online media. As part of this process, the website's visual design has been updated and the content has been categorised under the headings "Discover", "Experience", "Understand", "Protect", and "Appreciate". At the same time, the online calendar was integrated into the regionally distributed Destination.one events network to enhance the multiplier effect. All TERRA.vita tourism partners, communities and cities participate in this connected online calendar. Videos are increasingly being used to support the website, for example, to provide information on events in sign language. Furthermore, the website features redesigned flowering-o-meters showing the blooming times of different vegetation in specific areas and a new offering for individually bookable TERRA.guide tours entitled "Discovery tour for young and old".



Trollfjell UNESCO Global Geopark (Norway): Balancing welcomed tourism and sustainability

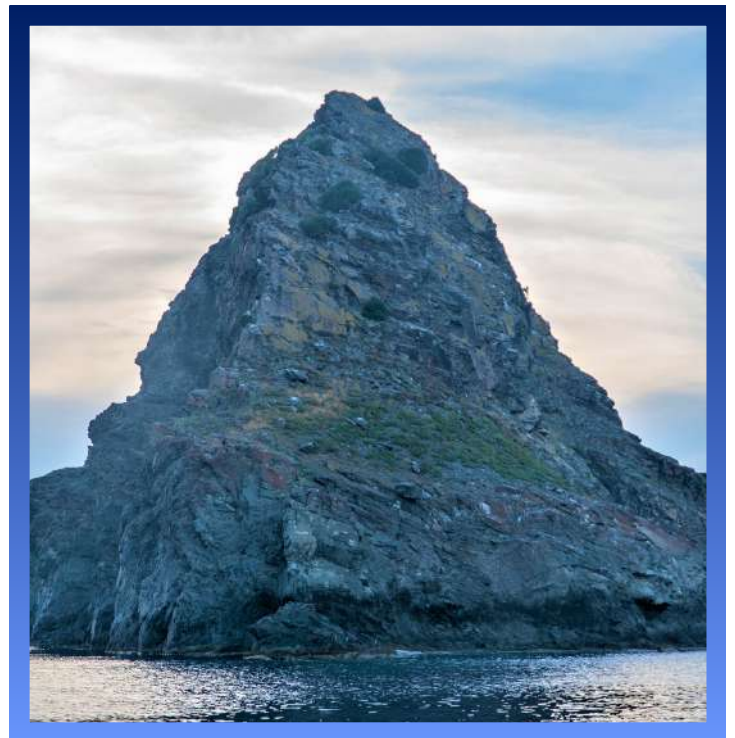
Trollfjell Geopark experiences a boom in nature-based tourism. Although most welcomed, we are mindful of potential challenges this pressure can cause to our natural heritage. Together with our six municipalities, we have led a major effort to ensure sustainable management of natural sites. We have strategically mapped trails and areas to assess if these are vulnerable or resilient to tourism. If vulnerable, we assess whether we can take mindful action to increase resilience. For our famous Mount Torghatten, a great collaborative effort – partly state funded – improved trail resilience, information and geoconservation. This led to Torghatten being authorised as Norway's seventh National Tourist Trail. The authorisation requires that the resilient, safe, and sustainable infrastructure and natural heritage is upheld in the future.

By directing tourism towards more resilient areas, we do our best to safeguard our wholesome natural and cultural heritage, while supporting sustainable economic growth and responsible tourism.

UNESCO Global Geopark Vis Archipelago (Croatia): The Middle Triassic Monuments of UNESCO Global Geopark Vis Archipelago

The UNESCO Global Geopark Vis Archipelago is home to the Adriatic's rarest treasures: the islets of Jabuka and Brusnik. These are the only volcanic islets in the Adriatic Sea, composed of diabase that dates back to the Middle Triassic period (approximately 220 million Years Ago). Both have been strictly protected as Geological Monuments of Nature since 1958.

Located up to 50 km from the island of Vis—the Geopark's main island and starting point—their distance, lack of mooring facilities, and exposure to the open sea act as a natural filter for visitors. Access depends entirely on the "bonaca" (calm sea). While the islands of Vis and Biševo attract the majority of visitors, these islets remain highly preserved due to their relative inaccessibility. To ensure long-term protection, the Geopark maintains a strict policy: no docking infrastructure or construction will ever be permitted. Our future perspective is clear: safeguarding these 220-million-year-old monuments by respecting the raw power of the Adriatic's volcanic monuments. Photo: Matko Petrić





Vulkaneifel UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): How sustainable tourism can strengthen resilience and economic value

The UNESCO Global Geopark Vulkaneifel demonstrates how sustainable tourism can strengthen regional resilience and create long-term economic value. To find out the recent contribution of tourism to the regional economy, the Geopark commissioned a study by the renowned institute Deutsches Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Institut für Fremdenverkehr, a prominent German research and consulting institute specialising in tourism economics. The results reveal that a tourism-related turnover of 425.5 million € EUR is generated giving a regional added value of 211.9 million € EUR. This corresponds to more than 7,200 income equivalents.

With over 8.1 million tourist stay days annually, tourism is a key driver for Vulkaneifel. At the same time, the Geopark promotes sustainable development through geo-education, conservation of cultural landscapes, support for local businesses and year-round nature-based tourism.

Initiatives such as orchard meadow conservation, educational programmes on geological heritage and sustainable hiking infrastructure show how UNESCO Global Geoparks can combine environmental responsibility, regional identity and economic resilience. The Vulkaneifel thus serves as a model territory for sustainable regional development in Europe.

Working Group “Volcanic Areas”, European Geoparks Network: “LOCAL STORIES OF OUR VOLCANOES”: A collaborative work among European UNESCO Global Geoparks linking geodiversity and cultural heritage

The book “Local Stories of Our Volcanoes” is a networking initiative among the members of the EGN Working Group “Volcanic Areas”. Promoted and coordinated by El Hierro Geopark, the book aims to highlight the geodiversity of the European UNESCO Global Geoparks and their connection with the cultural heritage of the territories, through legends, stories and/or myths known by their people from long ago.

Fourteen UGGPs in Europe from nine nations (Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain and Türkiye) participate in this publication. The main innovative approach of this book is the inclusion of ten different languages in a single publication, including the native language of each of the nine countries involved, as well as English.

The structure of the book “Local Stories of Our Volcanoes” includes a tale story text, an illustration (by Adriana Sandec, Canary Island), a brief geological description of the site, landscape, or phenomena addressed in the local tale story, and a photo that exemplifies it.



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