

# GGN/EGN - Geopark Annual Report 2019

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name, country, regional Network:** Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark, Hungary, European Geoparks Network

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2012 / 2016 (green card: 2017–2020)



**Representative photos:** field trip in the Tapolca Basin for participants of the Interreg Danube GeoTour project meeting (left), Geopark booth at the GoVolcanic event, Budapest (right).

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 1 January–19 May: 3 people in the Geopark Group (2 females, one of them was on maternity leave, 1 male); 20 May–31 December: 3 people (1 female was on maternity leave, 2 males). The number of the management organization staff (members of departments that collaborate with the Geopark Group): 129 employees.

**Number of visitors:** 326,571 (in visitor centres, interpretive sites) + 4,027 participants on guided geotours, geo-educational programmes, etc.)

**Number of Geopark events:** 101

**Number school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 46

**Number of Geopark press release:** 20 interviews and articles in the national and regional media (6 articles, 14 interviews in radio and TV)

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### Major achievements in 2019

- Working on a EU project at 22 geosites, called “Management and Interpretation of the Geological Heritage in Bakony–Balaton Geopark”.
- Presenting our diverse volcanic heritage and the Interreg Danube GeoTour project for Ambassadors of the EU Member States and State of Israel to Hungary at Hegyestű Geological Interpretive Site.
- A new region of the Geopark (Sümege region) was covered by a geotour-guide training course for local people.

### Contribution towards GGN - networking and participation:

- Participation in the 43rd EGN CC meeting in Swabian Alb UGGp (also at the GeoFair with promotional material and local products), Germany and in the 44th EGN CC meeting in Sierra Norte de Sevilla UGGp, Spain (two delegates).
- Participation and oral presentation at the 15th European Geoparks Conference in Sierra Norte de Sevilla UGGp, Spain (two delegates).
- Collecting and preparing for publishing the European Geoparks Week programme/reports 2019 and the GGN annual progress reports from all the members of the EGN.
- Participating in the work of the EGN Volcanic Geoparks Working Group, making our contribution for the future e-book “Volcanoes in Europe Geoparks”.
- Publishing an article in the EGN Magazine Issue 16 (“Routes of fire: wandering on new volcanic trails”).

- Participation in the Danube GeoTour INTERREG DTP project on geotourism networking and development (Coordinator: Ildija UGGp, other partners include 8 Geoparks, total budget: 1,665,509 EUR, budget of our Geopark: 257,000 EUR). Two project partner meetings in our Geopark, the second one was a very successful final event. In the frame of this project, presence of our Geopark staff and our partners at the GGN booth at ITB Berlin.
- EGN Week: one of the most popular events was an outdoor geoeducational programme for families at Hegyestű Geological Interpretive Site, an iconic geosite of our Geopark.
- UNESCO evaluation mission in Kula–Salihli Aspiring UGGp, Turkey (by Alessandra Casini and Barnabás Korbély) in July, submitting the mission report in August.
- Participation at the two meetings of the Hungarian Geoparks Committee in Budapest and in our Geopark, giving a presentation on our Geopark’s activities, revising the National Geopark Concept, discussions with the representatives of Novohrad–Nógrád UGGp and the Aspiring Bükk-vidék Geopark, etc.
- Study tour for visitors from Terras de Cavaleiros UGGp, Portugal.

### Management and financial status

The management organisation of the Geopark is the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate, a regional state organisation, established in 1997 and belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Directorate is headed by the Director, who is an official delegate to the EGN CC. The Bakony–Balaton Geopark Group is an organisational unit of the Directorate, headed by a geoscientist/pedagogue, who is the other delegate to the EGN CC. The Geopark Group staff recently consists of 3 geoscientists (one of them is on maternity leave now: this position to be occupied at the time of making this document), one of the Geopark Group staff members is a specialist on regional development and also a certified geotour-guide. The members of the Geopark Group are also officials in charge of geological nature conservation. The Group closely cooperates with other units, eg. with the 21 members of the Ranger Service, the Department of Nature Conservation (13 employees), the Department of Ecotourism and Environmental Education (32 employees, in which one member is our most active geotour-guide and a geoeducational expert; she has MSc as a secondary school teacher of Geography and Biology). The Geopark Group was established by the Organisational and Operating Rules of the Directorate in 2012, after the successful application to the EGN/GGN. The overall financial status of our Management Organization in 2019:

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>BALANCE</b>	<b>Out of the balance, amount of pre-funded EU and national projects</b>
17 981 574 EUR	9 152 104 EUR	8 829 470 EUR	8 729 102 EUR

### Geoconservation

- Working on a large-scale EU project (“Management and Interpretation of the Geological Heritage in Bakony–Balaton Geopark”) on management of 22 geosites of the Geopark: geological key sections, caves, sinkholes, protected geological nature conservation areas, new nature trails, information booklet with holistic approach in Hungarian and English, etc.), the project budget is 520,867 EUR, anticipated period of the completion:
 

years	2020–2021.
-------	------------

- Preparing the declarations of geological key sections, fossil sites, springs and caves as protected natural monuments.
- Removing the vegetation at geosites by the Geopark Group staff: Palaeokarst of Úrkút Nature Conservation Area, pyroclastic section near Szentbékállá, Permian–Triassic boundary geosite near Csopak, etc.

### **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

- The “flagships” of our Geopark’s information and interpretation activities are the visitor centres, interpretive sites (326,571 visitors in 2019 = the number of people who bought tickets). E.g. the most visited show cave in Hungary is Lake Cave of Tapolca.
- Our Geopark-related nature trails and hundreds of guided geotours (provided by the Geopark staff and our contracted Geopark Partners) also attracted thousands of people.

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

- Presentation for the teachers of the Hungarian members of UNESCO Associated Schools Network.
- Indoor geoeducational programme for school classes in Lake Cave of Tapolca Visitor Centre (Tapolca), the Western Gateway of the Geopark.
- Outdoor geoeducational programme for the participants from the schools of Balaton Uplands at Hegyestű Geological Interpretive Site.
- Interactive oral presentations on International Mountain Day for schoolchildren (in 3 schools).

### **Strategic Partnership**

- Signing cooperation agreements with trained local geotour-guides, our new Geopark Partners.
- “Dino Festival” by the Hungarian Dinosaur Fund at the only Hungarian dinosaur locality, located in our Geopark (Iharkút): geopark booth, visiting the excavations, meeting palaeontologists, thematic programmes, etc.
- Successful application of our Geopark Partner civil organisation, Bakonyalja Barátai Association, for financing a geotour-guide training course to start in the Sümeg region, in co-operation with the Geopark management organisation.

### **Promotional activities**

- New promotional leaflet of our National Park (for year 2019) with logo and main features of visitor centres and interpretive sites of the Geopark (250,000 copies, in Hungarian and English)
- Promotion of the Interreg DTP Danube GeoTour project and of our Geopark, our local products at ITB Berlin.
- Promotion of show/adventure caves of the Geopark in the framework of a national tourism campaign.
- Daily updated website (geopark.hu) with Events Calendar, Facebook page, Instagram profile, mailing lists for our Geopark-fans, tourism leaflets.
- Highly visited Geopark booths in the Valley of Arts Festival (Kapolcs), during “Dino Festival” (Iharkút), at Geological Days (Budapest), at “Earth Science Whirl” (Budapest) and at the GoVolcanic event (Budapest) etc.
- Information and advertisements of the Geopark in the most popular hiking maps of the area.

## **4. Contacts**

**Manager:** Zoltán PUSKÁS, Director of Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate (the Management Organization of our Geopark), puskaszo@bfnp.hu

**Geoscientist:** Barnabás KORBÉLY, korbely@geopark.hu