

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

### **Geopark name, country, regional Network:**

Famenne-Ardenne UNESCO Global Geopark, Belgium, European Geoparks Network

### **Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2023**

Representative photo with caption (TOP 100 – Durbuy anticline - IUGS)



## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 5 staffs including 2 geoscientists

**Number of visitors:** 250.000 visitors (Han caves - major geosite)

**Number of Geopark events:**

- events held by management body : 5
- cooperative organization : 4

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 12

**Number of Geopark press release:** 25

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### **Major achievements in 2024**

Creation of a new graphic charter and logo to standardise our media.

The objective was to have a graphic charter that defines the visual identity and ensures the consistency of the new communication materials produced by and for the Geopark. In connection with this new graphic charter, we decided to revise our logo so that it could be more easily transposed onto different media. This also enabled us to revise our business cards, create common signatures for the whole team and have common media.



**GEO PARK**  
FAMENNE · ARDENNE



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Recognition of the Durbuy anticline as one of the 100 most beautiful sites of international geological heritage by the International Union of Geological Sciences, in the presence of the new Minister for Tourism, Valérie Lescrenier.

This geosite is located in the medieval town of Durbuy, within the Famenne-Ardenne UNESCO Geopark. It has a base of 90 metres and a height of 37 metres, and is made up of around 25 layers of Upper Devonian marine limestone (380 million years old). This fold is an excellent example of Late Carboniferous Variscan deformation in Europe. The structure was then carved out by the River Ourthe, which originally meandered over a Cenozoic sandy blanket, eventually eroding the underlying folded Devonian formations, whatever their resistance to erosion.



Geopark actions and training in terms of teaching and education

- 3 to 19 May: Educational stand at the International Sculpture Symposium in Durbuy.
- 30 June 2024: Participation in the Journées Fermes Ouvertes with our partner 'Les fromages le Plateau du Gerny', an opportunity to find out more about our local producers.
- 11 August 2024: Educational stand at the Roman Gardens Festival at Malagne - Archéoparc de Rochefort.
- 20 October 2024: Educational and tourist stand at the Fête du Bois organised by the Beauraing tourist office.

The Geopark Famenne-Ardenne is producing a series of short educational videos for the general public (6 videos). The aim of these videos is to provide educational tools for understanding :

- o The concept of a UNESCO World Geopark - Running time 2 to 3 minutes - Outdoor sequence (1 location);
- o The Geopark Famenne-Ardenne - Running time 2 to 3 minutes - Outdoor sequence (1 location);
- o The Scientific Mission - Running time 2 to 3 minutes - Outdoor sequence (1 location);
- o The Educational mission - Duration of 2 to 3 minutes - Outdoor sequence (1 location);
- o Sustainable development through Partners - Duration of 2 to 3 minutes - Outdoor sequence (1 location);
- o Enhancing natural heritage - Duration of 2 to 3 minutes - Outdoor sequence (1 location);

The Geopark Famenne-Ardenne is producing a series of short educational videos aimed at schoolchildren (3 videos). The aim of these videos is to provide tools for understanding and understanding:

- o My school in the Geopark - Duration: 2 to 3 minutes – Sequence studio;
- o Becoming 'geocurious' - Duration: 2 to 3 minutes - Sequence studio;
- o Preserving my environment - Duration: 2 to 3 minutes - Sequence studio.

Hosting school groups in the Geopark area

- 16 March 2024: Reception of UCL Master's students in geography
- 15 April 2024: Reception of Master's students in tourism from the Université Libre de Brussels at the Geopark Information Centre. Introduction to the Geopark, visit to the Grotto of Lorette and the Brasserie de la Lesse.
- 12 October 2024 : ULB Geol Bac 2
- 22 November 2024: Fieldtrip with students from the Erasmus Mundus Pangea Master's programme at the University of Lille, a joint Master's programme specialising in applied palaeontology , palaeobiology and geoheritage and its applications to the study of the past as a key to understanding future ecological issues.

### **Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation**

\*4 to 10 March 2024: Participation in the 49th coordination committee meeting of the European Geoparks Network to discover the Kula - Salihli Unesco Global Geopark in Turkey.

\*5 February 2024: Participation in the Global Geoparks Network workshop on UNESCO's sustainable development goals.

\*5 to 12 March 2024: Mission to support the creation of the Chefchaouen Geopark in Morocco. Our

Geopark has been appointed as an expert by UNESCO.

\*12 to 13 March 2024: Participation in the Council session of the International Geosciences Programme and in the information meeting on UNESCO World Geoparks at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. This will be an opportunity to present our Geopark, our local products and their links with geology.

\*22 to 23 April 2024: Invitation to the inauguration of the new cross-border Geopark Schelde-Delta. Here we were able to discover the area and initiate exchange projects and collaboration between Geoparks on a Benelux scale.

\*April 2024 : Digital photography competition "Megaliths as landmarks in our geoparks" in collaboration with the UNESCO World Geoparks Parc naturel régional des Causses du Quercy - Géoparc mondial Unesco (France) and Geoparque Mundial Unesco Sobrarbe-Pirineos (Spain).

\*2 to 6 October: participation in the 17th European Geoparks Conference EGN in Iceland.

- o Presentation of the European Resiliage dossier

- o Presentation of scientific research linked to floods and speleothems in the Hotton caves

- o Durbuy Anticline: presentation of a poster and receipt of the certificate of the second Top 100 most beautiful geological sites in the world by the International Union of Geological Sciences - IUGS

- o Joint participation in the Geofair with our Belgian, Dutch and grand-ducal colleagues

- o Signing of a BENELUX partnership agreement for the Famenne-Ardenne Unesco Global Geopark with the Natur- & Geopark Möllerdall, De Hondsrug Unesco Geopark and Schelde Delta Unesco Global Geopark.

## **Management and Financial Status**

We received funding of 47.900 € from our partner municipalities. We also received our annual subsidy of 150.000 € from our regional government.

## **Geoconservation**

The year 2021 was marked in Belgium by major floods in mid-july.

Since september 2023, funded by Europe, the Geopark is partner of the european consortium Resiliage (18 partners from 10 countries). We are one of the 5 corelabs of analysis concerning natural disasters.

The project, led by the Polytechnic University of Turin, began in September 2023 and will

end in August 2026. The Geopark is one of the core laboratories (having experienced natural disasters) along with Crete, Trondheim in Norway, Karsiyaka in Turkey and Naturtejo Geopark in Portugal. As far as we are concerned, it is the socio-economic aspect in particular that is the subject of the study, but it is broader in scope.

Different actions have already been carried out, including a local workshop in March 2024 with the European consortium.

The aim was to bring together over the two days as many sectors and operators as possible who had direct or indirect links with the events. The contribution and experience of everyone will enable strategies, solutions and tools to be put in place to respond to natural disasters. Surveys have also been carried out on the perception of risk natural, as well as role-playing through augmented reality experiments and analyses of psychological reactions.

- 19 February 2024: Presentation of the Resiliage project as part of the 'Navigating the climate research funding landscape: finding creative opportunities' session at the Belgian Science for Climate Action Conference in Brussels.
- 18 to 19 March 2024: Participation in the 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities at Mons to present the Resiliage project.
- 2 to 5 March: Resiliage workshop at the Domaine de Lomme in Eprave. Two days of work and reflection on the theme of resilience in relation to natural disasters.
- 21 to 25 May: Steering Committee and General Assembly of the European Consortium (18 partners from 10 countries) in Heraklion.

### **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

The Geopark has joined forces with the Maison du Tourisme Famenne-Ardenne. The aim of the project is to position the area as an area of excellence by associating it with a green and sustainable identity. Over the years, environmental concerns have become a societal issue at the heart of all discussions. Climate change, depletion of the earth's resources... so many factors that lead us to think about this issue and to work differently. The whole economic sector is concerned, including tourism. Considered as one of the pillars of the economic development of our territory, it is all the more important to play a major role in green tourism in order to limit the ecological footprint of the activity.

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

See the chapter about the European consortium Resiliage.

## **Strategic partnership**

We continued to develop our network of local and academic partners.

On the basis of our partner charter, a control grid with objective criteria (mandatory and optional) and an agreement, we have labelled brand new "Geopark Partners". These include hotels, gîtes, bed and breakfasts, restaurants and local producers. Following various exchanges with our partners, including a "training" evening dedicated to them, we created various projects together on which we could collaborate or simply communicate with them.

Involvement of local players and development of synergies with partners.

- 17 April 2024: Partners' evening at the Château de Lavaux-Sainte-Anne (Rochefort), the main theme of which was networking and coming up with ideas together on how the Geopark can help partners to forge links and how partners can help the Geopark to be more visible.

- 12 June 2024: Partner Géobalade 'à la découverte de la Calestienne' in Froidlieu (Wellin) with expert commentary by our geologist Serge Delaby, followed by a visit to the Pressoir d'Hortus, one of our partners in Wellin, which introduced us to the know-how and orchard of this family, which has been based in Froidlieu for some years.

-17 September 2024: Géobalade partners to discover the Fonds des Vaulx (Marche-en-Famenne). An 8km walk to discover the geological, natural and historical wealth of , culminating in a local meal prepared by the Fonds des Vaulx non-profit association.

-18 November 2024: Partners' evening at the Ateliers du Gerny (Marche-en-Famenne).

This was an opportunity to present the Geopark Famenne-Ardenne's 2024 actions and projects, as well as the Bienvenue Vélo label, thanks to a presentation by the CGT. The partners also discovered the activities of our host Les Ateliers Gerny and were able to take part in workshops Zero waste organised by Barbara Leboutte 'Par Amour du Vivant'.

## **Promotional activities**

We continued to step up our media communications during the year. We carried out a number of promotional actions via different communication channels: print media, TV and social networks. In addition to the journalistic press, we were the subject of various articles for tourism and scientific magazines, notably in collaboration with Wallonie Belgique Tourisme.

-20 September 2024: filming of the Grandeur Nature programme on RTBF on the Sentiers de Grande Randonnée - SGR in Belgium linking the Trappist abbeys with Adrien Joveneau, Francis Hubin and our geologist Isabelle Bonniver. They will visit the Grotto site in Lorette and the Trappist abbey in Rochefort for a diffusion radio, TV and print media.

-17 October 2024: Shooting of a segment for the programme 'Quel temps pour la planète?' at the Grottes de Han with Marie-Pierre Mouligneau. Theme: 'A water story'.

In 2024, we continued to feed our social networks and our website.

- Famenne-Ardenne Unesco Global Geopark Facebook account
- Instagram account [geoparkfamenneardenne](#)
- Website [www.geoparkfamenneardenne.be](http://www.geoparkfamenneardenne.be)

We took part in a number of tourism trade fairs:

-26 to 28 January 2024: participation in the Tourissima consumer tourism trade fair in Lille on the VisitWallonia stand.

-1 to 4 February: participation in the Salon des Vacances in Brussels on the VisitWallonia stand.

-30 to 31 March 2024: participation in the Relais des Voyageurs at the Citadelle of Namur, a festival on slowtourism, open-air and accessible.

-23 to 26 May: participation in the Oostende Voor Anker festival at VisitWallonia.

To promote the Geopark, it has financed inserts in the Famenne-Ardenne guide published by the Maison du Tourisme Famenne-Ardenne. A free insert was included in Attractions et Tourisme's 365.be guide.

#### **4. CONTACTS**

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