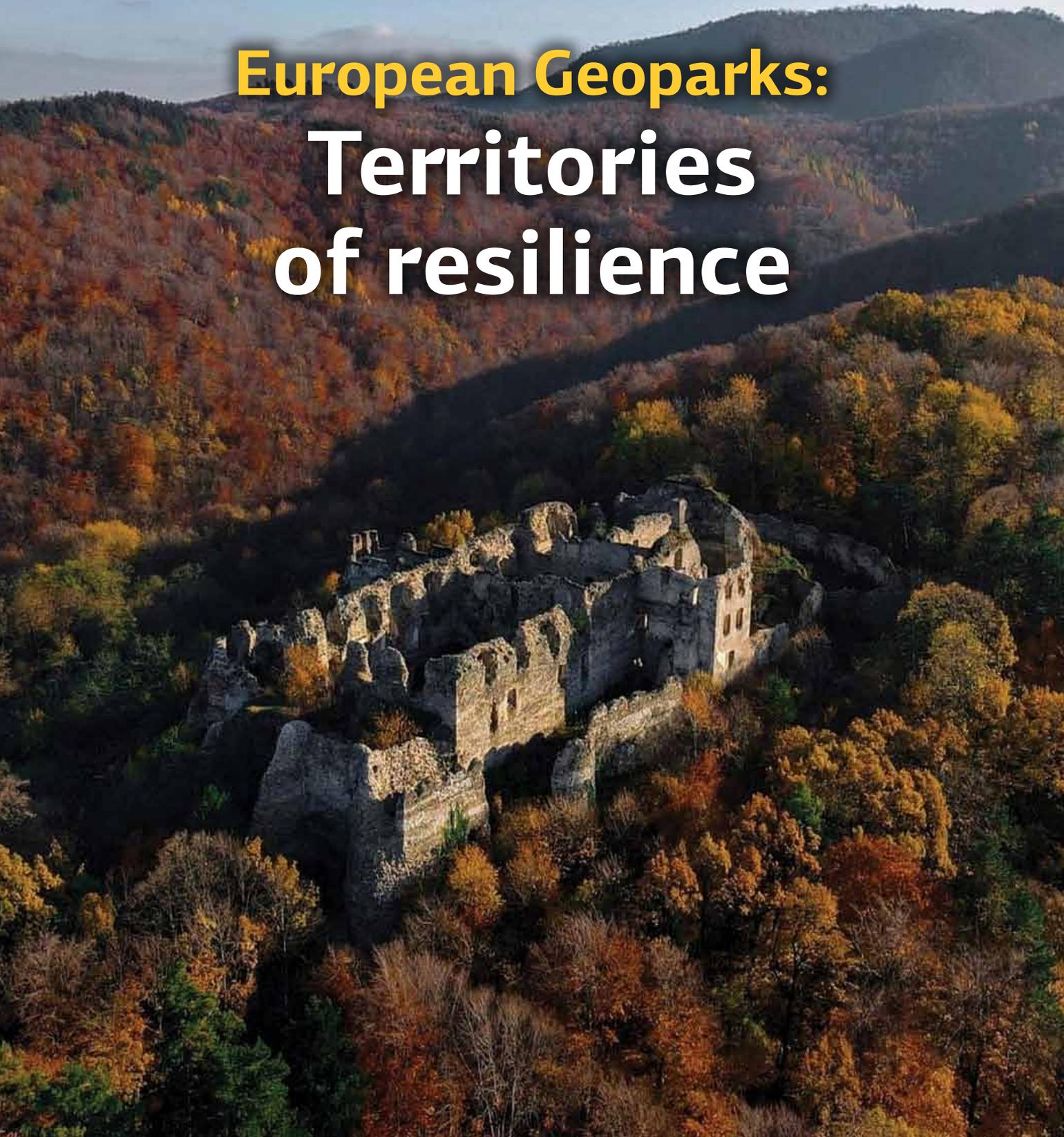


EUROPEAN GEO PARKS NETWORK

European Geoparks Magazine ● Issue 18

European Geoparks: Territories of resilience



THE EUROPEAN GEOPARKS NETWORK

www.europeangeoparks.org

CALENDAR

2021

- March 2021:** 3rd European Geoparks Network Digital Forum
- April 2021:** 211th Session of UNESCO Executive Board – Nomination of New UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- 22nd April 2021:** International Mother Earth Day - Geopark activities
- 18th May 2021:** International Museum Day - Geopark activities
- 22nd May to 6th June:** European Geoparks Week 2021
- 7-20 June 2021:** Digital Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks 2021, Lesvos Greece.
- 5th June 2021:** World Environment Day - Geopark activities
- 8-11 June 2021:** 45th European Geoparks Network Meeting – Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark, Croatia.
- 9 September 2021:** World CleanUp Day - Geoparks activities
- 9-15 September 2021:** 9th International Conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks – Jeju Island, Republic of Korea.
- 11 September 2021:** 46th European Geoparks Network Meeting – Jeju Island, Republic of Korea.
- 13 September 2021:** 3rd Global Geoparks Network Ordinary General Assembly – Jeju Island, Republic of Korea.
- 13th October 2021:** International Day for Disaster Reduction - Geopark activities.
- November 2021:** 41st General Conference of UNESCO.
- 11th December 2021:** International Mountain Day - Geopark activities.

2022

- March 2022:** 47th European Geoparks Network Meeting – Hondsrug UGGp, Netherlands, co-organized with TERRA.vita UGGp, Germany.
- September 2022:** Asian Pacific Geoparks Network Coordination Committee Meeting – Satun UNESCO Global Geopark, Thailand
- September 2022:** 7th Asian Pacific Geoparks Network Symposium – Satun UNESCO Global Geopark, Thailand
- September 2022:** 48th European Geoparks Network Meeting – Sesia – Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy
- September 2022:** 16th European Geoparks Conference – Sesia – Val Grande UNESCO Global Geopark, Italy

2023

- March 2023:** 49th European Geoparks Network Meeting – Hateg UGGp, Romania
- September 2023:** International Conference location to be decided during the 9th UNESCO International Conference, Jeju Island, Republic of Korea



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Geoparks: Territories of resilience

The European Geoparks Network (EGN) is one of four regional networks of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) which includes all areas designated as UNESCO Global Geoparks (UGGps).

In 2020, the Covid-19 global pandemic and devastation of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries curtailed activities in European Geoparks. The biannual EGN Coordination Committee meetings were substituted by digital fora and scheduled evaluation and revalidation missions were postponed. Nonetheless, the Basque Coast UGGp celebrated its 10th year as a member of the EGN and the Black Country UGGp (UK), Djerdap UGGp (Serbia), Estrela UGGp (Portugal), Granada UGGp (Spain), Lauhanvuori - Hämeen kangas UGGp (Finland) and Yangan Tau UGGp (Russian Federation) joined the Network together with Maestrazgo (Spain), one of the founding members of EGN. The range of articles also confirms that through networking and collaborating European Geoparks remained resilient, resourceful and creative in the face of adversity.

In response to Covid-19, Luberon UGGp initiated "Luberon Gratitude" to thank pandemic frontline workers. Chablais UGGp provided practical information to a population under lockdown and the residents of Katla UGGp enjoyed almost empty tourist destinations. Interviews with leading scientists provided a digital experience of the English Riviera UGGp.

All Geoparks engage in formal and informal education. Terras de Cavaleiros UGGp diversified by creating online lessons. Park guides and communications staff in Beigua UGGp produced digital events for children. Eight interactive games can be downloaded from Famenne - Ardenne UGGp's website. Idrinja and Magma UGGps promoted the effectiveness of the TeachOUT app. Kula - Salihli UGGp provided online training on global climate change. Six summer educational programmes in Lesvos Island UGGp and the virtual gymkhana in Sierras Subbéticas UGGp are examples of exciting new developments. Pollino UGGp focused on rock types and groundwater composition. Advancing Earth science and environmental education within the framework of the UNs' Sustainable Development Goals are objectives in TERRAvita, Trollfjell and Vulkaneifel UGGps.

By initiating new projects and developing online activities, Geoparks addressed the impact of Covid-19 on geotourism. Via its "ParKeeper" project, tourists can become citizens of the Adamello Brenta UGGp. Psiloritis UGGp developed the initiative "Psiloritis Supports its Supporters", while Vikos-Aoos UGGp organized an event to encourage volunteering in the local community. Rocca di Cerere UGGp promoted its cultural heritage in the Rimini TTG Travel Experience Trade show. North Pennines AONB & UGGp provided online talks for The North Pennines Stargazing Festival, and Beaujolais UGGp

invited listeners to join audio tours. Virtual reality models illustrate the landscape's history in Rokua UGGp. Geotourism provision is increased by a new guided tour in Eisenwurzen UGGp, the promotion of lesser known geosites in Bohemian Paradise UGGp and the completed section of the Via Geoalpina in Sesia Val Grande UGGp. Ore of the Alps UGGp advocates mythogeography as the motto for promoting resilience in adults and children.

Marketing and promotion are essential activities. The "Photo Marathon" is a successful marketing tool in Novohrad-Nógrád UGGp. Promoting agricultural products contributes to marketing Cilento, Vallo Di Diano and Alburni and Villuercas-Ibores-Jara UGGps. Online marketing prepares the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UGGp for the resumption of tourism.

The quality of a Geopark's infrastructure is fundamental to the success of tourism provision. Bergstrasse - Odenwald UGGp uses its Geodatabase to monitor its infrastructure and initiated an interactive SDG platform highlighting projects and activities in its member communities. A new Geopark Visitor Centre in Central Catalunya UGGp, GeoMón UGGp's redesigned Visitor Centre and "The Trail Running Centre Allepuz-Maestrazgo Geopark" are significant developments. De Hondsrug UGGp's exhibition "Farming in the Hondsrug", and the fossil exhibition in the Harz- Braunschweiger Land - Ostfalen UGGp are new attractions. Newly installed toposcopes enable visitors to read landscapes in the Massif des Bauges UGGp. The Olimpline is an exciting attraction in Karawanken/Karavanke UGGp. Naturtejo UGGp solved a geotechnical problem with a 200 m² diagram of an active fault.

All Geoparks value their geological, cultural and natural heritage. Troodos UGGp documents the restoration of an asbestos mine. Swabian Alb UGGp highlights the vulnerability of its calcareous tufa terraces. In 1730 farmers transformed agriculture following a volcanic eruption in Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UGGp. The tree *Abies nebrodensis* is an example of resilience in nature in Madonie UGGp. Sitia UGGp demonstrates the relationship between geology and architecture in Zakros Village. A recovered stolen fossil of a crocodile in Origenes UGGp draws attention to the effect of a collectors' market for fossils.

The Geoparks' varied and imaginative responses to the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrate their potential to participate in the international cooperation essential for dealing with the environmental and economic effects of the global climate change crisis.

Tony Ramsay
 Publication Editor

Novohrad–Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark, Hungary – Slovakia

The transnational Photo Marathon during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The biannual cross-border Medves Photo Marathon is a popular best practice activity in the Slovak-Hungarian transnational Novohrad–Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark. The programme is organized in the picturesque Medves Plateau. This is the largest basalt lava plateau in Central Europe and a protected landscape with a rich natural and cultural heritage.

Unfortunately, due to the springtime Covid-19 restrictions most activities, including this planned programme had to be cancelled during EGN Week 2020.

However, the organizers did not abandon the event, and sponsored by the Olympus Company, held the 5th OLYMPUS Photo Marathon from 9 -11 October. The event was attended by 250 amateur and professional photographers from Slovakia and Hungary. Contributors included members of the 16th Honvéd Military Tradition Preservation Group and the Börzsöny Heavy Infantry who enacted historical events and posed as models for the photographers. Photographers and contributors wore face masks, adhered to social distancing and had access to disinfectants.

Unique and special events in Hungarian locations included photography in the House of Geowonders in Salgóbánya and in the nearby forests and mountain peaks. In the Salgo Fortress there was an opportunity to photograph enactments of World War II images, and armored knights stood guard in the castle. Sunrise and sunset tours were directed by local guides and a 27metre high platform served as a location for photographs from a bird's eye view.

Special events in the Slovak area of the Geopark included an opportunity to take sunrise photos. In the afternoon's location, the castle in Fülek/Fil'akovo, photographers could take evening photos of enacted images based on the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch and of models in medieval dress.

Although the event itself is over, as a follow up a photo competition was declared for the best photographs in the categories of landscape, people and wildlife. The main prize, an OLYMPUS E-M5III 1240 Kit (E-M5 Mark III body, EZ-M1240PRO lens, charger, battery, lens hood), was donated by the sponsor. As is customary following the previous four events the



prize giving will be accompanied by an exhibition of the best work.

The event proved to be an exceptionally effective tool for raising public awareness of nature conservation issues, for promoting the Geopark concept and sustainable tourism and for strengthening cooperation between the Geopark's stakeholders and the local inhabitants.

This event also provided amateur photographers with an opportunity to meet and photograph the natural, historical and cultural assets of this borderless and photographer-friendly Geopark.

The multifaceted Photo Marathon is a very successful grassroots marketing tool. Images captured during the event can be viewed by thousands of people using different social media platforms.

The event brings people of different interests together. Through their shared experiences, participants can become advocates of the Geopark by sharing their photos on their own websites and blogs. View the promotional video of the event on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5e3dmf5h3U&feature=emb_logo

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The website announcement for the cross-border Medves Photo Marathon.



North Pennines AONB and UNESCO Global Geopark, UK North Pennines Stargazing Festival gets remote



The Milky Way over High Force Waterfall.
© Gary Lintern.

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and UNESCO Global Geopark has some of the darkest skies in England. This is one of the features that makes the area particularly special, alongside its internationally acclaimed geological heritage, unique combination of rare flora and fauna, beautiful landscapes and fascinating cultural history. The AONB Partnership (which manages the Geopark) has organized a successful Stargazing Festival annually since 2017, with the support of other organizations and partners. The aim is to inspire people to stop and take notice of these fantastic dark skies, to learn more about the world and the universe we live in, and above all to enjoy the experience. The festival is held in October, to coincide with a school holiday week and

to encourage visitors outside of the main tourist season. The long, dark evenings are also the perfect time for stargazing.

The dark skies are one of the effects of an upland landscape. The area has a small population and the distance from cities means that light pollution is very low. Finding a clear night in the North Pennines isn't always easy, but the reward of thousands of stars and the misty band of the Milky Way above the hills is well worth the wait.

In 2020, like everything else, this event had to be modified. Gathering groups of people in an inflatable planetarium, a village hall, or even sharing a telescope outdoors is a difficult and often impossible prospect at this time. The majority of the festival has therefore moved to remote activities for a North Pennines Stargazing Week.

This year's activities include daily star tips from a local astronomer, online talks with a series of expert speakers, how-to guides, an online exhibition of night photography, suggestions of where to go and what to look for, self-led activities for families and lots of social media activity. Attention is also focused on the North Pennines' Dark Skies Discovery Sites – a selection of designated locations spread across the nearly 2000 square kilometres of the Geopark. These sites are fairly easy to access but the low levels of light pollution make them perfect places to enjoy the night sky at its best.

The necessary changes could mean missing out this year on some of the physical experiences and emotional connections that looking through a professional telescope, visiting a planetarium, attending a hands-on event or spending a night under the stars with dozens of others might bring. However, it may also mean that more people, or a broader range of people, are inspired to get out and experience the wonders of the dark night skies for themselves. Watch this space.

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The night sky at Burnhope Reservoir.
© Gary Lintern.



Amateur photographers in action.



A lady and her knight modelled during sunset photography in the castle in Fülek/Fil'akovo.