

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Chelmos- Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece, European Geoparks Network)

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2009 / 2023



Figure: Photos from the 5th UNESCO Global Geoparks Conference of Greece and Cyprus, which was held in Kalavryta (June 2024).

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: 11 staff member, including 2 geoscientists and 1 external research assistant/geoscientist.

Number of visitors: The number of visitors is estimated at approximately 522.000, based on data from key sites and events, including the Kalavryta Ski Resort (approximately 250.000 visitors), the 2nd Helmos Mountain Festival (12.000 visitors), the Odontotos rack railway (approximately 200.000 visitors), the Cave of Lakes (60.000 visitors), and the Municipal Museum of the Kalavritan Holocaust (51.502 visitors).

Number of Geopark events:

1. Organizing and hosting the 5th International Conference of UNESCO Global Geoparks of Greece and Cyprus
2. Grand Opening of Chelmos–Vouraikos Information Center in Kalavryta
3. Training Seminar on Environmental Education for Staff of Environmental Organisations
4. Celebration World Environment Day through Community and Nature Activities
5. Environmental Awareness and Birdwatching Event at Lake Doxa
6. Participation in the 44th Vouraikos Gorge Crossing
7. Educational Programs at Rodea and Helmos Youth Camps
8. Helmos Mountain Riding Project for Global Geodiversity Day
9. Collaborations with Sports and Mountaineering Associations for Environmental Awareness

(with Hellenic Handball Federation and the Aigio Mountaineering Club)

10. 2nd Helmos Mountain Festival
11. Participation in the 20th Anniversary of the Municipal Museum of the Kalavritan Holocaust
12. Hosting Academic Research in Vouraikos Gorge and Chelmos–Vouraikos Geopark (Department of Harokopio Geography, Greece; University of Stavanger, Norway; University of Penzing, Vienna)
13. Conservation Program for *Silene conglobulata*: Linking Geodiversity and Biodiversity Collaboration with university departments (University of Patras, Departments of Geology and Biology)
14. Ecosystem Monitoring and Risk Management in Vouraikos
15. Participation to the 17th European Geoparks Conference in Iceland which was hosted by Reykjanes Geopark
16. Participation to the 49th EGN Coordination Committee Meeting in the Turkish Geopark Kuls-Salihli
17. PhD thesis: Contribution to the study of the flora, the ecosystems, and their services in the Chelmos–Vouraikos National Park, development of a bio-monitoring program, and assessment of the extinction risk of rare and threatened plants, as management tools
18. Master thesis: The Contribution of Interpretive Guiding to the Development of Geotourism and Geoparks
19. Printed Plant and Geodiversity Guides of Chelmos- Vouraikos UGGp were issued
20. “Kalavryta on Mars”, Geosite names of Chelmos–Vouraikos UGGp have been used by a NASA Scientist, working on the Mars exploration project, originating from Kalavryta and inspired by the geopark to name targets into the “Kalavryta Quad”, an area explored by the Curiosity rover within Gale crater on Mars.
21. Promotion of UNESCO Global Geoparks of Greece and Cyprus on the screens of the Athens Metro, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Global Geoparks Network and enhancing visibility of the UNESCO Global Geoparks brand.
22. Participation in TEDx Patras and Hellas Trekking Events with Geopark Educational Game.

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 20

Number of Geopark press release: Frequent announcements published on the Geopark's official Facebook and Instagram pages

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2024

- Organizing and hosting the 5th International Conference of UNESCO Global Geoparks of Greece and Cyprus
- Grand Opening of Chelmos–Vouraikos Information Center in Kalavryta
- Printed Plant and Geodiversity Guides of Chelmos- Vouraikos UGGp were issued

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Attended the 5th International Conference of UNESCO Global Geoparks of Greece and Cyprus: Active participation in scientific sessions, networking activities, and field-based learning initiatives. The conference facilitated knowledge exchange on Geopark management, environmental education, and sustainable development, while also promoting local products and geotourism.
- Attended the 17th European Geoparks Conference (Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland): Participation enabled the exchange of best practices on geoconservation, community engagement, education, and sustainable tourism.
- Attended EGN Meeting (Kula–Salihli UNESCO Global Geopark, Türkiye): Contribution to strategic discussions on EGN priorities and future joint actions.
- Article published in EGN Magazine, Issue 21, regarding a school presentation conducted within the framework of the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction, entitled “Chelmos–Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece: Education on Climate Change and Natural Disasters — Empowering the Future in the Hands of Youth.

Management and Financial Status

- The Management Unit of Chelmos- Vouraikos National Park and Protected areas of Northern Peloponnese is the Administrator of the Geopark. The personnel of the Management Unit consists four members of scientific personnel (Environmentalist, Geologist, Biologist and Forester), six Forest Rangers, a Secretary, an Accountant, as well as external collaborators such as Accountant, Legal Advisor, a geologist and a Scientific Advisor on matters of Geology.

Geoconservation

- A monitoring station in Vouraikos river provides essential data for conservation strategies by measuring parameters such as water temperature, water level, conductivity, pH, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity.
- The conservation program for *Silene conglobulata*, a critically endangered endemic species within the Chelmos-Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark, highlights the essential link between geodiversity and biodiversity in Collaboration with the University of Patras linking geodiversity and biodiversity and protecting a critically endangered endemic plant species.
- Hosting Academic Research in Vouraikos Gorge and the Chelmos–Vouraikos Geopark (Harokopio University of Geography; University of Stavanger; University of Vienna): Field

research and experiential learning for students and researchers.

- PhD Thesis in Chelmos- Vouraikos: Study of flora, ecosystems, ecosystem services, bio-monitoring development, and extinction risk assessment of rare and threatened plants.
- Celebrating World Environment Day through Community and Nature Activities

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Master's Thesis: The Contribution of Interpretive Guiding to the Development of Geotourism and Geoparks.
- Chelmos–Vouraikos Information Center: Attraction of visitors, promotion of local products, job creation, and visibility for local tourism businesses.
- Helmos Mountain Riding Project: Showcasing alternative and sustainable tourism opportunities.
- 2nd Helmos Mountain Festival: Support for sustainable outdoor tourism through bio-geodiversity workshops, educational activities, and collaboration with local tourism operators.
- Participation in the 44th Annual Vouraikos Gorge Crossing: Provision of environmental information during a major outdoor sporting event.

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

- Training Seminar on Environmental Education for Staff of Environmental Organizations
- climate-related educational content.
- Hosting Academic Research in Vouraikos Gorge and the Chelmos–Vouraikos Geopark (Harokopio University of Geography; University of Stavanger; University of Vienna): Field research and experiential learning for students and researchers.
- School presentation and interactive games for the International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction: “Chelmos–Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark, Greece: Education on Climate Change and Natural Disasters: Empowering the Future in the Hands of Youth.
- Educational Programs at Rodea and Helmos Youth Camps.

Strategic partnership

- The Chelmos Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark has signed official partnership agreements with the Vikos Aoos UNESCO Global Geopark, Troodos UNESCO Global Geopark, Kefalonia Ithaca UNESCO Global Geopark and UNESCO Global Geopark Thüringen Inselsberg Drei Gleichen.

- Our Geopark is an official member of the UNESCO Global Geopark Network, a member of Europark and an INHERITURA site.

Promotional activities

- Promotion of Greece and Cyprus UNESCO Global Geoparks at the screens of Athens Metro (Celebration of 20th anniversary of GGN together by promoting UNESCO Global Geoparks brand)
- Regular updates on social media channels (of Geopark's Facebook) to communicate activities, events, and scientific information.
- Production and distribution of brochures on fish species and endemic plants of the Chelmos–Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark.
- Grand Opening of the Chelmos–Vouraikos UNESCO Global Geopark Information Center, offering the opportunity to explore the geopark in depth through videos, texts, brochures, books, and an exhibition featuring samples of rocks and local plant life.
- Participation in TEDx Patras and Hellas Trekking Events with Geopark Educational Game.

4. CONTACTS

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