

MADONIE EUROPEAN GEOPARK
Progress Report, September 2007 - March 2008
Main activities

1. On 01.09.07 at the "Crystal" cinema in Polizzi Generosa Polisportiva Europa Junior showed the documentary "*The echo of the footsteps*", which, starting from the first Madonie Eco-Marathon held in July 2007, narrates the landscapes, the colours, the culture and the traditions of the Madonie Park. The initiative aimed to give prominence to the spirit of Eco-Marathons, which are meant to stimulate knowledge of territories rich in natural beauties, culture and traditions, but also to contribute in a significant way to their economic development;
2. Participation of the official representative Pasquale Li Puma in the 20th Meeting of the Coordination Committee held from 11.09.07 to 13.09.07 at Inchnadamph in Scotland and in the 8th annual Congress held from 14.09.07 to 17.09.07 in Ullapool at the North West Highlands Geopark in Great Britain;
3. Received communication from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Department for Development and Competitiveness of Tourism, with protocol note 1547858/07/EDEN of 03.09.07, referring to the "*EDEN Project: Excellent European destinations*", for which the Madonie Park body is among the forty destinations selected as being most in conformity with the national criteria and those of the European Commission, and therefore among the best emerging rural destinations;
4. Set going, on 21.09.07, the project "*From the Earth to the Stars*" conducted by the "Just for Fun" association, with the involvement of the teachers and pupils of the IV and V elementary classes and I, II and III junior secondary classes of all the Comprehensive Institutes in the Park (a class for each complex in each town or village in the Madonie). At the end of the first module, "*Let us build our sky*", 800 pupils of the 2nd and 3rd classes of junior secondary school met the astrophysicist Margherita Hack on 27.10.07; at the end of the second module, "*When I grow up I will be an astronaut*" 600 pupils of the 4th and 5th classes of the primary school met the astronaut Umberto Guidoni on 29.02.08; at the end of the third module, "*Geology and myths*" 400 pupils of the first classes of junior secondary school met the geologist Dino Ticli, a writer and great popularizer of geology;
5. Participation, from 22 to 24 October 07, of the official representative Pasquale Li Puma in the Week of Andalusia Geoparks, Cabo De Gata-Níjar Geopark Week and Parque Natural de las Sierras Subbéticas Geopark Week, with presentation of a talk with the title: "Geotourism in the Madonie Park: to long, difficult and fascinating holistic approach from the natural patrimony to the cultural patrimony toward the future "phase II";
6. Presented at Castellana Sicula, on 09.11.07 the "*Competition for entrepreneurial ideas for valorisation of the Madonie Park.*" The contest aims at the diffusion of entrepreneurial culture and the creation of new firms, above all young ones, in the territory of the communes in the Park, through the provision of services for information, orientation and technical support for the presentation of entrepreneurial projects to be financed with EEC, national and regional funds. Prizes for four of the best entrepreneurial ideas are contemplated within the sphere of Tourism (tourist services in support of enjoyment of the Park with exclusion of accommodation services), Agriculture and Craft;
7. Presentation of the project "Youth Camp: Meet your Geopark" to teachers at senior secondary schools in the Madonie Park within the development of the project "(At) School in the Park", regarding "*Discovering, protecting and promoting the resources and the naturalistic natural and historical patrimony for a project of socio-cultural development.*" So as to prepare young students to compete with works of their own, a week of exchanges among young people from all the geoparks, in concomitance with the Third UNESCO International Geoparks Conference 2008 (Osnabrück - June 2008), first of all there were days of training and updating for the teachers on 14.12.07, 08.01.08, 16.01.08, 22.01.08 and 22.02.08;
8. The "Insecta" Entomological Exhibition organised by Vittorio Aliquò, at Palazzo Pottino in Petralia Soprana from 15.12.07 to 14.01.08. Organized by the Madonie Park, by Petralia Soprana Council and by the Palermo University Consortium. "Insecta" allowed observation of a mysterious world, small but full of secrets and curiosities, and rich in biodiversity;
9. Planning of the part relating to the Madonie Geopark of the INTERREG IVC project "*PLANET EARTH: Nature conservation, sustainable development, responsible tourism*", presented on 15/01/08 by the Lesvos Petrified Forest Geopark;
10. Two conferences held and various theme events, "*The value of the donkey. Let us recover the donkey, the donkey will recover man*" at Castelbuono, from 29 February to 2 March 2008. The

initiative focused attention on the valorisation of the donkey and traced out pathways to improve its living and employment conditions also along geological paths;

11. Held in Rome, on 05.03.08, the first preparatory meeting between APAT and the present Italian Geoparks belonging to EGN (Madonie Park, Beigua Park and Geo-Mineral Park of Sardinia) for setting going the common project "*Promotion of Italian Geoparks in EGN: tools to support enjoyment and the popularization of geodiversity*", promoted by the national APAT (Agency for the Protection of the Environment and for Technical services – Defence of Nature Department – Tutelage of the Geological Patrimony), headquartered at Via Curtatone 3 00186 Rome.

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