

GGN/EGN - Geopark Annual Report 2021

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 / 2021 (the last revalidation of our Geopark was postponed from 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The recent period of designation: 1 January 2021 – 31 December 2024.



Representative photograph: the exhibition hall of the new Lóczy Cave Visitor Centre in Balatonfüred (opened in July 2021).

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staffs: two people in the Geopark Group (two geoscientists, one of them is also a regional development specialist). The number of Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate (our management organization) staff: 129 employees (members of the departments permanently collaborate with the Geopark Group).

Number of visitors: 277,199 (in visitor centres, interpretive sites within the Geopark territory), 1,645 participants on 53 guided geotours by our Geopark Staff, 22 guided geotours by our contracted Geopark Partners, geo-educational programmes, etc.)

Number of Geopark events: 90

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes: 14

Number of Geopark press release: 6 interviews and articles in the national and regional media (2 article, 4 interviews in radio and TV)

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2021

- Handover of the new Lóczy Cave Visitor Centre in Balatonfüred (content of its exhibition was partly created by our Geopark staff).
- Successful revalidation visit of Henning Zellmer and Bojan Režun in our Geopark.
- Working on a EU project at 22 geosites, called “Management and Interpretation of the Geological Heritage in Bakony–Balaton Geopark”.
- Declarations of protection for geological key sections and springs.

Contribution towards GGN - networking and participation:

- Participation in digital fora of the EGN and GGN.
- Installing new welcome panels along busy public roads with the new UGGp logo.
- Delegation of Edina Hajdú university student to the GGN Youth Forum, hosting her for a 3-day visit in our Geopark.

- Barnabás Korbély was the co-author of another article in the EGN Magazine issue 18: “The European Geoparks Week 2020”.
- EGN Week 2021: popular guided geotours in numerous regions of the Geopark.
- Contacting one of our most active Geopark Partners with other European Geoparks in the frame of Erasmus+ “Adult education methodology development of geohike-guides and handicraft colleagues at BAB Association” project; the second study tour was in Papuk UNESCO Global Geopark, Croatia.
- Desktop evaluation of the Toratau aUGGp (Russia) documentation for the IUGS, by Barnabás Korbély.

Management and financial status

The management organisation of the Geopark is the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate, a regional state organisation, established in 1997 and belonging to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Directorate is headed by the Director, who is an official delegate to the EGN CC. The Bakony–Balaton Geopark Group is an organisational unit of the Directorate, headed by a geoscientist/pedagogue, who is the other delegate to the EGN CC. The Geopark Group staff recently consists of two geoscientists (one of them is also a specialist on regional development and a certified geotour-guide). The members of the Geopark Group are also officials in charge of geological nature conservation. The Group closely cooperates with other units, eg. with the 21 members of the Ranger Service, the Department of Nature Conservation (13 employees), the Department of Ecotourism and Environmental Education (32 employees, in which one member is our most active geotour-guide and a geoeducational expert; she has MSc as a secondary school teacher of Geography and Biology). The Geopark Group was established by the Organisational and Operating Rules of the Directorate in 2012, after the successful application to the EGN/GGN. The overall financial status of our Management Organization in 2021:

INCOME	EXPENDITURE	BALANCE
10 916 786 EUR	9 143 801 EUR	1 772 986 EUR

Geoconservation

- Working on a large-scale EU project (“Management and Interpretation of the Geological Heritage in Bakony–Balaton Geopark”) on management of 22 geosites of the Geopark: geological key sections, caves, sinkholes, protected geological nature conservation areas, new nature trails, information booklet with holistic approach in Hungarian and English, etc.), the project budget is 520,867 EUR, anticipated period of the completion: 2023.
- Surveying numerous natural springs, preparation for their declaration of protection by the nature conservation authorities.
- Removing the vegetation at geosites by the Geopark Group staff and by contracted entrepreneurs: two geological key sections in Bakony Mts, Palaeokarst of Úrkút Nature Conservation Area, pyroclastic section near Szentbékállá, Permian–Triassic boundary geosite near Csopak, etc.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- The “flagships” of our Geopark’s information and interpretation activities are the visitor centres, interpretive sites (277,199 visitors in 2021 = the number of visitors who bought tickets). E.g. the most visited show cave in Hungary is the Lake Cave of Tapolca, the Western Gateway of our Geopark.
- Our Geopark-related nature trails and numerous guided geotours (provided by the Geopark staff and our contracted Geopark Partners) also attracted thousands of people.
- Complete renewal of a Geopark-related nature trail in Szigliget village (as a result of a cooperation with the local community).

- New guided geotours by e-bikes.

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

- Geoeducational programmes for school classes in Lake Cave of Tapolca Visitor Centre (the Western Gateway of the Geopark), in Balatonfüred, Szentbékállá, Balatonalmádi, Litér, Csopak, Úrkút, Mencshely and Nemesvámos.

Strategic Partnership

- Meeting with local professionals and decision makers in Baranya County about the planned Mecsek–Villány Geopark project.
- Cooperation agreement with a new Geopark Partner School in Tapolca, working with them on an Erasmus+ project (VR@Geoparks).
- Signing cooperation agreements with trained local geotour-guides, our new Geopark Partners.

Promotional activities

- New promotional leaflet of our National Park (for year 2021) with logo and main features of visitor centres and interpretive sites of the Geopark (250,000 copies, in Hungarian and English)
- Daily updated website (geopark.hu) with Events Calendar, Facebook page (more than 8,000 followers), Instagram profile, mailing lists for our Geopark-fans, tourism leaflets.
- Information and advertisements of the Geopark in the most popular hiking maps of the area.

4. CONTACTS

Manager: Mr Zoltán PUSKÁS, Director of Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate (the Management Organization of our Geopark), puskaszoltan@bfnp.hu

Geoscientist: Mr Barnabás KORBÉLY, korbely@geopark.hu