

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2022

## 1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

### **Geopark name, country, regional Network:**

Famenne-Ardenne UNESCO Global Geopark, Belgium, European Geopark Network

**Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation:** 2018 / 2021

Representative photo with caption (Geopark Day 2022)



## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 4 staffs including 2 geoscientists

**Number of visitors:** 210.000 visitors (Han caves - major geosite)

**Number of Geopark events:**

- events held by management body : 3
- cooperative organization : 5

**Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:** 15

**Number of Geopark press release:** 7

## 3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

### **Major achievements in 2022**

The Geopark has identified reference geosites for the installation of interpretative panels in 4 languages: French, English, Dutch and German. The contents present a popularised text of the geosite with additional scientific figures and photos.

A timeline identifies the geological or archaeological periods according to the geosite.

A QRCode provides a link to the Geopark website for more comprehensive information. As mentioned above, relevant pictograms encourage the visitor to respect the geosite to ensure its maximum protection and preservation.

Following the experts' visit, one of their recommendations is to create a "Geopark House". This reception point has to be central, allowing visitors to get to know our Famenne-Ardenne Geopark, its potential and other reception sites. The most important criteria for choosing a reception site for a Geopark Famenne-Ardenne house are :

- Accessibility and visibility ;
- Possible reception of visitors ;
- Geosite ;
- Possibilities of educational activities, conferences, ... ;
- Holistic" aspect of a Geopark that can be exploited.

Our objective is to set up the reception centre of the Famenne-Ardenne Geopark on the geosite of the Grotte de Lorette in Rochefort by March 2023. The coordination of the project began in 2022.

In order to complete this project, we have received confirmation in 2022 of a grant of 28,000 euros from the French community, following a request submitted to the Minister Valérie Glatigny. The purpose of the subsidy request was to produce short educational and pedagogical films with the objective of mediating on climate change and to produce panels to raise awareness of the scientific themes of the Geopark located in the Geopark House.

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

\*Our manager gave a lecture during the Digital Course on UNESCO Global Geoparks and Geotourism, the theme concerned green tourism.

\*In September our delegates participated in 16<sup>th</sup> EGN conference in Italy.

\*In partnership with the Polytechnic University of Turin and DeepBlue, we took part in the development of a proposal for the Horizon Europe call. This call aims at a better understanding of the behavioural and psychological reactions of citizens in the event of a natural disaster or crisis situation. We have been selected to join the socio-economic study laboratory of the call in direct partnership with Psiloritis UGGp and Naturtejo UGGp. Europe's decision on the financing of the project will be known in a few months.

\*In 2022 : with Möllerdall UGGp as pilot, creation of a short 90-second promotional film involving the following UGGp: De Hondsrug, Famenne-Ardenne, TerraVita, Vulkaneifel and Möllerdall.

\*The European Megalithic Culture Route serves as a platform for museums, geoparks, scientists and tourism experts from Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden to highlight the outstanding importance of megalithic culture for European history, to rediscover and promote the tourist value of its monuments and, in this way, to improve their protection as part of the common cultural heritage. In september 2022, the Geopark of Sobrarbe (Spain) proposed to the Geoparks Famenne-Ardenne and Causses du Quercy to join the association, given their megalithic heritage. Both have expressed their interest.

\*Our Geopark has designated one representative for Belgium to take part actively in the UGG youth forum. Louise Mertz was present at the 1st meeting in Bali. It has ensure nice and interesting exchanges with the others participants with other Geoparks from all over the world

### **Management and Financial Status**

We received funding of 47.900 € from our partner municipalities. We also received our annual subsidy of 150.000 € from our regional government.

### **Geoconservation**

The year 2021 was marked in Belgium by major floods in mid-july.

In 2022, in relation with the grant of 28,000 euros from the French community, we're going to produce educational and pedagogical films with the objective of mediating on climate change. Launched in 2022, the project content will be developped with testimonies from inhabitants and scientists.

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

Within the framework of projects managed via European funds, the Geopark has joined forces with the Maison du Tourisme Famenne-Ardenne. The aim of the project is to position the area as an area of excellence by associating it with a green and sustainable identity. Over the years, environmental concerns have become a societal issue at the heart of all discussions. Climate change, depletion of the earth's resources... so many factors that lead us to think about this issue and to work differently. The whole economic sector is concerned, including tourism. Considered as one of the pillars of the economic development of our territory, it is all the more important to play a major role in green tourism in order to limit the ecological footprint of the activity.

This project has given rise to various media:

\*a vade-mecum of good environmental practices for tourist operators

\*a flyer for tourists on good practices, TV spots, formations for tourism stakeholders,...

Alongside all the actions already carried out at local level, these supports will contribute to gradually positioning our territory as a true sustainable destination.

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

\*The educational activities carried out by our geologist have met with great success after emails were sent to all the primary and secondary school administrations in the Geopark territory.

The work required the creation of pedagogical supports for students and teachers. On this basis, walks are organised free of charge from the school, followed by class work on the rocks of the area. The activity can take a full day or be spread over two days.

Each activity requires a thorough survey to have an optimal knowledge of the potential of the area.

\*We also reintroduced our training courses for our partners: Gîte KALEO and Guides of the Domaine des Grottes de Han.

\*As far as our activities for the Geopark public (inhabitants, visitors, partners ....) are concerned, we have set up, in collaboration with the Beauraing Tourist Office, guided walks with a Geopark theme.

\*Finally, we have established a programme of 2 guided walks for the Geopark's partners (tourism, municipal staff, partners, etc.) on the basis of our geotrails. It was also the opportunity to present the richness of our local producers.

### **Strategic partnership**

We continued to develop our network of local and academic partners.

On the basis of our partner charter, a control grid with objective criteria (mandatory and optional) and an agreement, we have labelled brand new "Geopark Partners". These include hotels, gîtes, bed and breakfasts, restaurants and local producers. Following various exchanges with our partners, including a "training" evening dedicated to them, we created various projects together on which we could collaborate or simply communicate with them.

We defined with all our partners what it is to be a "Geopark Partner" and the actions they must or can carry out. As a Partner, they can use the logo of our Geopark on their products (beer, cheese, cured meats, etc.) and they must also put this logo on all their promotional material (tourist guide, brochures, website, etc.). Any use of our logo requires prior control by the Famenne-Ardenne UGGp team. Following the signature of their agreement with our Geopark, they are also part of a sustainable economic, social, cultural and ecological development approach. Beyond this educational and training aspect of sustainable development, we very often call upon our partners to highlight them during the filming of TV programmes or other media actions. They are the ambassadors of a certain know-how of our territory. All our partners are recognisable by the inhabitants of the area or any visitor thanks to the "Partner" sign that they have to display on their frontage or shop front. By doing so, we aim to create a "Geopark Partner" identity recognisable by all and a guarantee of a certain quality defined by sustainable and eco-responsible values.

### **Promotional activities**

We continued to develop our facebook page "Famenne-Ardenne Unesco Global Geopark" through several publications relating the various activities organised by and with the Asbl. We also continue to communicate with our Instagram account. We also continue to feed our website [www.geoparkfamenneardenne.be](http://www.geoparkfamenneardenne.be) with various contents.

Various merchandising products have been created for the promotion and visibility of the Geopark: textile bags, badges, magnets, pens, notebooks made of recycled paper. The Geopark has also been the subject of numerous articles in international media.

We also participated in some tourist fairs : Brussels, Oostende and also one professional fair in Achêne.

Some promotional announces were ordered in various tourist publications of the Maison du Tourisme, a specific announce in a VTT guide or the Belgian national guide 365.

Our free Geopark map was largely distributed by all our partners.

#### **4. CONTACTS**

**Manager:** Alain PETIT – [alain.petit@geoparkfamenneardenne.be](mailto:alain.petit@geoparkfamenneardenne.be)

**Geologist:** Serge DELABY – [serge.delaby@geoparkfamenneardenne.be](mailto:serge.delaby@geoparkfamenneardenne.be)