

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2017

## 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 Photo:** participants and lecturers of the 10<sup>th</sup> geotour-guide training course, held in the Southern Bakony II region of the Geopark, September 2017

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 6 people (3 female, 3 male), including 3 geoscientists on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 4 people (3 female, 1 male), including 3 geoscientists on 31<sup>st</sup> December.

**Number of visitors:** altogether 370,920 (mostly at visitor centres, interpretive sites); from this 6,885 visitors on geo-activity days, geo-events, guided geotours, geopark contest, etc.)

**Number of Geopark events:** 201



**Number school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 75**

**Number of Geopark press release:** 102 interviews and articles in the national and regional media (90 articles, 12 interviews in radio and TV)

### **3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES**

#### **Major achievements in 2017**

- Working on a EU project at 22 geosites, called Management and Interpretation of the Geological Heritage in Bakony–Balaton Geopark.
- Active role in the work of the Hungarian Geoparks Committee (two meetings in 2017).
- Working on the Danube GeoTour INTERREG DTP project on geotourism networking and development.
- A new region of the Geopark (Southern Bakony II) was covered by a geotour-guide training course for local people.

#### **Contribution towards GGN - networking and participation:**

- Participation in the 39th EGN CC meeting in Burren and Cliffs of Moher UGG, Ireland.
- Participation and oral presentation at the 14th European Geoparks Conference in the Azores UGG, Portugal. At the same venue, participation in the 40th EGN CC meeting.
- Collecting and preparing for publishing the European Geoparks Week programme 2017 and the progress reports from all the members of the EGN.
- Participating in the work of the EGN Volcanic Geoparks Working Group, updating the layout design of the future e-book, titled “Volcanoes in Europe Geoparks”.
- Publishing an article in the European Geoparks Magazine, Issue 14 (Alsóörs – a place of connections | The Geosite of the Year).
- Participation in the Danube GeoTour INTERREG DTP project on geotourism networking and development (Coordinator: Idríja UGG, other partners include 9 Geoparks, total budget: 1,665,509 EUR, budget of our Geopark: 257,000 EUR). Kick-off meeting in Idríja UGG, 2nd partner meeting in Styrian Eisenwurzen, Austria.
- Participation and oral presentation in the Workshop of Global Geoparks in South Eastern Europe, Idríja UGG, Slovenia.
- Organisation and wide promotion of the EGN Week: handing over ceremony of a renewed geological nature trail near Alsóörs, a full day geo-programme for pupils in Fonyód, guided geotours, opening a photo exhibition (“Fascinating Hungary”), etc.
- UNESCO revalidation mission in Sierra Norte de Sevilla UGG (Nickolas Zouros, Barnabás Korbély) in June, submitting the mission report in August.
- Study tour, meeting the colleagues in the Hungarian part of Novohrad–Nógrád UGG.

#### **Management and financial status**

The Geopark's organisation and its predecessor organisations have been in operation for decades. The organisation has been operating as Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate since the foundation of the national park, 1997. The Bakony–Balaton Geopark Group, as an organisational unit within the directorate, established in 2012 is responsible for the tasks directly related to the Geopark's goals and it works closely with other units of the directorate (e.g. Ranger Service, Department of Nature Conservation, Department of Ecotourism and Environmental Education, Financial Department). Visitor sites managed by the directorate are operated by permanent and temporary employees or by contracted local entrepreneurs. The management structure is designed especially to enhance protection of natural heritage, thus protection of geological heritage is included. The directorate's substantial activities, experience and existing infrastructure in the field of tourism and connections to local businesses provide an ideal ground for the geopark organisation to promote sustainable regional development for the Geopark area. The Director of the Directorate and the Head of the Bakony–Balaton Group are the two official delegates to the EGN Coordination Committee.

The Geopark's management organisation, the National Park Directorate is a regional state organisation that manages its budget independently. The budget is partly supported by the state via the Ministry of Agriculture and mostly by incomes from tourism and other fields. Within the directorate's budget, the Geopark is supported via the salaries of the Geopark Group staff members and other members and via amounts paid for other costs of the Geopark (office costs, confer-

ence participation costs, GGN Association membership and EGN promotional fees, travel, etc.). Successful project applications prepared by the Geopark Group staff for the development of the Geopark also contribute to the budget. Financial support from the EU, through our successful applications for geotourism investments (eg. building a visitor centre or renewing an exhibition of a visitor centre) and geological nature conservation investments (eg. clearing geosites) in the Geopark are also important elements of the budget. The Geopark Group defines the costs needed for different projects and activities and the Director of the leading organisation makes the decision regarding these costs.

### **Geoconservation**

- Working on an EU project on management of 22 geosites (Management and Interpretation of the Geological Heritage in Bakony–Balaton Geopark: key sections, caves, sinkholes, protected geological nature conservation areas, new nature trails with holistic approach, etc.) of the Geopark (budget appr. 500,000 EUR).
- Preparing the declarations of geological key sections, fossil sites, springs and caves as protected areas/assets.
- Removing the vegetation at geosites by the Geopark Group staff: Red Stone Nature Trail (near Alsóörs village), Palaeokarst of Úrkút Nature Conservation Area, pyroclastic section near Szentbékálla, Permian–Triassic boundary geosite near Csopak.
- Meeting with the Vice-Mayor and Chief Architect of Tapolca about protecting the passages of a unique cave system under the town.

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

- Altogether 144 geotours with 4,280 participants (105 geotours were guided by the staff of the Geopark leading organization, 39 were guided by our Geopark Partners (local entrepreneurs).
- Preparing the publication (revising) of the very first geological walking map in Hungary that covers a part of our Geopark (the vicinity of Csopak village)

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

Indoor activity geological programme for families in Lavender House Visitor Centre (Tihany), the Eastern Gate of the Geopark • Launching 3 new menus in the website of our Geopark: “Man and Landscape” (cultural/intangible heritage), “Diverse Wildlife” and “Sustainability”; publishing numerous articles on these topics • Outdoor activity programmes for students on the Sustainable Development Goals of UN • Guided geo-walk and activities for kids at Hegyestű Geological Interpretive Site • “Car-free days” event in Balatonalmádi • “Meet Santa Claus” programme for children in Lóczy Cave, Balatonfüred.

### **Strategic Partnership**

- Signing cooperation agreements with trained geotour-guides, our Geopark Partners.
- Open days (“Dino Expo”) by the Hungarian Dinosaur Fund at the only Hungarian dinosaur locality, situated in our Geopark (Iharkút): geopark booth, visiting the excavations, meeting researchers, 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 Southern Bakony II. region, in cooperation with the Geopark management organisation.
- Involving the delegates of Fekete Hill Nature Conservation Association for working out the route of a future volcanological nature trail.

### **Promotional activities**

New promotional leaflet (for year 2017) with logo and main features of visitor centres and interpretive sites of the Geopark (250,000 copies, in English and Hungarian) • Promotion of show/adventure caves of the Geopark in the framework of a national tourism campaign • Daily updated website (geopark.hu), Facebook page, Instagram profile, mailing lists for our Geopark-fans, tourism leaflets • Highly visited Geopark booths in the Valley of Arts Festival (Kapolcs), on

“Dino Festival” (Iharkút) and at “Earth Science Whirl” (Budapest), etc. • Information and advertisements on the Geopark in the hiking maps of the area.

#### **4. Contacts**

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