

GGN – KEFALONIA-ITHACA Geopark Annual Report 2024

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: KEFALONIA-ITHACA UNESCO Global Geopark, GREECE, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2022 / -



The new information panel of the geopark

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staff: 6 staff members, including 1 geoscientist

Number of visitors: over 880,000 (based on airport arrivals and estimations from key sites) **Number of Geopark events:** over 70

Number of school classes realizing Geopark educational programs: 50 schools (approximately 1,664 students)

Number of Geopark press releases and media publications: over 120

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major Achievements in 2024

- Installation of 13 new interpretation signs and 15 directional signs in geosites of the Geopark and within Aenos National Park.
- Participation in the completion of the Kefalonia Trails project in Argostoli Municipality.
- Participation in major events: Mount Ainos Festival, Sustainable Tourism Summits, exhibitions.
- Expansion and promotion of paleontological collections in information center in Koutavos Lagoon Argostoli and in Anogi information center.
- Promotion of the Geopark in the Athens Metro through the Hellenic Geoparks Forum.
- Strategic cooperation with Marketing Greece and tourism stakeholders for destination branding.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and Participation (digital or not digital)

- 49th EGN CC Meeting in Kula-Salihli UGGp, Turkey, 5-9 March 2024, with 1 representative
- Digital Coordination Committee Meeting of the EGN, 18-19 September 2024.
- 5th Conference of the UNESCO Global Geoparks Greece-Cyprus, June 13-15, 2024, Chelmos Vouraikos UGGp, Kalavryta, Greece, (in Greek), with 3 representatives.
- Featured article in EGN Newsletter No. 25.
- Webinar participation with UNESCO & RESILIAGE project.

And to other activities as well, e.g:

- Participation to the International World water day 2024 (22-03-2024) by a project of water analysis which was performed by experts and pupils in Koutavos Lagoon geosite!
- Participation to the International Environment Day which was celebrated by two actions 1) by hiking in Aenos geosites (05-06-2024) with pupils from Kefalonia-Ithaca schools showing their love for the environment, and 2) by a boat

trip/excursion (09-06-2024) around its coastline!

- Participation to the International Geodiversity Day (19/10/2024), Kefalonia and Ithaca UGGp in collaboration with the Secondary Education Directorate of Kefalonia, through the Heads of School Activities and the E.K.F.E. of, in successfully organized an Environmental Action Day for teachers of the Secondary Education Directorate of Kefalonia. “The aim of the activity was to offer participants the opportunity to explore the geotopes of Sami, while learning about the area's geodiversity, history, and cultural heritage.
- Participation to the EGN magazine publication with an article for issue 20. Preparation and submission of an article titled: “Kefalonia-Ithaca UNESCO Global Geopark, an earthquake laboratory” to be considered for publication in the special volume “Geohazards in European Geoparks”, which was published at the 49th Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of the European Network of UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Management and Financial Status

The Management Unit of Zakynthos and Ainos National Parks and Protected Areas of the Ionian islands-Argostoli branch is managing the geopark. A new local management committee was appointed during 2024 with representatives of the Ionian Islands Region. The financial status of the geopark is enhanced by the funding of the Ionian Islands Region and the budget of the Management unit. Income of 72,000 euros used mostly for infrastructure enhancement, signage and events (salaries not included).

Geoconservation

- New signage, patrols, and incident response.
- Waste removal in Aenos National Park.
- Trail maintenance and cleaning.
- Rescue operations and biodiversity monitoring.
- Cleaning of paths
- Daily patrols
- Report of damages to the relevant authorities
- Guided tours
- Event regarding the fire protection of the National Park

Sustainable Tourism (Geotourism)

- Participation in sustainable tourism events.
- Stay Active Kefalonia 2024.

- Mount Ainos Festival 2024.
- Nature walks with journalists.
- Stargazing nights and nature observation.
- Guided tours

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

- Expansion of the local Thematic school network "Nature and culture" in close collaboration with Kefalonia-Ithaca Geopark and the Regional Directorate of Education of Kefalonia and Ithaca and the Directorates of Secondary Education of Kefalonia.
- Run the new Fossil education programs.
- Hands-on activities for schools.
- Participation in national campaigns and exhibitions.
- International educational collaborations.
- Planetarium on the go
- Two Publications in international scientific journals in cooperation with University of Patras

Strategic Partnerships

- Cooperation with Ionian Arts Center, Marketing Greece, University of Patras.
- Local authorities and tourism associations involved.
- Local Schools Thematic network "Nature and Culture"
- Argostoli Municipality tourism committee

Promotional Activities

- Feature in Athens Metro digital screens.
- Media presence and publications.
- Website translation into German.
- Social media and newsletters.
- Ionian Center for Arts and Culture

4. CONTACTS

Manager: Dr. Michalis Xanthakis, m.xanthakis@necca.gov.gr

Geologist: Dr. Elena Zoumpouli, zoumpouel@gmail.com