



GLOBAL GEOPARKS NETWORK

## **EUROPEAN GEOPARKS NETWORK**

*Rules of operation*

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### *Rules of operation*

#### INTRODUCTION

The European Geoparks Network was established in June 2000 by four Geoparks:

- **Reserve Geologique de Haute-Provence** – France
- **Natural History Museum of Lesvos Petrified Forest** – (Lesvos Island) Greece
- **Geopark Gerolstein/Vulkaneifel** – Germany
- **Maestrazgo Cultural Park** – Spain

The main objective of the cooperation between Geoparks is the protection of the geological heritage and the promotion of sustainable development of their territories in Europe. The above listed Geoparks signed a convention on Lesvos Island, Greece in June 2000 declaring the creation of the European Geoparks Network. The purpose of this general designation was to share information and expertise, as well as the definition of common tools. Guy Martini Director of the Reserve Geologique Haute Provence, Nickolas Zouros Director of the Natural History Museum of the Lesvos Petrified Forest, and Marie - Luise Frey Scientific Coordinator of the Geopark Gerolstein/Vulkaneifel Geopark established the first Coordination Body of the Network. The Network owns the “European Geopark” trademark registered within all countries in the European Community.

In April 2001 the European Geoparks Network signed with UNESCO (Division of Earth Sciences) an official agreement of collaboration placing the Network under the auspices of the organization.

In February 2004 the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) was founded in Paris as an international partnership developed under the umbrella of UNESCO and serves to develop models of best practice and set quality-standards for territories that integrate the protection and preservation of Earth heritage sites in a strategy for regional sustainable economic development.

In October 2005 the European Geoparks Network in the frame of the existing agreement of collaboration with UNESCO (Division of Earth Sciences) signed an official declaration (Madonie Declaration) according to which the EGN is recognized as the official branch of the UNESCO – Global Geoparks Network in Europe. With this declaration UNESCO recognize that the European Geoparks Network is a reference to follow for the creation of similar Continental Networks of Geoparks worldwide.

In September 2014 the Global Geoparks Network (hereinafter referred to as “GGN”)), became a non-profit organisation subject to French legislation (the 1901 Law on Associations) and a non-governmental organization.

Recognising the very strong role networking has played in the success of the Global Geoparks movement and recognizing the valuable role it plays in facilitating the sharing of experience, formation of joint initiatives and projects and the highly significant role it plays in capacity-building, the GGN encourages the strengthening of Regional Geopark Networks.

Regional Geopark Networks include all the existing GGN members at a regional or continental level.

Regional Geopark Networks serve for the coordination of GGN activities at a regional or continental level for the exchange of information and co-operation between Global Geoparks and Global Geopark professionals in the region.

The activities of Regional Geopark Networks include the organisation of Regional Geopark Conferences, workshops and seminars, capacity building activities, common projects, promotional and marketing activities, and common publications.

Each Geopark Network forms a Coordination Commission which is the governing body of the Regional Network and elects two Coordinators and an Advisory Committee according to the *Regional Geopark Network Rules of operation*.

All Regional Geopark Networks shall submit an Annual Report of Activities to the GGN Executive Board.

The Statutes of the Global Geoparks Network is the basic document of the Organisation.

The internal Rules of the GGN, and the Code of Ethics define and complete these Statutes.

The European Geoparks Network is the Regional Geoparks Network in Europe of the GGN and follows the above mentioned GGN documents as well as the EGN *Rules of operation*.

The European Geoparks Network Coordination Committee at its 35th session on March 31 – April 1st, 2015 in Paris adopted the following:

1. The EGN Charter remains the basic document which inspires the operation and development of the European Geoparks Network.
2. The European Geoparks Network following the GGN statutes, will continue to operate as the Regional Geoparks Network of the GGN in Europe.
3. The European Geoparks Network based on its history and the EGN operation guidelines developed during the last 15 years, adopts the existing structure and operational rules of the EGN as described in this document.
4. GGN Individual members from Europe become members of the EGN Coordination Committee and up to two individual experts are elected in the EGN AC.
5. The EGN AC meetings includes the representative from the EGN Magazine Editorial Board
6. Changes to the existing EGN structure and Operational Rules are subject to a decision of the EGN Coordination Committee.

## **Article 1. Name**

The European Geoparks Network (EGN) is the Regional Network in Europe of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN). The use of the EGN name, acronym and logo is restricted to functions authorised by, and for the benefit of, the EGN and its members.

## **Article 2. Location of the Coordination Cellule.**

The Coordination Cellule of the EGN is in the Haute Provence Global Geopark at the:

*Musée Promenade,  
Montée Bernard Dellacasagrande,  
04000 Digne les Bains, France.*

The location may be modified by a decision of the EGN Coordination Committee.

## **Article 3. Categories of Membership.**

1. GGN Institutional Members — UNESCO Global Geoparks located in Europe.
2. GGN Individual Members – Global Geopark Professionals — Persons who have combined or proved professional experience in Global Geopark management (geological heritage, sustainable development, tourism development and promotion, and environmental issues) from a European country.
3. GGN Honorary Members — Persons who have rendered exceptional services to the international Global Geopark community or to the GGN from a European country.
4. GGN Cooperating Members — International Organisations, institutions or persons providing substantial financial or other assistance to the EGN because of an interest in Global Geoparks and international co-operation between Global Geoparks, from a European country.

## **Article 4. Annual Promotional Fee**

### **4.1. Amount and Payment of the Promotional Fee**

Each Institutional and Cooperating Member of the EGN shall pay an annual promotional fee at a rate recommended by the EGN Advisory Committee and approved by the Coordination Committee.

Every year, the EGN Coordination Committee shall announce the amount of the annual membership fee for the following year.

### **4.2. Period Covered by the Promotional Fee**

The annual promotional fee shall cover the calendar year in question.

## **Article 05. Members Representation**

### **5.1 Designated Representatives**

Institutional Members should designate two persons to represent them at the EGN Coordination Committee, one is an Earth Scientist (using a broad definition of that term) with experience in geological heritage protection and/or promotion and the other is a geopark manager (including local authority representative) or a specialist on local development / community involvement / tourism.

Cooperating Members can designate one (1) person to represent them at the EGN Coordination Committee.

## **5.2. Special Status**

Honorary and Cooperating Members are entitled to membership rights and privileges but may not hold an elected office in the EGN.

### **Article 06 - Components of the EGN**

The EGN is composed as follows:

- i. Coordination Committee
- ii. Advisory Committee
- iii. Coordinator and Vice-Coordinator
- iv. National Geopark Fora / Committees
- v. Working groups - Catalysts
- vii. European Geoparks Conference
- viii. European Geopark Meetings
- ix. Affiliated Organisations
- x. Operational Secretariat

### **Article 07 - Governance Structure**

#### **7.1 - The Coordination Committee (CC)**

The Coordination Committee is the only decision-making committee of the EGN, regarding regional issues.

The CC meets regularly, at least twice a year with a physical meeting in the Spring and a digital meeting in the Autumn. Each physical meeting will be hosted in a different Geopark. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss the Network's progress and to coordinate joint programmes and activities between members.

The CC comprises the 2 official nominated representatives of each geopark, GGN Individual members from Europe plus the representative of UNESCO, IUGS and IUCN.

The Institutional members in EGN Coordination Committee are represented by two representatives from each European Geopark, one is an Earth Scientist (using a broad a definition of that term) with experience in geological heritage protection and/or promotion and the other is a Geopark manager or a specialist on local development / community involvement / tourism.

During the physical or digital EGN CC meetings each representative of the institutional members and each individual member has one vote. UNESCO, IUCN and IUGS do not have voting rights in the CC. An electronic voting system may be used during digital EGN CC meetings.

An institutional EGN CC delegate can only represent its own Geopark. This refers, in-particular to the official positions as mentioned in the Geopark Application Document.

An official Geopark representative cannot provide private paid consultancy (by contract) to other Geoparks or Aspiring Geoparks.

#### **7.2 – The Advisory Committee (AC)**

The Advisory Committee is made up of specialists in sustainable development and the enhancement and promotion of geological heritage. These specialists include representatives

of the territories that originally initiated the EGN plus elected members and representatives of international structures working in the area of enhancement of geological heritage (UNESCO, IUGS, IUCN). The Advisory Committee provides advice on all issues concerning strategy, external relations and the nomination and integration of new zones within the network. The AC has no decision-making ability.

The AC advises on particular topics of discussion within the network, but does not have the ability to take decisions for the network.

Two positions within the AC are reserved for the elected Coordinators.

Three positions within the AC are reserved for Guy Martini, Nickolas Zouros and Andreas Schüller as representatives of the founding members of the EGN in recognition of their particular experience and knowledge on Geoparks development. If one of these individuals leaves the AC, for whatever reason, their position will not automatically be transferred to another individual from their geopark but will be subject to election by the CC.

One position in the AC is automatically reserved for UNESCO, one is reserved for IUGS and one for IUCN.

Eight (8) positions within the AC are elected by the members of the CC for a period of two years.

One position in the AC is reserved for the EGN Magazine Editorial Board Representative. The EGN CC may elect up to two special advisors from the GGN Individual Members to join EGN AC.

### **7.3 – Coordinator and Vice-coordinator**

The role of these positions is to coordinate the life and continuing growth of the network. The positions are elected by the CC for a period of two years. There is no limit to the number of times an individual can be re-elected to these positions.

### **7.4 – Official Representatives to the EGN**

A European Geopark must nominate two official representatives to the EGN Coordination Committee (CC). These individuals should be thoroughly familiar with the application dossier of their territory (for those representatives who did not assist with the writing of their application dossier). One of the official representatives of the new geopark to the EGN CC must be an Earth Scientist (e. g. geologist, geomorphologist, soil scientist etc). The other official representative must come from an administrative - local authority / managerial / economic development (incl. tourism) background. A substitute must also be nominated whose role will be to attend meetings should one of the official nominees be unable to attend. The substitute will have the same background knowledge as the two official nominees and have decision making responsibilities.

### **7.5 Elections**

Elections for Coordinators and EGN AC members take place every 2 years at the Spring Meeting of the EGN CC.

Institutional EGN CC delegates from Geoparks that have been successfully re-validated (green card holding) and have been in the network for at least 4 years, can stand for the AC positions.

Institutional EGN CC delegates from Geoparks that have at least 2 years' experience as a member of the AC can stand for the positions of Coordinators.

## **Article 08 - General operational rules**

### **8.1. Synergies in Geopark activities**

All activities undertaken by Geoparks have to be in a spirit of complementarity with the other members of the European Geoparks Network. Especially in the fields of common geotourism packages and the creation of new by-products linked with geological heritage, all European Geoparks have to work together in order to improve their common image as special, sustainable tourist destinations and attractions.

### **8.2. Use of EGN logo and EGN Map**

#### **8.2.1. EGN Logo**

Each member will be entitled to use the European Geopark logo and name in its communications, thereby contributing over time to creating a common image of quality, linking the enhancement of geological heritage and sustainable development.

Only an EGN Institutional Member is entitled to use the logo of the EGN in its promotional material and is entitled to call itself a European Geopark. The EGN logo must only be used on products produced directly by the geopark's management or by official PR collaboration partners and may not be given to so called "third" partners or contractors. All geoparks are required to check the regulations regarding the use of these logos and guidance may be sought from the EGN Cellule.

#### **8.2.2. EGN Map**

The EGN map reproduced in the EGN magazine has been produced by the Lesvos UNESCO Global Geopark and is available to all EGN members. Any inaccuracies regarding geopark locations on this map should be referred directly to the team of Lesvos UNESCO Global Geopark who will be happy to make any changes for the members.

### **8.3 Meetings of the EGN**

The CC of the EGN meets at least two times each year. It is obligatory to attend all these meetings. An explanation for any anticipated absence from a CC meeting should be provided to the EGN Coordinators. It is obligatory that both official representatives attend all meetings of the CC. If, for some reason, one of the official representatives cannot attend then the officially nominated substitute from that Geopark may attend. In this instance, the EGN Coordinators must be advised in advance of any CC meeting. Furthermore, two members from each Geopark are obliged to attend, even if one of them is the substitute. However, in no instance can three representatives of any one Geopark attend a meeting of the CC, unless there is a special invitation from the EGN AC or EGN Coordinators.

## **8.4 Reports**

### **8.4.1 Annual Reports**

Every March, EGN members submit an Annual Report to the GGN (with a copy sent to the EGN Coordinators) which includes the main achievements of the previous year. These reports will be published at the EGN and GGN website.

## **8.5 Agenda**

Prior to each meeting, a draft agenda and registration form will be circulated by email. It is the responsibility of each member to react to these emails and to take part in any discussions that might arise from them.

For the structural and other important decisions on the operation of the Network, a written proposal has to be circulated to all members at least one month before the meeting of the CC. No discussion or decision on such items can be undertaken unless it has been included on the meeting agenda.

## **8.6 Minutes**

The minutes of the CC meeting include the decisions agreed by the CC and as such constitute the official documents of the EGN. The draft minutes of the previous CC meeting should be circulated to all of the CC members within a month after the meeting and will be formally adopted during the next EGN CC meeting.

Each new member should familiarise themselves with the minutes of the previous CC meeting so that they will be in a position to understand the discussions within the network and to be able to make a positive contribution at their first CC meeting.

### **Article 09 EGN Coordination Cellule**

The EGN coordination cellule is the official contact office for the EGN. The cellule coordinates the distribution of information on the network and acts as the initial contact point for new and aspiring members.

### **Article 10 Internal Committees / Working Groups**

An Internal Committee / Working Group may be authorised by the EGN Coordination Committee to implement programmes and activities, and to serve as a channel of communication between members of the EGN with similar scientific and professional interests.



### **10.1 Catalysts and Working Groups**

At meetings of the EGN CC working groups may be set up to advance a working paper or project on a particular item of discussion. Typically, such working groups consist of five or six members of the CC who have volunteered to take part in this work.

Catalysts may also be selected to advance work on a particular topic. These are individuals who have voluntarily agreed to coordinate some discussion or activity within the network. Working groups and catalysts are crucial to the strengthening of the network and it is the responsibility of all members of the EGN CC to actively take part in these positions.

### **10.2 Thematic networks**

Thematic networks within EGN have been formed in response to the need to strengthen collaboration between Geoparks on issues of common interest. The themes of these networks are based on the geological characteristics of each Geopark, which can become a basis for the development of common activities of the group members. An important issue should be the connection between the place (landscape, geology and geosites) and human activities (culture, local tradition, food, etc). Every thematic network will meet during EGN CC meeting and will present a report to the CC on the second day of each EGN CC meeting.

For each thematic network one member of the Coordination Commission will be nominated as Catalyst. The catalysts should have the necessary experience of EGN operations. This means that they should have at least 3 years' experience within the EGN CC.

All of the above positions are totally voluntary and are financially supported from within each individual's own institute.

### **Article 11 National Geopark Fora / Committees**

A National Geopark Forum or Committee, including all the members of the EGN resident in a State, is working to promote Geoparks at the national level. It may be authorised to organise activities of the EGN/GGN in that State.

National Geopark Committees may also include:

- 1 representative of the Government body in charge of Geoparks;
- 1 representative of the national geological organisation or survey;
- 1 representative of the national environmental/protected area organisation;
- 1 representative of the national cultural heritage body;
- 1 representative of the national tourism organisation;

Additional members may be included as seen appropriate to fit the particular national context. All National Geopark Fora / Committees in Europe shall submit an Annual Report of Activities to the EGN.

### **Article 12 EGN Internal organisation**

The EGN is a network with no administration positions such as president, secretary-general, treasurer etc... The rationale behind this is to encourage all members of the network to be equally active within the network for the benefit of the network. It is to encourage an equal division of responsibilities within the network and to avoid spending time in unnecessary administrative duties that would require some financial support from within the network.

### **Article 13 EGN Financing**

13.1 – The cost of members travelling to, and accommodation during, the meetings of the co-ordination committee is borne by the geoparks or the individual members themselves. The Coordination Committee meets 2 times each year and participation of two representatives of each geopark at all meetings is obligatory.

13.2 – The host territory of a meeting pays for all official representatives' subsistence. On one occasion each year a meeting of the co-ordination committee coincides with the open Annual Conference of the European Geoparks Network which gives all members the opportunity to welcome new members and to discuss with and advise potential candidates.

13.3 – Each member has also to cover an annual promotional fee for the publication and distribution cost of the EGN Magazine and other EGN promotional activities. Each member will receive copies of the magazine.

13.4 – Each member has also to cover the cost of travelling, accommodation, and subsistence for the two experts who will conduct the revalidation mission of the territory every four years (or two in the case of a yellow card).

### **Article 14. Communication**

#### **14.1 EGN Internal Communication**

Apart from the two EGN CC meetings per year, the life of the network is continued largely through email correspondences. Email correspondence between and among the EGN members is considered **in all cases** to be confidential and therefore must not be forwarded or copied to anyone not on the official EGN email list.

Great care must be taken that the EGN email list used is always up-to-date. All members of the EGN CC will be notified immediately of any changes in this email list.

#### **14.2 EGN website “[www.europeangeoparks.org](http://www.europeangeoparks.org)”**

The EGN website is the main communication tool of the Network. The website provides all necessary information concerning the Networks functioning and operation through members progress and annual reports with links to all members’ websites as well as to the applications of new members. All members should link their website to the EGN website [www.europeangeoparks.org](http://www.europeangeoparks.org). All members are responsible for the improvement of the common EGN web site by updating their presentation and communicating their activities and news.

#### **14.3. EGN Newsletter**

An electronic Newsletter is published twice a year and distributed electronically to the EGN members and the Geopark community.

## **Article 15. EGN promotion and common publications**

### **15.1 – Communication activities**

All members should communicate and promote the EGN activities and achievements, especially to local communities, and participate in EGN common promotional activities. Each member is responsible for the promotion of EGN members and their activities through media, publications, exhibitions, etc.

### **15.2 EGN**

#### **Magazine**

The EGN magazine is the main promotional tool of the network and is published annually. EGN members should contribute to and support the creation of common promotional tools (i.e. by submitting articles for the EGN Magazine, providing photos, contributions for books or leaflets) as well as for their distribution and promotion.

The EGN Magazine Editorial Board consists of three individuals, elected every 2 years by the EGN Coordination Committee.

A representative of the Editorial Board attends The EGN CC meetings as an external advisor.

### **15.3 Geoparks Corner**

All geoparks are responsible for publicizing the Network and promoting all other members through the “Geoparks Corner” which should be organised in the main tourism centre (museum, interpretation centre, etc) of each Geopark. A Geoparks Corner is a promotional display providing information, images, leaflets, products etc... of all EGN members.

## **Article 16 EGN Common activities**

All members should participate in EGN common activities. All members should also participate in EGN proposals for the realisation of common activities through European Union funds.

### **16.1 European Geoparks Week**

EGN week is the annual festival organised by all EGN members during summer to promote Geoparks. The submission of the EGN week programme and the report on the results is obligatory for all members. While most members will organise EGN week during the same period as most other members, some geoparks, for local reasons, may wish to hold it at a different time during the period May 1 – August 31.

### **16.2 EGN Biannual Conference**

The EGN Biannual Conference is hosted every second year by a different EGN member and is the main outreach activity of the EGN.

Each geopark should contribute to the network’s biannual open conference by presenting an oral or poster communication about geopark’s achievements, activities, and experiences.

### **16.3 Members collaboration**

All members should collaborate with each other on a bilateral or multilateral basis, through the organisation of common activities, exchange of know-how, twinning agreements, common publications, presentation of geotourism initiatives and local products etc.

### **Article 17 Languages**

#### **17.1. Official Languages**

English and French shall be the official languages of the EGN.

English will be used as the working language at EGN meetings and for working documents.

**17.2. Other Languages.** The Coordination Committee may adopt other languages provided the costs of doing so are met by the members.

### **Article 18 - Policies and Rules of Procedure**

#### **18.1. Adoption of Policies.**

The Coordination Committee shall adopt, and may amend, such Policies and Rules as are required to give effect to the provisions of these *Rules*.

#### **18.2. Rules of Procedure.**

The Coordination Committee shall adopt, and may amend, its own Rules of Procedure.

### **Article 19 - Relations with Other Organisations**

#### **19.1 Partners.**

The EGN has established working relations with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the International Union of Geological Sciences and other international organisations as may be deemed appropriate.

#### **19.2. Participation of Other Organisations.**

The EGN CC may invite representatives of international organisations with which it has established official relations to participate in its ordinary CC Meetings and other workshops and activities.

### **Article 20 Validation and Amendment**

#### **20.1. Implementation.**

These EGN Rules of Operation shall become effective immediately upon adoption by the EGN Coordination Committee.

#### **20.2. Amendments.**

EGN Coordinators, EGN AC and EGN members may propose amendments to these *Rules of Operation*. The Coordination Committee decides on the amendments to these *Rules of Operation* at its next meeting, following the meeting in which amendments were presented and discussed.