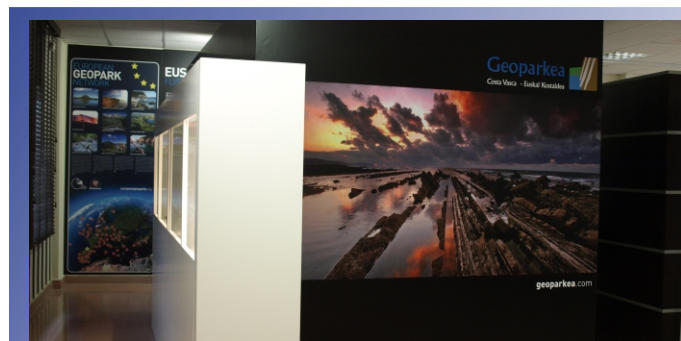


New projects and facilities

New Visitor Centre on karst phenomena in Bakony–Balaton Geopark (Hungary)

An underground maze, the Lake Cave of Tapolca, hides beneath the streets of the town near Lake Balaton. The cave offers a unique opportunity for boating. In addition, from 2015 visitors are also invited to explore an interactive exhibition in the new Lake Cave Visitor Centre, focusing on the wonderful world of karst. The geological features are interpreted by special attractions, 3D photos and an impressive 3D film. The EU-funded investment is coordinated by the leading organisation of the Geopark, the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate. More details: www.lakecave.hu



The new Geopark corner of the Basque Coast Geopark (Spain)

The Basque Coast Geopark has recently opened a new exhibition and interpretive site to display the core values of the Basque Coast Geopark.

This new Geopark Corner is open to the public and showcases the main attractions of the territory. It is composed of one main module with a large screen where visitors can watch a promotional video about the Basque Coast Geopark. The walls of this module are labelled with spectacular pictures and informative messages about the Flysch, inland Karst valleys and some deep-rooted customs. In the Geopark Corner the visitors can also find some of the most appreciated treasures of the Basque Coast Geopark, such as exceptional septarian nodules from Deba, a giant ammonite from Mutriku and examples of trace fossils from Zumaia. This new site is intended as an interesting starting point for visitors and as an invitation to get to know and enjoy the Basque Coast Geopark.

The President of the Republic inaugurated a new infrastructure at Arouca Geopark (Portugal)

On the 18th February 2015, the President of the Republic, Aníbal Cavaco Silva inaugurated the Arouca Meteorological Radar station, which houses the most modern equipment of the Portuguese Sea and Atmosphere Institute network. The president also visited two of Arouca Geopark's geosites, "View of the Costa Castanheira" and the "Rock Giving Birth to Stones"

This recent addition to the Geopark's infrastructure, and meteorological observation station, will support and enhance the "View of the Costa Castanheira" geosite by providing a panoramic lookout point, located on the 10th floor of the tower of the Meteorological Radar station. Through the windows visitors can admire the 360 degree panoramic view of the Serra da Freita and the morphology of the landscape of central and northern Portugal. The station welcomes visits from scientists, educational groups and tourists. The management of this geosite is the responsibility of AGA - Arouca Geopark Association.



Education

Eisenwurzen (Austria): Summer in the Nature- and Geopark

Imagine your children getting bored towards the end of their long summer holidays. It's the right time to offer a programme of hiking tours to interesting places in the Geopark playing happily along the river side or watching "exotic" animals like pot-bellied pigs. The grand finale, the visit to the GeoTrail of Gams and the fun of experiencing the diversity of rocks which are collected along the river and polished in the GeoWorkshop of Gams. They are not only a beautiful souvenir but also a silent invitation to come back with brothers, sisters and parents.

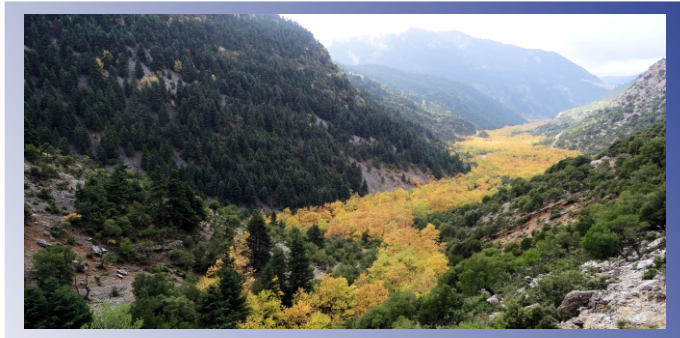


“Step into the Stone Age” in English Riviera Geopark (United Kingdom)

Due to recent changes in the UK national curriculum, schoolchildren across Britain are being taught about the nation's Stone Age heritage and, as a result, the education team at Kents Cavern are developing the Stone Age School initiative through Firestone, a two-year project supported by the UK Heritage Lottery Fund. Based at Kents Cavern, one of Europe's most important Ice Age cave sites, once home to Neanderthals and the first early modern humans in the British Isles, Firestone will allow young people and adults to 'step into the Stone Age' through a series of new and innovative experiences in the caves and across the English Riviera Global Geopark.



Tourism



Co-organizing the 35th annual crossing of Vouraikos Gorge: Chelmos Vouraikos Geopark (Greece)

Chelmos-Vouraikos Geopark will co-organize the annual Crossing of Vouraikos Gorge, together with the “Kalavryta Mountaineering Association”. This well-known and highly touristic local event takes place every year on the second Sunday of May, in one of the most beautiful areas of the Peloponnese. The hikers depart from Kalavryta rack-railway station on mount Chelmos and after an approximately 7-hour hike through Vouraikos Gorge, they reach the Diakofto rack-railway station at sea level. The route follows the Vouraikos River and passes through scenic traditional villages where the hikers have the opportunity to taste and purchase local products such as honey and cheese. The event is a great success and it is estimated that more than 2,000 people participate every year. Stay informed at www.fdchelmos.gr

Access of the Partner Enterprises of the Sobrarbe Geopark (Spain) to the National Ecotourism Club

Sobrarbe Geopark is going to develop a system of audit and training among its 143 partner enterprises (restaurants, hotels, camping sites, craft and food producers) to enable these enterprises to be part of the National Ecotourism Club promoted by the Ministry of Tourism of Spain. Sobrarbe Geopark is already a partner in this Club which includes natural reserves and the enterprises working in these reserves that are committed to the development of sustainable tourism. Through this action, Sobrarbe Geopark aims to strengthen the promotion of its tourism enterprises, to improve the quality of the services offered by these tourism businesses and to raise their awareness for the preservation and dissemination of the values of nature in general, and particularly of the Sobrarbe Geopark.



Meet our Geoparks

All about Lavender in Haute Provence Geopark (France)

Lavender is the Geopark's « star » flower !. Lavender culture is a traditional specific culture from the Haute Provence Geopark and during the summer the lavender fields with their distinctive and attractive color fascinate a large number of visitors. From March to July 2015, a new specific animation will be provided to visitors explaining : lavender culture technics, soils, lavender distillery and lavender products. This animation will be presented by the « Lavender Museum », a new partner of Haute Provence Geopark.



Expedition Gateway at Hondsrug Global Geopark

The Expedition Gateway 'Nature' is the starting point for an expedition to the most beautiful landscapes of the Hondsrug area. Heather as far as the eye can see, winding streams, green meadows in which the most beautiful orchids grow. A peat lake with the blackest water and the whitest cotton-grass. The play of light and shadow on the forest ground, small woodland paths that rise and fall, spring flowers, cornflowers and the scent of camomile in a field of rye. The most surprising thing is the influence that human beings had on this landscape. Even the most unaffected piece of nature would never be what it is now without having been touched by humans.





Geopark Idrija (Slovenia): a new geosite „LAJŠT” in Idrijska Bela to be set

Within the CAMIS project (Coordinated Activities for Management of Isonzo-Soča) in cooperation with our partner Municipality Idrija we will create a geosite, as a meeting place with stone benches and tables, mainly meant for playing traditional social games. In playing these well-known games, instead of using special figures, pebbles from the Idrija riverbed will be used. Playing games and using information from the information board at the venue visitors will get to know the diversity of rocks in the territory of Geopark Idrija. The geosite is dedicated to presenting the geological heritage of the area and expanding the geopark's facilities. It will be finalised by March 2015.

Common activities

Naturtejo and Tianzhushan Global Geoparks engage in an international project for interpreting the geological heritage of the Chinese Geopark.

An international project, coordinated by the China University of Geosciences in Beijing, is being developed by Tianzhushan Global Geopark. The aim of the project is to refresh the interpretation of the remarkable geological heritage of Tianzhushan, including Palaeocene fossil sites, spectacular scenic areas with granite landforms, and the educationally important routes through the ultra-high pressure metamorphic belts. It also includes improvements to signage and information panels, local museums and cultural sites, visitor centers, local schools and family-run hotels. Naturtejo Global Geopark, Portugal was invited to participate in the project under the cooperation agreement signed in July 2014. A multidisciplinary team will work intensively in the field during the next months.



stimulated by the environment and human artistic expression. By using Earth materials, like soil, stone, clay or wood, or by being inspired by the landscapes or rural life, the artists from both regions made, through their work, this interaction more than explicit. The special web site developed to promote the exhibition and the artists can be visited at: <http://geocreating.weebly.com/geocreating.html>. In addition a short, time-lapse video from the exhibition can be viewed here: <http://vimeo.com/111026312>.

Promotion of Psiloritis Geopark (Greece) through Local Art

In 2004 Psiloritis Geopark in Greece focused its efforts on promoting the EGN by developing a special exhibition to publicise Psiloritis Geopark through local art. The name of this very interesting and impressive local art exhibition was "Geocreating" and it was hosted by the Municipal Gallery of Saint Marcus Basilica in Heraklion town of Crete in Greece from 12 to 24 of October 2014. The exhibition presented artworks of the 30 local artists from Psiloritis Natural Park (www.psiloritis-natural-park.gr) and two artists from the aspiring Troodos Geopark in Cyprus (www.troodos-geo.org). The purpose of the exhibition was to demonstrate the interaction between being

Investigating effects of climate change and human activities using sediment DNA and pollen stratigraphy at Traeth Mawr, Fforest Fawr Geopark (UK).

Traeth Mawr, a peat bog in the Fforest Fawr Geopark, is the site of a former lake in which approximately 5 metres of peat, organic and siliclastic lake deposits accumulated during temperate and cold climates over the last 15,000 years. This important site is now the focus for testing and applying new and innovative research using DNA metabarcoding to determine the occurrence and origin of DNA fragments attached to silicate grains and humic substances. Extracted and amplified DNA fragments will be subjected to high-throughput sequencing and used to record occurrences of mammals and waterfowl. The DNA results will, together with pollen stratigraphy, be used to assess the influence of climate change and human activities, including the introduction of grazing animals at this site, on plant and animal biodiversity from prehistoric times to the present day. This research involves scientists from Cardiff University's Schools of Biosciences, Earth and Ocean Sciences, and School of History, Archaeology and Religion, and Fforest Fawr Geopark.



Cooperation with UNESCO World Heritage sites



Geo-workshops with the Geopark Rangers at UNESCO-WHS Messel Pit: Geopark Bergstrasse-Odenwald (Germany)

The Geopark has implemented a "geo-workshop programme" with the Geopark Rangers in cooperation with WHS Messel Pit, a world famous fossil site related to a former volcanic maar structure. The programme reflects the variety of Messel topics, which include "rain forest", "fossils", "Earth history", and "volcanism" and is targeted at children from 7 to 14 years. The Geopark Rangers introduce them to discoveries in Messel Pit through activities like creating fossils using natural materials, building a volcano or exploring the rain forest. Following two very successful years, the geo-workshop programme, which is a part of the cooperation between the Geopark and WHS Messel Pit, will be continued in 2015.

Cooperation with EGN/GGN

Geopark Rokua (Finland): The 13th European Geoparks Conference

Conference theme: Responsible Use of Natural and Cultural Heritage

Rokua Geopark has the honour of hosting the next European Geoparks Conference. The conference will be held in Finland at Rokua Geopark and in the city of Oulu from 3rd to 6th of September 2015. Rokua Geopark is located in Northern Finland. The closest airport, the Oulu Airport, is situated less than an hour's drive from the Geopark. The Geopark's theme, Heritage of the Ice Age, reflects the territory's exceptional record of glacial deposits and landforms created during the last Ice Age.

Conference registration opens February 1st 2015 at www.egnconference2015.com



Agenda/Calendar

European Geoparks Week: May 23th – June 7th 2015

13th European Geoparks Conference: Rokua Global Geopark, Finland, September 3rd - 6th