

«UNESCO Global Geoparks in Europe: Collaboration for a Sustainable Future»



Arran's Global Geopark (UK) Journey: Partnering for a Sustainable Future

Arran proudly joined the UNESCO family in April 2025! This is a major achievement for our island, and its success is deeply rooted in our strong local partnerships.

Our collaborations with key organisations like Arran Heritage Museum, Community of Arran Seabed Trust, National Trust for Scotland, and VisitArran are vital. These partners, alongside local outdoor activity centres, help us share Arran's unique story and promote sustainable tourism and geoconservation.

We celebrated our success at the Arran Heritage Museum, highlighting the power of community effort. We are committed to deepening these partnerships, ensuring our stunning landscape is protected and enjoyed for generations to come.

Azores UNESCO Global Geopark (Portugal): 2nd Iberian and Macaronesian Geodiversity Field School

From 16 to 19 October 2025, Santa Maria Island hosted the field school "Santa Maria Island (Azores), where volcanoes and life forms are imprinted on the rocks". Organised by the Portuguese Association of Geologists, the Azores Geopark, and the Spanish Earth Science Teaching Association, and funded by the European Geosciences Union, the event attracted 49 participants from seven countries. It benefited from the support of the University of the Azores and the Municipality of Vila do Porto. The programme combined lectures, educational workshops and extensive fieldwork, highlighting Santa Maria's unique geology, fossils, sea-level changes, and volcanic landscapes, while promoting geoscience education, geodiversity, and international cooperation.





Basque Coast UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): Celebrating the 15th anniversary of our little but great story!

The Basque Coast Geopark was born in 2010. Five years later, our territory was recognised, among others, as a UNESCO Global Geopark, a place where Earth, sea, and people come together to tell a unique story. Now we celebrate not just an anniversary, but a shared journey full of discovery, learning, and empowerment.

We are grateful to everyone who has been part of this journey: local communities, institutions, visitors, researchers, teachers, and volunteers. Thanks to their commitment, Geoparkea has become a benchmark in environmental education, conservation, and sustainable geotourism. We look to the future with enthusiasm, working for a vibrant, resilient, and open territory.

Bergstrasse-Odenwald UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): Soils – archives of the past and essential life support for our future

Soils are far more than the ground beneath our feet. They secure our food supply, store water, regulate the climate, and provide habitat for an extraordinary diversity of organisms. At the same time, soils form extremely slowly and are threatened by sealing, erosion, and overuse. What is lost can hardly be restored.

In Germany, archive soil has been designated Soil of the Year 2026, drawing attention to a fundamental quality of soil: Their layers contain evidence of past climatic phases, geological processes, and human land use – ranging from Ice Age deposits and ancient arable soils to traces of historical forms of land management. In Bergstrasse-Odenwald, soils likewise tell stories of landscape change, settlement, and the close interaction between nature and humankind.

For us as a UNESCO Global Geopark, this theme is of particular significance. Geoparks make Earth history tangible and communicate the connections between geology, landscape, and culture. Archive soils bring all this together directly – showing that history is not only found in museums, but lies right beneath our feet. At the same time, the Soil of the Year highlights sustainability. We live and depend on Earth's complex and interconnected systems, and we are called upon and challenged to protect them as well as to communicate their functions and importance to the public. More information: www.geo-naturpark.net





Catalunya Central UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain) hosts a national open education-focused meeting

More than 150 participants and representatives from UNESCO Global Geoparks across Spain gathered at the Catalunya Central UGGp for the 10th Open Days of the Spanish UNESCO Global Geoparks Network, held from October 14 to 16 at the magnificent Montserrat Mountain geosite. This year's meeting placed education at its core, highlighting innovative approaches to geoscience learning, school engagement, and the role of geoparks as active educational agents. Presentations from multiple geoparks and partners showcased new tools, collaborative programmes and field-based teaching experiences. Field visits across the geopark's geological and cultural landscapes encouraged exchange and networking. The event successfully strengthened shared commitment to education within the European and Global Geoparks Networks.

El Hierro UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): On International Geodiversity Day, we hosted the Canary Islands Geoparks Conference, organised by GOBCAN, featuring the El Hierro and Lanzarote Geoparks.

Students visited La Albarrada and the Geopark Interpretation Centre, learning about the value of our geological heritage. Talks were given by leading experts on our region about geodiversity and geoparks, how lichens interact with rocks, how the flavor of wine depends on the soil in which it is grown, and how our trails tell stories about geology and culture.

A geological walk was also organised, allowing participants to learn about all that our land has to offer.



Granada UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): Certified Ecotourism for a Sustainable Future

The Granada UNESCO Global Geopark promotes responsible ecotourism models among its tourism businesses. Together with the Spanish Ecotourism Association and the "Soy Ecoturista" Club, the Geopark's Technical Office informs, guides, and supports accommodation providers, activity companies, and local producers throughout their accreditation process as certified partner companies of the Granada Geopark. This certification guarantees experiences linked to the conservation of geological heritage, respect for local communities and the creation of jobs in rural areas, reinforcing the Geopark's contribution to a sustainable future. These joint efforts encourage innovative ecotourism products, strengthen local identity and foster collaboration between public institutions, entrepreneurs, and residents.

Kefalonia-Ithaca UNESCO Global Geopark (Greece): Terroirs Behind the Wines

On 10 October 2024, the Kefalonia-Ithaca UNESCO Global Geopark and the Kefalonia Winemakers Association co-organised an inspiring event titled “Kefalonia: Terroirs behind the wines.” The activity highlighted the deep connection between the island’s geology, its diverse landscapes, and its renowned wine varieties. Through presentations and guided tastings, participants explored how Kefalonia’s unique geological heritage shapes its vineyards and influences the character of local wines. This initiative promotes SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production, and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals, fostering sustainable local development, geocultural awareness, and strong collaboration between the Geopark and local producers.



Empowering the Next Generation for a Resilient Future: Maestrazgo UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain)

The municipalities of Cañizar del Olivar and Aguaviva (Maestrazgo UGGp, Spain) hosted the “II Conference on the Prevention and Management of Natural Risks” with notable participation from members of the scientific committee and attendees such as students from the Emergency and Civil Protection Module of Teruel, teachers, local authorities, Nature Protection Agents, the Civil Guard, and civil protection volunteers. That same week, an online International Conference was held with experts from Portugal, Brazil, Uruguay, Spain, and the European Commission, as well as participants from several countries. The events enabled the exchange of experiences on managing natural risks and their increasingly significant consequences.



Maiella UNESCO Global Geopark (Italy): “Geopots” highlight the strong connection of geological heritage and biodiversity

Young volunteers from the Servizio Civile Universale collaborated with the Maiella UNESCO Global Geopark in an innovative educational project that combines geology and botany. After a training programme on the Geopark’s geodiversity, participants collected and classified rock samples according to their lithology. These were then used to create “geopots”, in which each rock type was paired with a plant species adapted to its specific substrate, illustrating the deep relationship between geology and vegetation along a geobotanical pathway. The pots are now part of a permanent exhibition at the Botanical Garden of Sant’Eufemia a Maiella. During Geodiversity Day, a joint theoretical and practical seminar led by the Geopark’s geologists and botanists explored how plants adapt to rocky environments, highlighting the strong connections between geological heritage and biodiversity.



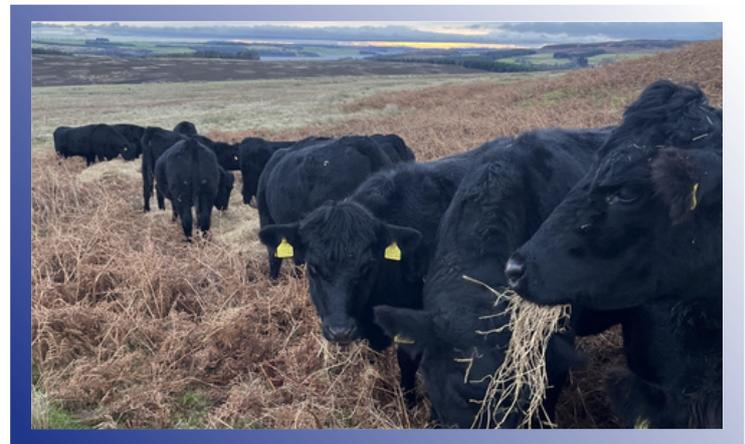


Möllerdall UNESCO Global Geopark (Luxembourg): Linking the geological and industrial heritage

The steel figure of a blast furnace worker recalls the region's early iron industry. It stands along the hiking trail passing an old ironworks near the village of Fischbach. Turning the crank on its hip lets visitors hear information about the worker's former workplace. Scanning the QR code brings the blast furnace and the stamping mill to life as an AR experience. More innovative tools for presenting this heritage will be developed within the INTERREG-funded project *Sous nos pieds*. The Famenne-Ardenne and Vulkaneifel Geoparks are project partners.

North Pennines UNESCO Global Geopark (UK): Evening talks link farming and nature

In the autumn and winter of 2025, the North Pennines National Landscape and UNESCO Global Geopark team have been hosting a series of evening talks with the theme of examining the links between farming and nature. Each talk was given by an invited speaker with opportunities for discussion. The target audience involved farmers, landowners, and other local residents. Speakers included a farmer, a botanist, and a head gamekeeper, showing different perspectives on the way the land is managed and how people work together for sustainability.

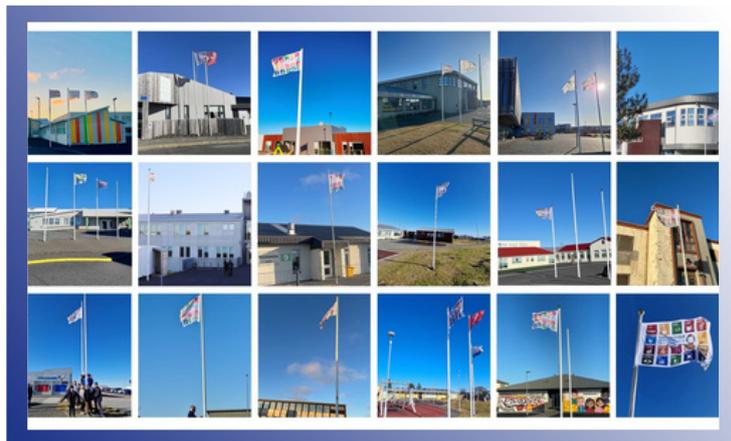


Psiloritis UNESCO Global Geopark (Greece) visits Sitia UNESCO Global Geopark for a geotourism workshop!

On September 4 and 5, 2025, a geotourism workshop titled "Let's get to know Sitia UGGp" was held with members of the Mountain Leaders Association of Crete, that operate in Psiloritis UGGp. The workshop included visits to geosites, museums and local businesses in Sitia UGGp so that professionals from these two Cretan UNESCO Global Geoparks could interact and exchange knowledge and good practices for the dissemination of a new and responsible tourism culture. The seminar was held within the framework of the LEADER/CLLD Programme, the most successful policy tool for community-led local development (CLLD) in the European Union. It was implemented by LAG AKOMM Psiloritis a local development organisation in Crete that functions as a LEADER Local Action Group (LAG).

UNESCO School collaboration in the Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark (Iceland)

Reykjanes Geopark has invited all 27 schools within the geopark to become UNESCO schools. Eighteen have signed a declaration of intent to begin the application process, three schools have already been recognised as UNESCO schools, two have submitted applications, and many others are well underway. This project creates unity among schools across municipalities, school levels, and institutions. It also provides a neutral platform within the geopark where enthusiastic school staff can meet regularly, share ideas, and support one another. Examples of collaboration include regular workshops, learning camps, and trips for the UNESCO teams with focus on the SDG goals.



Ries UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany) celebrates 20 years: Ries Geopark Schools – fastest growing programme and our best hope for the future

The Ries Geopark Schools programme is the fastest growing initiative in Geopark Ries and a key driver of its vision for a sustainable future. As members of an active network, schools commit to integrating regional geology, natural and cultural heritage into lessons, projects, and school life. Joint activities and special projects link classrooms with real-world challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals, from climate action to responsible resource use. Teachers receive support and training from Geopark staff and partners. Together, they empower young people to understand their home region, to value its unique geoheritage, and to become committed, informed citizens.

Rocca di Cerere UNESCO Global Geopark (Italy) – Strengthening Collaboration for a Sustainable Future

Rocca di Cerere UNESCO Global Geopark has intensified its commitment to sustainability and cooperation. It hosted the 4th Consortium Meeting of the FRED – Fire Free MED project, welcoming partners from seven Mediterranean countries to Enna to advance shared strategies for wildfire prevention. Rocca di Cerere UGGp also strengthened collaborations with local universities through technical visits, training sessions, and joint research initiatives on innovative monitoring technologies. At the same time, it expanded the educational and community-engagement activities, involving schools, guides, and local stakeholders to promote a shared culture of environmental awareness within the Geopark.





Salpausselkä UNESCO Global Geopark (Finland): Guide training has attracted dozens of students

Salpausselkä Geopark Guide training started in 2021 as a pilot course organised by the geopark's staff, with approved local guides as the main target group. Based on the pilot course, the regional vocational education institute Salpaus Further Education, together with the geopark staff, developed formal training for geopark guides. A new course Salpausselkä Geopark Guide – Sustainable Travel Expert was held in 2022 and 2023 as part of Further Vocational Qualification in Tourism Services. In 2024, the training was integrated into the Local Guide course, and in 2025 became a part of the Nature and well-being tourism services course. The Geopark Guide training includes topics such as sustainability in tourism, wild food services, nature-based experiences, The UNESCO Global Geopark's concept and networks, geodiversity, as well as the geological, natural and cultural heritage, and the main sites in the geopark. Having geopark themes integrated into formal vocational education has been an important step in the development of sustainable tourism in the region and in promoting the geopark to local people and visitors. During 2021-25, over 60 people have taken part in the training. Around 20 official Geopark Guides now offer guided tours as part of their tourism services, while others make use of the knowledge and skills for example in their work as teachers.

Sobrarbe-Pirineos UNESCO Global Geopark (Spain): Safeguarding dry-Stone heritage through transboundary collaboration

The PETRA (Stone upon Stone) project promotes the safeguarding of traditional dry-stone construction in the Pyrenees. Its actions reinforce the commitment of Sobrarbe-Pirineos UGGp to European cooperation for a sustainable future. PETRA brings together partners from Spain, France, and Andorra to research, document, and transmit this ancestral knowledge, train new builders, and develop cross-border cultural itineraries. This collaboration involves the Working Community of the Pyrenees, the Comarca de Sobrarbe, the Institut per al Desenvolupament i la Promoció de l'Alt Pirineu i Aran, the Regional Natural Parks of the Catalan and Ariège Pyrenees, the University of Pau and the Adour Region, the University of Lleida, and the Government of Andorra.



Sunnhordland UNESCO Global Geopark (Norway): Steering Toward Zero-Emission Waterway Tourism

Geopark Sunnhordland has launched a NORA (Nordic Atlantic Cooperation) supported collaboration with Vatnajökull National Park (Iceland) and the Environment Agency of the Faroe Islands. The project investigates what it takes to transition from fuel-powered vessels to zero-emission solutions for tourist transport in cold-climate UNESCO landscapes. We have already conducted interviews with leading technology suppliers and boat designers (Corvus Energy, Breeze Ship Design, Evoy, Greenfjords) and pioneering tourist operators already using zero-emission boats, such as Bonseye. We have also circulated questionnaires to further stakeholders and conservation authorities.

Our findings will be shared in a public webinar in spring 2026 and during a physical workshop on the Faroe Islands. Geoparks with water-based tourism interested in updates or exchange are welcome to contact: anouk@geoparksunnhordland.no.

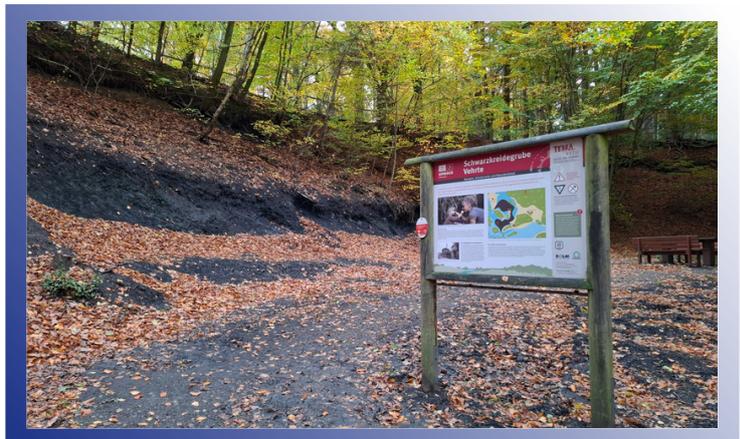


Terras de Cavaleiros UNESCO Global Geopark (Portugal): “Composting Awareness Campaign with Senior University”

Terras de Cavaleiros Geopark promoted an ecological initiative with students from the Senior University of Macedo de Cavaleiros. The aim of this activity was to raise awareness of the importance of home composting and reducing organic waste, thus avoiding sending biodegradable waste to landfill and contributing to the achievement of local and national environmental goals. At the end, participants took home organic waste bins. A small gesture with a big impact, essential for a cleaner and more sustainable planet.

TERRA.vita UNESCO Global Geopark (Germany): Resurrection of a deteriorated geosite

The “Black Chalk Pit” in Vehrte is an important geosite and natural monument that displays Jurassic Posidonia Shale in a strongly matured form only found here. In recent years, the geosite has become heavily overgrown, leaving only a few metres of this geological time window visible. In a major geoconservation measure, the rock wall with a length of around 40 metres has now been exposed. Since there are now two other theories about the heating of the rock in addition to the Bramsche Pluton, two new information boards have also been placed.



EGN - European Geoparks Network

Coordinators: Sophie Justice, Babis Fassoulas
Information: www.europeangeoparks.org

EGN Newsletter

Contacts: Daniela Rocha - daniela.rocha@aroucageopark.pt;
Jutta Weber - j.weber@geo-naturpark.de
Editing: Tony Ramsay