

## GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

### 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

**Geopark name, country, regional Network:** Buzău Land UNESCO Global Geopark, Romania, European Geoparks Network

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2022 / 2022



Fieldwork during the “4th Regional Workshop for Europe on the Role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites”, co-organized and hosted by our UGGp in November 2022, with specialists from over 17 European countries.

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 10 staffs including 2 geoscientist(s)

**Number of visitors:** Visitors estimated to 130,000, based on data from two geosites and one museum.

**Number of Geopark events:** 6 main events: International Geodiversity Day, Earth Day, World Water Day, International Education Week, European Researchers' Night, 4th Regional Workshop for Europe on the Role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 8 schools currently use Geopark Infrastructure for their weekly science classes.

**Number of Geopark press release:** 2 press releases and over 10 interviews (radio, TV and papers)

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### Major achievements in 2022

- Marked two hiking trails to important geosites and cultural sites, hardly accessible before (The Eternal Flames, the Rock-Hewn Dwellings from Cozianca Meadow).
- Finished the work on the GeoGate Visiting Center, which we have officially opened in January 2023.
- Together with the Institute for Earth Physics, we installed two permanent seismic stations (with seismometers) in the UGGp, for research purposes and monitoring of the Vrancea seismogenic area, which partly overlaps with our territory.
- We set-up two new permanent science laboratories in schools from poor communities (FutureLabs), which means completely refurbishing classrooms with new furniture, optical microscopes, digital magnifiers, thin sections and specimens, computers, digital sensors for measuring air and water chemical and physical parameters. This are huge upgrades for our schools, where scientific education otherwise relies only on blackboard and books.
- We built two "Plastic Mills" to serve 10 communities (mayoralities), with a total number of over 25,000 beneficiaries. "Plastic Mills" are local recycling centers for plastic, enabling communities not only to collect their own plastic waste, but also to grind it, melt it and pour it in molds, making new objects from recycled plastic. It is a way of transforming waste into resources, with positive impact on the environment and on local circular economy. The Plastic Mills contain granulator machines (for grinding plastic), injection and extrusion machines (for melting and pouring) and aluminum molds (for the end-products).

- We created three new geo-products together with a local artisan.

### **Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation**

- We collaborated with the European Geoparks Network and the Global Geoparks Network for the inclusion of Buzău Land UGGp in promotional campaigns on social media and in two written publications (EGN magazine and the new Geopark's book).
- We collaborated with the Karawanken-Karavanke UGGp (Austria and Slovenia) and with Lanzarote and Chinijo Islands UGGp (Spain), supporting them with information and materials about our UGGp, for their visitor centers.
- We participated in the EGN meeting in autumn.
- Between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November we hosted in our UGGp and co-organized together with the UNESCO Venice Office, with Buzău County Council and the University of Bucharest, the "4th Regional Workshop for Europe on the Role of Visitor Centres in UNESCO Designated Sites - Tourism Sustainability and Visitors Management".

### **Management and Financial Status**

- Buzău Land UNESCO Global Geopark is managed by the Buzău Land NGO (non-governmental organization), in close cooperation with the Buzău County Council (regional administration) and University of Bucharest. In 2022 de UGGp had a budget of 90,000 euro from the Buzău County Council and an extra budget of over 90,000 euro attracted by the Buzău Land NGO from private companies.

### **Geoconservation**

- We identified a new sandstone concretions geosite, "The Mushrooms from Odăile", and started the collaboration with the local community to prepare a hiking trail to this objective (which will connect the geosite with a village and with an old, XVIII century church) and to grant it protected area status. This will be achieved in 2023.
- We identified a new geosite, a voluminous deposit of volcanic ash previously unknown due to its remote location (in a deep valley surrounded by forests). Based on analyses that our geologist performed, we know it is an ultra-distal deposit (hundreds of km away from the volcanic source) and that it has a preliminary age of ~ 13 million years (U-Pb zircon dating). We plan to continue the analyses so we can have data for interpretation, and then prepare a thematic hiking trail.

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

- We supported the formation of the "Slow Food Community Buzău Land", where the UGGp is a founding member, and now we actively support producers in the Geopark and surrounding areas. This includes promotion, visibility, networking, participating at regular meetings, organizing market fairs and Slow Food Travel opportunities in the UGGp.
- The UGGp organized guided tours for tourists, visiting amber, salt, eternal flames and mud volcano geosites.
- The UGGp collaborated with the County Council for setting up the Buzău County Tourism Strategy, which is correlated to that of the Geopark.

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

- In 2022 the UGGp has partnered with two important research institutions in Romania, the Institute of Earth Physics and the Institute for Geography of the Romanian Academy, to collaborate on landslides. This collaboration has two important components: (1) research and (2) developing educational programmes and materials for schools, both for their curricula, but also for extra-curricular activities performed by the UGGp staff. The work is set to start in 2023.

### **Strategic partnership**

- We extended our partnerships with the Institute of Geography of the Romanian Academy, with the Institute of Earth Physics, and with two private companies which are important stakeholders in the region (SOMACO – cement making, Ursus – brewery).

### **Promotional activities**

- Launched five new videos on our YouTube channel (own production), promoting the UGGp and the local heritage (<https://www.youtube.com/tinutulbuzaului>).
- We prepared a short film for international film festivals, "The Old Man and the Grass", which participated in 2022 at the biggest rural film festival in Europe, Agrofest. It is set to participate in more film festivals in 2023. It is a movie about longevity and natural, sustainable lifestyle, featuring a local who is over 100 years old.
- We filmed materials for four other videos, including one dedicated to amber. They will go into the processing and launch phases in 2023.
- Co-organized a promotional event, 'Treasure Games in the Geopark', where 10 influencers

spent 5 days in the UGGp on a treasure hunt, discovering places and people and being confronted with different tasks and challenges. This resulted in a “reality-show” type web-series available on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@treasuregamesro/videos>).

- We collaborated with British documentary film producer Charlie Ottley for an episode of the new season "Flavours of Romania", dedicated our UGGp, which will be aired on Netflix.
- We collaborated with British documentary film producer Scott Ramsey to make a film dedicated to amber (both from a geological and cultural point of view), which will air on BBC.
- We hosted an episode of a popular web-series in Romania, "The Flavor of Summer Memory".
- The UGGp promotion was constant on social media networks (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) and on the Geopark's website, with a reach of over 382,000 people on the website, over 100,000 people on Facebook and Instagram and a total of 43,500 video views on YouTube.
- We prepared 3 new geo-booklets promoting (1) The Mud Volcanoes (including hiking trails), (2) The Rock-Hewn Dwellings (including hiking trails), (3) local foods and people.

#### 4. CONTACTS

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