

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name, country, regional Network:** Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark, Austria-Slovenia, European Geoparks Network

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2013 / 2021



*Hosting the GEO Day of Biodiversity 2024 in Karawanken-Karavanke UGGp, July 5 – 7 2024*

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 06 staffs including 01 geoscientist(s)

**Number of visitors:**

Information center Podzemlje Pece, Mežica: 16.500, Obir Dripstone Caves: 23.400, Petzen-Peca: 110.000, Guided hiking tours: 750, Zipline: 1600, Management center St. Philippen: 500, Geo.Dom visitor center: 7.000

**Number of Geopark events:** 100

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programs:** 250

**Number of Geopark press release:** 65

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

**Major achievements in 2024**

- Hosting the **GEO Day of Biodiversity 2024** (July 5-7, 2024), Geopark Karavanke welcomed experts, researchers, and nature enthusiasts to celebrate and explore the region's diverse biodiversity.
- Successful completion of the **INTERREG Alpine Space I-SWAMP** project (ecological monitoring, restoration and protection of small Alpine wetlands in the Geopark area)
- Hosting the **"Interreg Cooperation Day 2024"** (September 21, 2024)
- **Expansion of the network of Geopark certified schools, kindergartens and educational centres:** the Geopark awarded further educational certificates to three elementary schools and a kindergarten in Ravne na Koroškem.

## Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Participation at the 49<sup>th</sup> EGN Coordination Committee Meeting in Kula-Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark, Turkey, where Mrs. Suzana Fajmut-Štrucl was elected to the Advisory Committee of the European Geoparks Network (03/2024).
- Participation at the 17th European Geoparks Network Conference in Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland, where Mr. Gerald Hartmann and Mrs. Suzana Fajmut-Štrucl were awarded for their significant contributions to the development of the Global Geoparks Network (10/2024).
- Participation at EGN Digital CC Meeting (09/2024) and Teacher Forum (10/2024)
- Organisation and implementation of different events during the EGN Week 2024 as part of the GEOfestival.
- Contributions to the EGN Magazine, EGN Newsletter, GGN publications, etc.
- Participation of the Geopark Karawanken-Karavanke representatives at national Geopark Forum meetings (SLO and AT).

## Management and Financial Status

- Crossborder Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark is managed by the organisation EVTZ (EGTC) Geopark Karawanken m.b.H; Financial status: multi-source financing, stable financial status.

## Geoconservation

- Informing and awareness raising activities of local community and visitors about the importance of the geoconservation on guided tours, in information/visitor centres, brochures, articles, and events.
- Journalistic and scientific articles were produced and contributions to the International Geodiversity Day through different events.
- Ecological monitoring and restoration activities for protection of small alpine wetlands (removing of invasive plants in project sites on both sides of the border in the frame of INTERREG Alpine Space project I-SWAMP).

## Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Launching of new projects: **Danube Region Program “Danube GeoTour Plus” project** (focused on vulnerable group inclusion, Geopark experience development and visitor flow management); **INTERREG Alpine Space WATERWISE project** (water resource protection and solutions in the Alpine region); **ERASMUS+ EMPATHS project**, **INTERREG SI-AT projects: Connect2Tourism** (development of innovative cross-border mobility solutions) and

**KaraMon** (disaster risk reduction);

- Successful implementation of other ongoing projects: **ESS MOVEMONT.at project** (landslides monitoring, environmental education); **INTERREG SI-AT GreenTour project**, **INTERREG Central Europe HUMANITA project** (visitor flow management).
- Participation in the implementation of the following INTERREG SI-AT small scale projects of the Geopark municipalities and the Tourism Board TVB Geopark Karawanken: "Drau-Drava Run", "PeaceWalk", "Crossborder experience" and "tradition4tourism".
- Implementation of year-round programs, titled "Nature experience Geopark Karawanken", with different outdoor experiences, several guided hikes, snowshoeing, guided visits, etc.

#### **New education programs on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction**

- In 2024, the Geopark implemented several educational activities, including workshops, summer camps, and programs for children and school groups.
- The **2023/2024 annual school topic** was "**WETLANDS – Into Nature with Boots**", with the final event held at the Geo.Dom Visitor Centre (02/2024). The Geopark school topic for the **2024/2025 school year "UNESCO Geopark – Green Classroom"**, dedicated to the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UGGs, focusing on sustainability. The introductory seminar for teachers and educators was held in October 2024 at Geopark info point in Castle Ravne na Koroškem.

#### **Strategic partnership**

- Podzemlje Pece d.o.o., Obir Tropfsteinhöhlen, RRA Koroška, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation, Petzen-Bergbahnen GmbH, KSL Tourismus Marketing GmbH, GRIF, Nenad Čmarec s.p., Geological survey of Slovenia, KREATUR d.o.o., Tourist board TVB Geopark Karawanken, TVB Eisenkappel-Vellach, FH Kärnten (CUAS), Carinthian Regional Museum, The Hemmaberg-Juenna archaeological museum of Pilgrims, Alpine Associations, Tourism Association Lavamünd, network of certified Geopark schools, kindergartens & educational centres, local producers

#### **Promotional activities**

- Several promotional activities at local, regional and national level, participation at local, regional, national and international events, fairs, forums, conferences, radio and TV interviews and documentary, contributions for local and regional newspapers, ...

#### **4. CONTACTS**

**Manager, Geographer:** Mag. Gerald Hartmann ([gerald.hartmann@geopark-karawanken.at](mailto:gerald.hartmann@geopark-karawanken.at))

**Geologist:** Mag. Suzana Fajmut-Štrucl ([suzana.fajmut@podzemljepece.com](mailto:suzana.fajmut@podzemljepece.com))