

Basic Information:

Geopark Name: Catalunya Central UGGp

Size: 1317 km²

Longitude: E1°53'49.0"

Latitude: N41°48'15.0"

Revalidation: 2016, 2021 (postponed to 2021) and 2024

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Celebrating Earth Heritage

The Catalunya Central UGGp, located in the heart of Catalonia, contains numerous geological and mining heritage sites. A strong human presence has also given this territory a great personality, culture, and traditions.

Until more than 36 million years ago, across much of the central part of Catalonia, a sea evaporated and finally disappeared with the rise of some mountain chains like the Pyrenees in the north. This process left spectacular rock formations and rich natural resources, which defined the landscape and the settlers of the territory of the Geopark. Rocks are essentially sedimentary from the Eocene and early Oligocene ages and were deposited first in marine environments and after being isolated from the sea (about 36 million years ago) with fluvio-lacustrine sediments. The Catalan Potassic Basin (the end of the marine basin) is a world-relevant example of the sedimentation of marine evaporitic rocks, with minerals such as halite (common salt) and sylvite (potash) formed 36 million years ago in a dynamic tectonic context. Furthermore, the territory also has unique elements internationally recognized, such as the mountains of Montserrat and Sant Llorenç del Munt, which were ancient littoral fan deltas. Others are karstic elements such as Montserrat caves and El Toll Caves, the latter with significant prehistoric, faunistic and human remains. The most southerly manifestations of the Pyrenean tectonics are apparent in representative geomorphology. Essential findings of Quaternary terrestrial vertebrate fossils in the fluvial terraces, among others, are prominent aspects of our geological heritage.

Sustaining local Communities

The Catalunya Central UGGp includes 30 municipalities from Bages County, five from Moianès County (at the east), and one municipality belonging to Baix Llobregat County bordering from the south. The population is around 195.000 inhabitants, with a density of 168 inhabitants per km² (2022 census).

The Catalunya Central UGGp has two Nature Parks with an identifying skyline landscape. Several interpretation and information centres welcome visitors and coordinate different geo-activities. One particular centre is the Geology Museum Valentí Masachs, which goes beyond a classical museum in showing people how geological materials are used.

Each of these centres also carries out educational programs related to geology, nature, environmental education, and historical heritage, including medieval villages, Romanesque art, etc. Moreover, teachers have the support of an Educational Centre that creates and leads activities to foster the territory, environment, and geology. Catalunya Central UGGp works with schools and universities to contribute to sustainability culture and research and promote the conservation of its geological heritage.

Catalunya Central UGGp is a unifying project that highlights the geological and mining attractions of the area, as well as the tourist assets under a common denominator, geotourism, with an exciting and high-quality offer, integrating culture, nature, geology, mining and gastronomy. Geotourism must be understood as the activity that supports or even improves the geological character of the territory, including its culture, environment, heritage and the well-being of its residents. The Geopark takes advantage of the force of geotourism to economically and socially stimulate the whole territory for a more balanced development. Public and private initiatives are related to territory values and promote economic, social and environmental sustainability (stakeholders' formation and certification, local products, cuisine, branding, etc.). Our Geopark fosters research and awareness of the values of local heritage (natural and cultural) and, of course, of the geological heritage. The idea of sustainable improvement allows for development based on the self-identifying characteristics of the territory.

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