

Contributions to Magazine 6 provide insights into the range of activities within the European Geoparks Network (EGN). In keeping with the aims of its Charter, Geoparks adopt a holistic approach to their territories, using geology, landscape, archaeology, natural history and culture to develop geotourism, promote education and contribute to economic development. In order to share experiences, consolidate and develop the aims of the Network, its members meet twice yearly. Recent meetings include the 22nd EGN - Coordination Meeting in Bohemian Paradise Geopark in 2008 where Adamello - Brenta Nature Park was accepted as the 32nd member of the EGN. At the 23rd EGN - Coordination Meeting hosted by Sardinia Geominerario Park two Geoparks, GeoMon and Arouca Geopark, became the latest members of the Network. A new concept, 'thematic networks', was adopted to encourage collaboration between

Geoparks with a common geological heritage.

EGN activities in 2008 include the successful European Geoparks Week, involving over 32,000 visitors, 405 events and 300 press articles. The contribution by Naturtejo Geopark provides a flavour of activities offered during Geoparks Week. European Geoparks, a book published by the EGN, was designed to introduce the general public to the varied and fascinating nature of Geoparks.

Contributions from individual Geoparks describe activities delivered or initiated in 2008. Geopark Harz Braunschweiger Land Ostfalen outlines research projects on the Palaeocene/Eocene Thermal Maximum Event and the Triassic/Jurassic Oxygen Minimum Event. The North West Highlands Geopark describes evidence for a late Precambrian meteorite strike. English Riviera Geopark describes the success of a major funding application under the UK Government Seachange Funding Programme. Beigua Geopark celebrated the International Year of Planet Earth with an exhibition emphasizing geoconservation. Geopark Bergstrasse Odenwald communicated Earth history through art and music. A study day at Madonie introduced professional geologists, teachers and students to geotourism. Copper Coast Geopark and Geopark Schwabian Alb highlight activities in their respective Geopark Centre and Infocentre. Park Naturel Regional du Luberon and Sobrarbe Geopark describe cycling routes promoting the exploration of their Geoparks. Terra.vita Nature Park explores the use of geocaching to engage people with the landscape. Young visitors to Naturpark Steirische Eisenwurzen are given a hands-on experience in the Water Adventure Park at St. Gallen. Sardinia Geominerario Park introduces the reader to its rich industrial archaeology. Mecklenburg Ice Age Park describes networking with colleagues from the Netherlands through a workshop initiated by ProGEO.

Congratulations to Cabo de Gata - Nijar Natural Park and Sierras Subbéticas Natural Park on the award of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in 2008.

European Geoparks are also members of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN). In 2008, Terra.vita Geopark hosted the 3rd International UNESCO Geoparks Conference in Osnabrück. The associated Global Geoparks' Fair provided 5000 visitors with an opportunity to learn about the EGN and GGN. The conference produced the Osnabrück Conference Declaration affirming the role of Geoparks in protecting the Earth's geological heritage, using that heritage for economic development and in communicating issues like global climate change to the public. Geopark Bergstrasse Odenwald describes its successful partnership with the Global Geopark Mt. Lushan (PR China), an example of international cooperation.

The projects, initiatives and activities described in this issue demonstrate the success of the EGN. We 'live in interesting times'. A global economic crisis and the even more serious issue of global climate change present the world with challenging problems. The EGN, with its emphasis on economic development, education, communication and above all through the cooperation of its members, can contribute to the debate to find resolutions to these problems.

Tony Ramsay, Member of the Editorial Board



Geoparks

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