

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Holy Cross Mountains UNESCO Global Geopark, Poland, European Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2021 / -

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)



Geofestival Kielce 2023 – geoeducational activities in the Geoeducation Center, photo. Ł. Zarzycki

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 10 staffs including 3 geoscientists: 4 employees from member municipalities and 1 employee from partner organization (members of the Geopark Management Board) and 5 educators working at the Geoeducation Center in Kielce - the main informational and educational center of the Geopark managed by the Kielce Municipality, a member of the Geopark

Number of visitors: The number of the visitors to the major geosites, museum or visitor center:

Kadzielnia (geosite) – 317 756 visitors

Chęciny: Medieval Royal Castle and historic town (cultural site) – 225 000 visitors

Ethnographic Park at Tokarnia (cultural site) – 126 000 visitors

Wietrznia (geosite) with the Geoeducation Center- 102 569 visitors

The Raj (Paradise) Cave (geosite) – 106 560 visitors

Ślichowice (geosite) – 68 048 visitors

Botanical Garden (natural site) – 48 856 visitors

The Cracov Bishops Palace (cultural site) – 150 000 visitors

Podzamcze Chęcińskie – Palace-park complex and Science Center (cultural site and education center) – 64 000 visitors

Miedzianka (geosite) with the Ore Mining Museum Chamber (museum) – 2 800 visitors

Chałupki - Center of Pottery Tradition (cultural site - museum) – 5 276 visitors

Total number of visitors at the territory of the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp in 2023: 1 216 865 visitors

Number of Geopark events: 54

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 78

Number of Geopark press release: 12

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2023

- Co-organization by the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp of the 8th edition of the Polish Geo-Product Forum as part of the International Earth Day 2023; Effective cooperation and support from the Holy Cross Mountains UNESCO Global Geopark for local non-governmental organizations and authorities from Eastern Roztocze in connection with the planned creation of a new Polish geopark near the Polish-Ukrainian border.
- Organization of the third edition of the Geo-Festival Kielce - a significant event aimed at promoting geological, natural, and cultural heritage, as well as education, geotourism, and active tourism;
- Participation of the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp in conference in Banska Stiavnica (Slovakia) and signing of a memorandum regarding in the development of geotourism and geoparks in the countries of the so-called Visegrad Group: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary. Initiating a strategic partnership and collaboration between UGGp, aUGGp, and national geoparks from the mentioned countries.
- Effective partnership collaboration at the local and regional levels: organizing educational, promotional, and geotouristic events in cooperation between the Geopark and local organizations and institutions (including the Świętokrzyskie Branch of the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society, local guides, the Regional Tourist Organization of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, and the Świętokrzyskie Branch of the Polish Geological Institute).
- Continuation of network cooperation with institutions/organizations from different geoparks (Madonie UGGp, Kula UGGp, Katla UGGp, Bakony-Balaton UGGp, Papuk UGGp, Zelezne Hory National Geopark) as part of projects form Erasmus+ and EEA and Norway Grants.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Active participation of representatives of the Holy Cross Mountains UNESCO Global Geopark in conferences and meetings (including online meetings) organized in 2023 by GGN, EGN:
 - the 47th EGN CC meeting in Hateg County UGGp (Romania),
 - the 10th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks at M'Goun UGGp (Morocco)
 - meetings of the GGN Advisory Committee.
- Active participation of the Holy Cross Mountains UNESCO Global Geopark in actions and promotional campaigns organized by GGN, including, above all, EGN Week 2023, International Geodiversity Day, World Water Day, International Museum Day, World Cleanup Day, and International Tourism Day.
 - Continuation of the implementation of international projects and collaboration with institutions/organizations (including geoparks) initiated in 2021 and 2022: Project „VR@Geoparks” (Poland, Italy, Portugal, Croatia, Hungary, Türkiye); Project „GeoEducation For Combatting Climate Change” (Poland, Czech Republic, Türkiye, Hungary); Project „Geoeducation for everyone” (; Project „Geotourism and Geoparks – developing Earth sciences and environment education for sustainable societies”
 - A meeting at Muskau Arch UGGp and the signing of a memorandum regarding mutual collaboration and partnership building between geoparks: Muskau Arch UGGp, Holy Cross Mountains UGGp, and the Land of Extinct Volcanoes aUGGp,
 - Participation of the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp in conference in Banska Stiavnica (Slovakia) and signing of a memorandum regarding in the development of geotourism and geoparks in the countries of the so-called Visegrad Group: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary. Initiating a strategic partnership and collaboration between UGGp, aUGGp, and national geoparks from the mentioned countries.

Management and Financial Status

- The Holy Cross Mts. UGGp is managed by the Association of five Municipalities. The Association has a statute, legal personality and is the organization responsible for managing the Geopark. According to the Polish law, the members of the Association are five local government units, of whom the representatives of the association's organs are elected: the General Assembly, the Management Board and the Audit Committee. In 2023, the management structure of the Geopark remained unchanged. In addition to the information provided in the 2022 report, it can be added that the Association of Municipalities Holy Cross

Mountains UNESCO Global Geopark has established cooperation with new local partner organizations, including, among others: the „Świętokrzyskie Association of Social Initiatives” named after Stanisław Staszic and the „Świętokrzyski Poziom Gór” Association.

- The Holy Cross Mts. Geopark Association of Communes has an independent budget and a financial management system resulting from formal and legal conditions of communes as local government units. Funding for the basic operations of the Geopark and financing investments/initiatives/projects related to the statutory activities of the Geopark comes from four different sources:

I - basic budget of the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp Association: membership annual fees of each of five communes

II – project budget of the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp Association: External financial resources obtained from international/national/regional programs and grants (Erasmus+, EEA Grants, Regional and Local Grants).

III - An independent budget of the municipalities – members of the Geopark’s Association, related to expenditures for the tourism and promotion of geological/natural/cultural heritage as well as the investment projects related to Geopark’s area (ex. touristic development of geological, natural, and cultural sites; tourism route and path)

IV - Expenditures (EU funds and contributions from member municipalities of the Geopark) for large investment projects related to the construction or modernization of tourist infrastructure at geological, natural, and cultural sites located within the Geopark.

In the budget summary for the year 2023, the two main components of the budget: funds from membership fees (I) and funds directly acquired by the Association from external sources (II), amounted to a total of 38 112,00 EUR. The financial resources from the two mentioned sources are lower than in 2022 due to a reduced amount of external funds from project financing. However, the Management of the Holy Cross Mountains UNESCO Global Geopark plans to secure new funding and participate in additional projects. The Geopark has also applied for new grants within local and regional grant programs and financial initiatives.

Geoconservation

- Ongoing maintenance (cleaning, maintenance of green areas, repair of tourist infrastructure) of selected, representative geosites from the funds of communes - members of the Geopark Association
- Effective cooperation with non-governmental organizations (Speleoklub Świętokrzyski, Świętokrzyski Klub Alpinistyczny) and private entities (Tyrolka na Kadzielni, blogger TymRazem.pl) in the protection and conservation of selected geosites (Kadzielnia, Wietrznia, Moczydło).
- Special campaigns for cleaning selected geosites carried out in cooperation with local

associations and schools,

- Collaboration with the Regional Environmental Protection Directorate in Kielce in the scope of the protection and conservation of geological heritage, as well as consultation of documents related to protection plans and protective tasks of selected geological reserves - representative geosites of the Geopark: Wietrznia, Kadzielnia, Ślichowice, Biesak-Białogon

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Effective cooperation of the Geopark (including member municipalities of the Geopark) with local non-governmental organizations in organizing events promoting geotourism, sustainable and active tourism (including: the 31st edition of the "50tka Świętokrzyska" marathon/tourist rally organized within the Holy Cross Mts. UGGp, in the municipalities of Nowiny, Chęciny, and Kielce; Nordic Walking in the Chęciny Municipality – 3rd Edition)

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- PALEO-ART project: Organization of a temporary exhibition combined with geo-educational workshops for children and youth from schools located within the Geopark,
- Collaboration of the Geopark with the "Recover the Environment" " Foundation in organizing a nationwide informational campaign and educational program "Poland's Recycling Capital," aimed at promoting pro-environmental attitudes and the idea of sustainable development.
- New educational workshops in the field of geology, ecology, and botany for children and youth organized by the Geoeducation Center in Kielce during winter and summer vacations (GeoNature Holidays, Nature Summer Academy).
- GEOLOGY ENTHUSIAST CLUB – as part of the year-round activities of the Club, new geo-educational sessions for children, youth, and adults have been introduced, with a focus on topics related to geoconservation, nature conservation, and ecology.

Strategic partnership

- Strategic partnership between Polish and Germany geoparks: Muskau Arch UGGp, Holy Cross Mountains UGGp, and the Land of Extinct Volcanoes aUGGp - signing a memorandum of cooperation,
- Strategic partnership between V4 groups: Polish, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungarian national organizations and geoparks – signing memorandum in Banska Stiavnica (Slovakia)
- Strategic partnership and cooperation with leading universities and research institutes in Poland: Polish Geological Institute, Warsaw University - Faculty of Geology, AGH University of Science and Technology, Faculty of Earth Sciences University of Silesia
- Strategic partnership and collaboration in the promotion of geotourism and the geopark with national and regional organizations associated with tourism: Polish Tourist Organization, Regional Tourist Organization of the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, Świętokrzyskie Branch of

the Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society.

- Partnership collaboration with organizations/institutions associated with selected geoparks (including: Madonie UNESCO Global Geopark, Katla UNESCO Global Geopark, Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark, Bakony-Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark), as part of international projects (see point: Networking and participation)

Promotional activities

- promotion in social media as part of facebook, instagram and YouTube channels; official fb profile: <https://www.facebook.com/geopark.swietokrzyski/>
- promotion on the official website of the geopark: <https://geopark.pl/>
- Promotion in local and national media (TV, radio, press)
- Promotion as part of international circumstances (including Earth Day, Sustainable Tourism Days)
- Promotion of the Geopark as part of local events (science picnics, field games, quests, trips, lectures)
- Promotion of the Geopark in cooperation with local tourist guides and hotels

4. CONTACTS

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