

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2020

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name, country, regional Network:** Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark, Portugal, EGN

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2020

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staff:** 8 staff including 5 geoscientist(s)

**Number of visitors:** 3000

**Number of Geopark events:** Clarify the events held by management body and cooperative organization

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programs:** 55 indoor + 16 outdoor

**Number of Geopark press releases:** 25

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### Major achievements in 2020

- National Tourism Award

The National Tourism Award was created with the aim of promoting, encouraging and distinguishing the best entities, practices and projects in the tourism sector. In the third edition of the National Tourism Award, the Portuguese businesses/projects that stand out as success cases were awarded, under the categories of Authentic Tourism, Gastronomic Tourism, Inclusive Tourism, Innovative Tourism and Sustainable Tourism. The Estrela Geopark was one of the 10 finalists for this award in the Sustainable Tourism category.

- Geoconservation Award (ProGEO-Portugal)

The Geoconservation Award aims to reward a local entity that distinguishes itself in the implementation of strategies for the conservation and enhancement of the Geological Heritage of its municipality.

This initiative aims to:

- Distinguish the best examples of GeoHeritage conservation promoted by municipalities;
- Stimulate critical reflection on the need to preserve Geological Heritage and encourage municipalities to adopt strategies and procedures towards it;
- Disseminate and raise awareness among the general public about the recognition of the value of GeoHeritage as an integral part of Natural Heritage;
- Motivate the media to debate on the role of Geology in contemporary society.

### Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

- Estrela's Conferences

The Estrela's Conferences are public sessions promoted by the Estrela UGGp to gather ideas and answer questions from citizens, also involving stakeholders and decision-makers, They have been important to build bridges, clarify ideas and involve the population in the geopark. Due to the pandemic, the 3rd edition was held entirely in virtual mode.

- Welcome for new UNESCO Global Geoparks 2020

The event took place in July of 2020 and aimed at introducing the new members of the Global Geoparks Network, fostering knowledge and networking among all 169 Global Geoparks

- Network meetings – SESDNet

Within the framework of the "Meetings of the Science and Education Network for Sustainability of the Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark", the first meeting of the network was held on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, in webinar format, where the initiatives that are being developed for the sustainability of the territory of the Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark were presented. The strategy outlined for Science is focused on research in specific disciplinary areas, sometimes transversal, that can promote a structural transformation, namely in the area of training and empowerment of the territory, contributing for decision-makers in different contexts and the public administration itself, teachers and students, professionals in the area of tourism, restaurants and hotels, among many others, to obtain the appropriate training to act and work in a world in transition.

## Management and Financial Status

- Environmental Fund – Estrela Educa

During 2020, the Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark prepared an application to the Environmental Fund with the project "EstrelaEduca: educational resources for the enhancement of the Natural Heritage of the Estrela Geopark" which intends to develop an online educational platform, with didactic resources of different typologies, suitable for each school level, which have the natural heritage of the Estrela Geopark as a tool. Also in this project, an animated video was produced, aimed at the children and youth audience, which presents in accessible language the natural heritage of the Estrela Geopark as well as the objectives of the UNESCO Global Geoparks.

- Turismo de Portugal – Great Route of the Estrela Geopark

Integrated in the Line of Support to the Touristic Enhancement of the Interior, The Great Route of the Estrela Geopark is a set of walking (300km) and cycling (360km) trails which, in an integrated and complementary way, intend to promote the visitation of all the Geopark and its geosites (places of geological interest). Creating cohesion in the existing tourism offer and in the promotion of new businesses, it reuses the old ICNF routes, connecting them with the existing ones in the municipalities (that stop at their borders), with the 2 Great Routes and also with all the Geopark's Gates. Between walking and cycling trails, this project will cover about 760km of shepherds' trails, old paths or more modern ones, passing through a minimum of paved roads, although, even in this case, the route will always follow secondary roads with reduced traffic, allowing the visitation and interpretation of 75 of the 144 geosites inventoried so far, corresponding to more than 60% of its totality.

## Geoconservation

- Broadening of the Geosites network

The update of the current list of geosites of the Estrela Geopark is a continuous process which aims to increase the knowledge about each of the sites, using research and field work. This process also assumes the inventory of new sites of geological interest that may integrate the official list of geosites. In this process 20 new Geosites were added.

## Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Astronomy in August

Astronomy Observation is an increasingly recurrent and sought after practice in Serra da Estrela. In this sense, the Estrela Geopark considers the development of astronomy activities throughout the year important. These activities promote a new touristic product in Serra da Estrela and reinforce the touristic offer of this territory, reaching other touristic segments.

- Walk with Science in the Estrela Geopark

The activity "Walk with Science in Estrela Geopark" travels to walk through routes and trails already identified and approved, but little known. This activity happens once a month, rotating through the 9 municipalities and allows tourists and the local community to know and interpret this territory

- Photography Workshop

This Photography Workshop took place in February of 2020 and aimed to be much more than a simple learning experience, intending that through the lens one can experience the identity of this territory, get to know breath-taking places and share knowledge with other photographers. Between the iconic glacial valleys of Loriga, Zêzere or Alforfa, through the imposing covões, such as the Ametade, or the majestic rocky peaks of the cântaros Magro, Gordo and Raso, without forgetting the enigmatic beauty of Poço do Inferno, this is a journey that enables a deeper knowledge of the territory, allowing new photographic experiences.

- Workshop de Astrofotografia

The territory of Serra da Estrela holds within itself a very particular geography, with a unique landscape, reflecting millions of years of evolution recognised by UNESCO as a Global Geopark. In this sense, we believe that the landscape that the mountain brings us, combined with millions of stars in the background, is an excellent setting for the Landscape Astrophotography Workshop, during the month of September of 2020. This initiative of the Estrela Geopark allowed the photographic capture of constellations, planets and identify

the best places to do it, capturing the sky in tune with our unique landscapes.

- **World Tourism Day Celebrations**

This is a celebration that has taken place every year since 1980 and aims to reinforce the importance of tourism worldwide. Having in mind that Tourism is one of the pillars of any UNESCO Global Geopark, the Estrela UGGp promoted, on the 27th of September, the Interpretative Route "Lagoas e Covões". The interpretative routes of the Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark constitute an opportunity to know territory of the Estrela Mountain range and to discover the particularities of its landscape and its heritage.

- **Sustainability Card of the Estrela Geopark**

The Sustainability Card of the Estrela Geopark is a fundamental instrument for the management of the Estrela Geopark Association (AGE), based on two main objectives: i. Generate revenue for AGE; ii. Promote and leverage the tourist offer of the Estrela Geopark territory, from a structured network of partners.

- **Interpretative Routes**

The interpretative routes (IR) are part of the structured tourism offer of the Estrela Geopark and a basic element of Nature Tourism. In order to meet the increasing demand for these trails, the Estrela UGGp has structured a set of 6 IR with the following themes: Water, Castles, Viewpoints, Religious, Textile Industry, Lakes and Overdeepenings. The interpretative routes of the Estrela Geopark are an opportunity to know the territory of the Estrela Mountain and discover the particularities of its landscape and a unique heritage. The set of interpretative routes are a way to, interpreted or freely, know this Geopark better, constituting authentic journeys through castles, viewpoints, and the religious and industrial heritage of Estrela, but also journeys through water and through the landforms of the last glaciation, visible in the highest sectors of the Estrela mountain. On the seven routes available, one discovers a different Estrela and interpret its undeniable heritage classified as a UNESCO Global Geopark.

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

- **Biennium for Climate Action**

The project contributes to the strengthening of networks, as defined in the 17<sup>th</sup> Objective of the 2030 agenda. As such, the objectives of the "Biennium for Climate Change in Portuguese Geoparks" are as follows:

- Identify the main potential impacts of climate change on territories;
- Propose climate change mitigation and adaptation actions;
- Involve the civil and school community, making them aware of this problem;
- Strengthen the role of UNESCO Global Geoparks as laboratories for education and science;
- Foster networking between Portuguese Geoparks and aspiring territories.

## **Strategic partnership**

- **Cycle of Webinars | Portuguese UNESCO Geoparks**

The Portuguese UNESCO Global Geoparks, in partnership with Turismo de Portugal, organised the Cycle of Webinars dedicated to this important UNESCO classification.

Between the 9<sup>th</sup> of July and the 24<sup>th</sup> of September we got to know the challenges, heritage, strategies and tourism values of these 5 Portuguese destinations, internationally recognised by the United Nations Organisation for Science, Education and Culture.

Several themes on the structuring areas of a Geopark were addressed.

The topics discussed were:

1. The challenges of the Portuguese Geoparks in the internal market (Portugal and Spain), in a pandemic context
2. Geological Heritage and Geotourism
3. Geoparks and Sustainable Development
4. Communication in Geoparks
5. The UNESCO brand and tourism activity

- **GEOfood**

The GEOfood brand is in essence a strategy to support local communities and enhance existing endogenous products in UNESCO classified territories. GEOfood aims to support territories, giving them tools to strengthen their local economy, working on the various Sustainable Development Goals. The GEOfood certification is exclusive for small and medium enterprises existing in Geopark territories, which

have food products produced from local raw materials.

#### Objectives:

- strengthen the link between local stakeholders and Geopark identity
- raise awareness among the general public about the relationship between food commodities and the unique local geological heritage
- create a network of partners within UNESCO Global Geoparks under the common mission to influence local, regional and national policies for an innovative food and land planning system that can strengthen urban-rural linkages.

- **EEA Grants**

The Estrela UGGp, in conjunction with the Gea Norvegica UGGp, from Norway, and the Katla UGGp, from Iceland, started the project "Building Bridges - Sharing good practices among UNESCO Global Geoparks", funded by the EEA Grants Bilateral Relations Fund. Based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda, in particular SDG 17, "promote global partnerships for sustainable development", the initiative aims to strengthen relationships and closer action between geoparks that integrate the European network, fostering the development and sharing of innovative tools and approaches for the sustainable development of territories and communities.

- **Highlands.3**

The HIGHLANDS Project, (H2020-MSCA-RISE-2019), developed by a large network of 42 international institutions, aims to contribute to Inclusive Sustainable Development through collective Research and Innovation sessions, oriented towards capacity building and knowledge sharing, experience and tool development. It will promote, over the next 4 years (2019-2023), a process of research and co-innovation through specific mobilities, involving public and private, academic and non-academic organisations, to build a shared vision, enhance the capacities of researchers, resource managers and users and policy makers, bridging the gap between research and territorial development in mountain territories.

#### **Promotional activities**

- **Monthly publications**

The Estrela UNESCO Global Geopark has been working, since May of 2020, with several media from the territory in the creation of a monthly collaboration with newspapers and radios of the 9 municipalities. Over the last months, this Geopark prepares and elaborates monthly publications about its work, focusing on the most diverse areas of study of this Geopark, from Geoconservation, Science, Education, Tourism to Communication.

- **Strengthening of social networks**

The social networks are one of the strongest promotional engines of the moment and in this sense the Estrela Geopark has been increasingly betting on its communication through this platforms, fostering the sense of belonging of the local populations and arousing the curiosity of its possible visitors/tourists. At this moment, the Estrela UGGp has Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and Youtube.

#### **4. CONTACTS**

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