

GGN – National Network / National Fora Committees

Annual Report 2024

1. IDENTITY / GGN NATIONAL NETWORK

National Fora/Committee: name, country, website, e-mail

Year of inscription: 2002

2. MEMBERS

Chair: Oliver Gulas-Wöhri, Styrian Eisenwurzen UGGp, o.gulas@eisenwurzen.com

Members: Horst Ibetsberger, Ore of the Alps UGGp, horst.ibetsberger@geoglobe.at

Gerald Hartmann, Karawanken/Karavanke UGGp, gerald.hartmann@geopark-karawanken.at

3. ACTIVE APPLICATIONS

Active application in your country: No active applications

Territories that you are advising: no territories at the moment

4. ACTIVITIES

In 2024, Austrian UNESCO Global Geoparks continued close cooperation with the **Austrian UNESCO Commission**, the **Austrian Academy of Sciences**, and regional partners. This collaboration strengthened national visibility and resulted in key projects in **sustainability, education, and tourism**.

Joint Initiatives

- **ESS Project “Moving Mountains”:** Research on mass movements as geosystem services in Austrian Geoparks (with University of Salzburg & Graz).
- **Danube GeoTour Plus:** Focus on sustainable tourism, new visitor experiences (long-distance trails, mobile exhibitions, geo-labs) – led by Geopark Styrian Eisenwurzen.

- **Austrian Geopark Strategy:** Further development of the national strategy for UNESCO Global Geoparks.

Highlights of the Three Geoparks

Karawanken/Karavanke

- **GEO Day of Biodiversity 2024:** International experts gathered for biodiversity research.
- **I-SWAMP Project:** Restoration and protection of alpine wetlands completed.
- **Humanita Project:** Innovative approaches for visitor engagement and nature conservation, including citizen science on invasive species.
- Expansion of the **Geopark Schools and Kindergartens network.**

Styrian Eisenwurzen

- Leading **Danube GeoTour Plus** with:
 - Inclusion of vulnerable groups
 - Sustainable visitor management concepts
 - New experiences like geo-hiking trails and mobile exhibitions
- **Tourism Strategy under Climate Change:** Pilot projects for autumn tourism and adaptation to changing weather conditions.
- Completion of the **Alm & Forest Project** to preserve ecologically valuable alpine pastures.

Ore of the Alps

- **New Erzweg Trail:** 54 km themed trail with over 100 new info boards and knowledge stations.
- Opening of a **new visitor center** in Bischofshofen with interactive exhibitions.
- Launch of research on **mine water** and geological processes.

Outlook

For 2024 and beyond, Austrian UNESCO Global Geoparks focus on:

- **Education & Citizen Science**
- **Climate Change Adaptation**
- **Digital formats & sustainable tourism**
- **Strong international networking (EGN, GGN, Interreg projects)**