



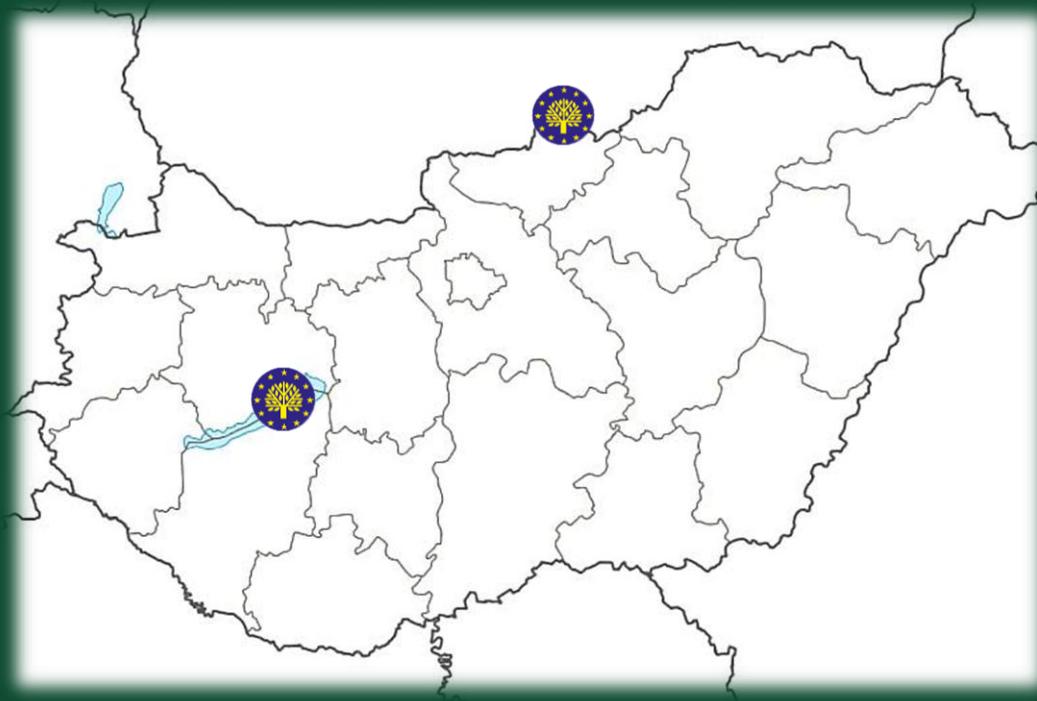
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EUROPEAN DIPLOMA-HOLDING AREAS AND THE GEOPARK INITIATIVE IN HUNGARY

Ipolytarnóc



Tihany



Novohrad-Nógrád
Geopark



Bakony-Balaton
Geopark

European Diploma-holding Protected Areas (EDPA) can have important roles in promoting and preserving natural and cultural resources in their surrounding wider areas. There are two such EDPAs in Hungary, which helped the creation of internationally recognised geoparks and function as centres, main gateways to them.

What is a geopark?

A geopark is an established territory with rich geological heritage, where locals -- as geotourism stakeholders -- are actively involved in the preservation of the rare natural and cultural heritage of their own area. Since its birth in 2000 the European Geoparks Network (EGN) has taken a leading role in raising the public's awareness towards geoheritage issues.



At present, EGN comprises
65 Geoparks from 22
European Countries



A Geopark is a territory, which includes a particular geological heritage and a sustainable territorial development strategy. It has an active role in the economic development of its territory through enhancement of a general image linked to the geological heritage and the development of Geotourism.

It has direct impact on the territory by influencing its inhabitants' living conditions and environment. The objective is to enable the inhabitants to reappropriate the values of the territory's heritage and actively participate in the territory's cultural revitalization as a whole.

It must work with local enterprises to promote and support the creation of new by-products linked with the geological heritage.

Geoparks have the potential for governmental nature conservation agencies to gain the endorsement of NGOs and the support of local population for heritage preservation. So in case of EDPA sites if such initiative exists, why not to control and use it?



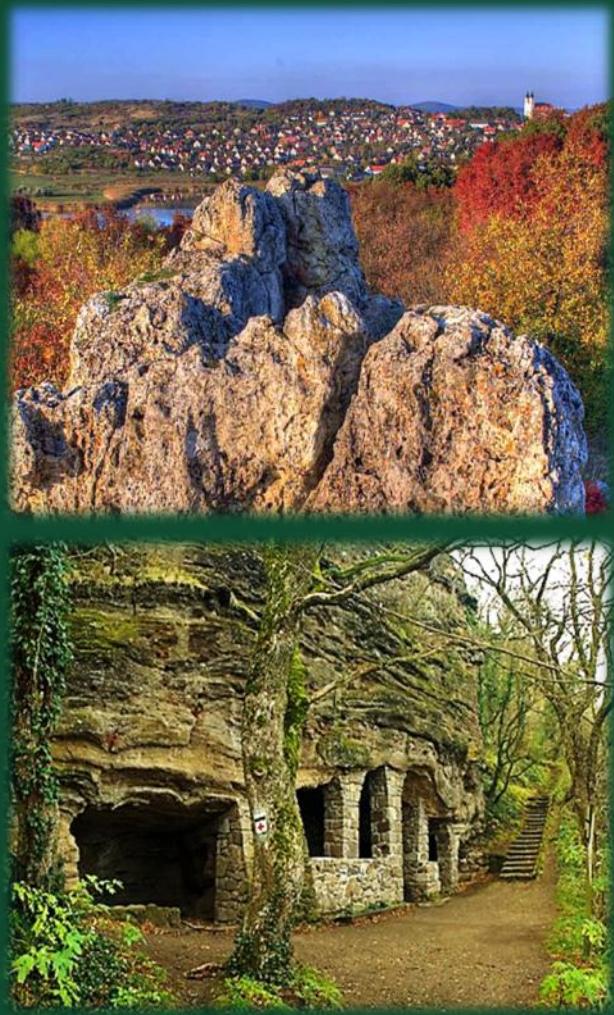
Postvolcanic Phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula (EDPA since 2003)



Tihany peninsula

The Tihany Peninsula was declared the first protected landscape area of Hungary in 1952. In 1997 it became part of the Balaton Uplands National Park, with an exceptional touristic importance. Tihany has been enriched by its peculiar geological assets and geomorphological features, like weathered basaltic rock-cliffs and unique geyser cones. Besides the area features mosaic-like wetland and dry habitats of submediterranean character with rare fauna and flora communities.





The site is within the confines of the Bakony-Balaton Geopark and gave weight to its successful application for the European Geoparks Network (EGN) member status in 2012.

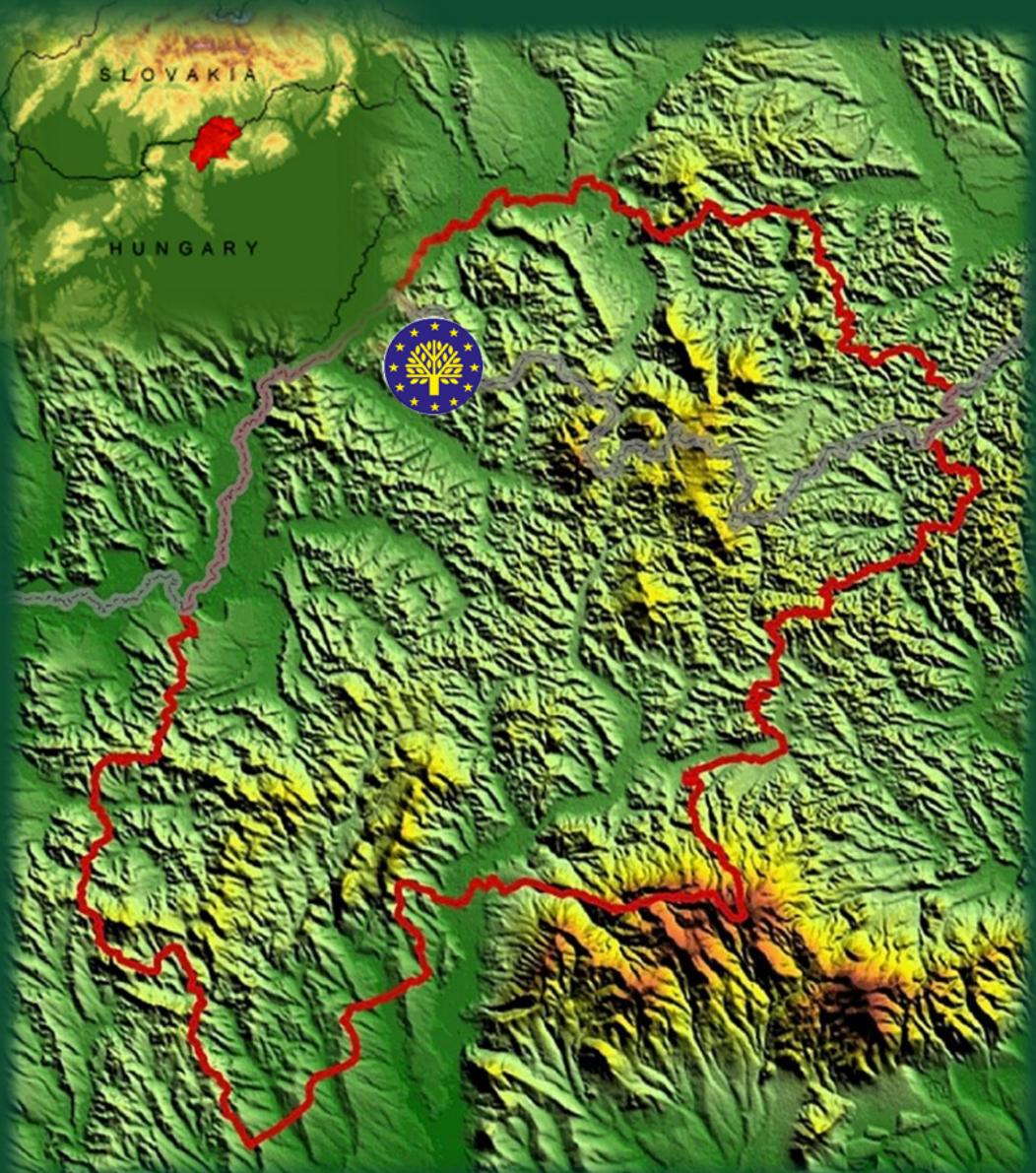


Ipolytarnoc Fossils Nature Conservation Area (EDPA since 1995)

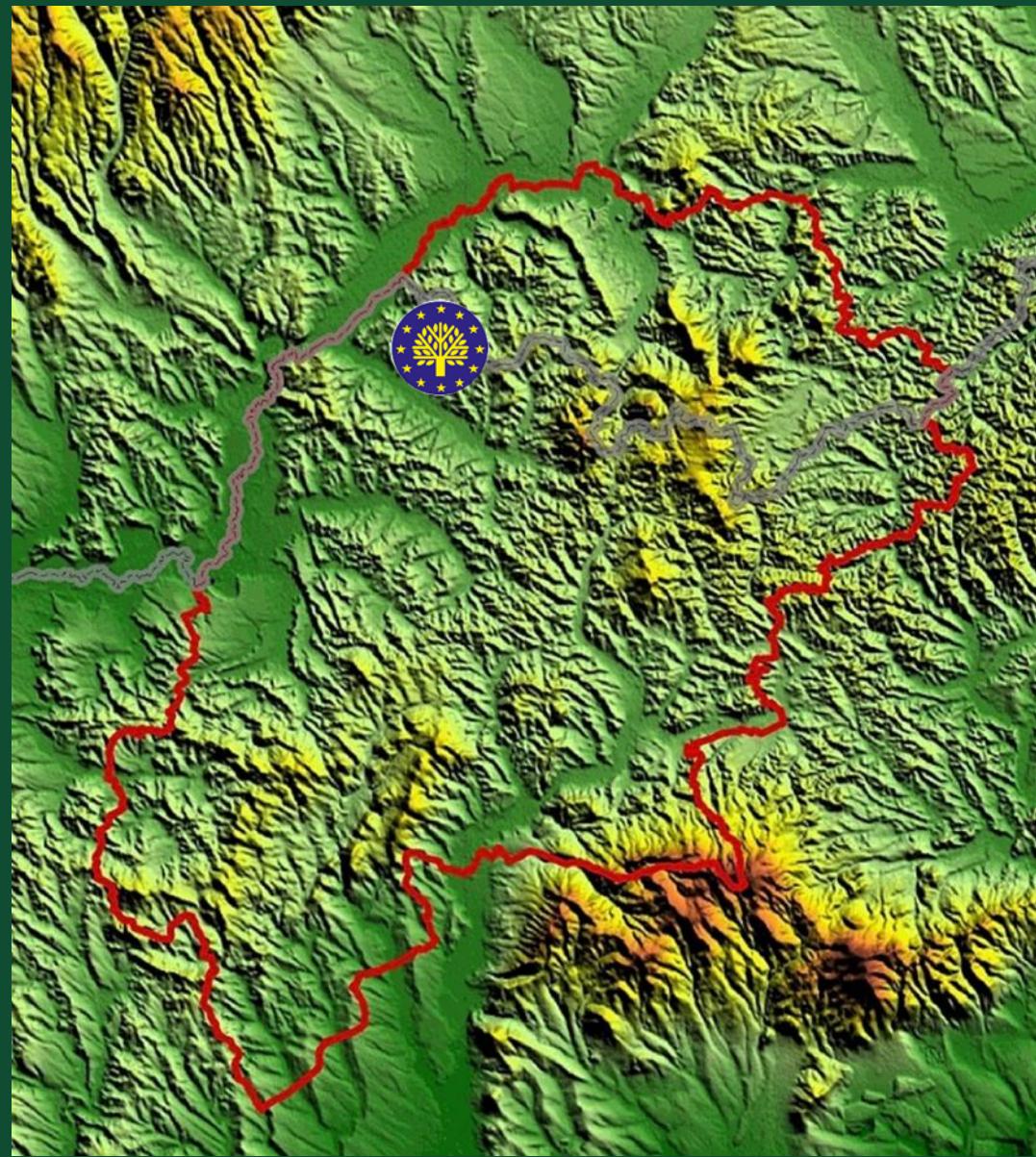


The site has been stewarding its unparalleled relics, fossils since the area got protection status in 1944. It is managed by the Bükk National Park Directorate. A volcanic catastrophe destroyed the paleohabitat and preserved its treasures at the same time by burying them. It is a Miocene Park, called Prehistoric Pompeii, where above sharkteeth-bearing marine sediments petrified forest, plant impressions and animal footprints are exposed.





The site is the main gateway to the transboundary, Slovak-Hungarian Novohrad – Nógrád Geopark (EGN member since 2010)



It has high-tech interpretation methods, like 3D movies



The 510 hectare-large Ipolytarnóc Fossils Nature Conservation Area, run by the Bükk National Park Directorate, is situated at the border between Slovakia and Hungary, on the Hungarian side. It is the prime fossil locality and the main gateway of the Geopark. Its interpretation centre is a favourite destination for visitors all over the world.



The Prehistoric Pine Visitor Centre



European Diploma-holding site

The Visitor Centre is the starting and final point of the study trail network of the site, it hosts conference, exhibition information halls and a 4 dimensional movie theatre. The Trail Network consists of 6 trails. Some parts of the area are open to the public through this trail network, which consists of the Geological Study Path linked with a Miocene Forest path, an Open-air Rock Park, a Boulder-cliff Trail and Biological Trails. On top of these a Canopy walk path is available for the braver visitors. The Geological Study Path, because of its strict protection,

During the establishing processes both of the Bakony-Balaton Geopark and the transborder Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark most of the stakeholders were brought together to participate in the creation of the geoparks. The challenging work needed grassroots movements, local enterprises, municipal and regional involvement beside state endorsement.



The geopark experts considered as a high priority, that knowledge on local geoheritage should find its way to local schools, and to the public. Outreach to NGOs, teachers and students on different levels is essential in order to fulfil the geopark's mission goals.



For example in the collection of the database of heritage resources even private citizens took part. Through consultations and guidance the local population became aware of the values of their own cultural heritage and started to be proud of their surrounding natural assets.



Special events and exhibitions were organized both in the Lavender House Visitor Centre of Tihany and the Prehistoric Pine Visitor Center of Ipolytarnóc



... and provided markets for local bio-produce and handmade craft fairs





... and
Forest Music



The Bakony–Balaton Geopark name stands not only for an area but also for an organisation. The leading organisation of the Geopark is the Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate, within which the Bakony–Balaton Geopark Group works directly on the Geopark programme. Several experts of the Directorate also participate in fulfilling tasks in relation to the geopark. The Directorate aims at involving institutions, local governments, schools, communities, service providers and individuals that operate or live within the geopark and identify themselves with the goals of the geopark. These stakeholders work as Bakony-Balaton Geopark Partners .

The 15 Multi-Purpose Microregional Associations of local governments, operating on the area of the Geopark and the Directorate concluded a common cooperation agreement in 2011, defining general tasks in relation to the geopark's goals. Based on this agreement, many local governments and the Directorate have worked together on renewing and maintaining geological heritage sites and the infrastructure that helps visitor friendly interpretation.



The Bakony–Balaton Geopark organises many geo-programs during the Geopark Week, at the end of every May. Geotourists can join geotours provided by trained geotour-guides, photo exhibitions on the cultural assets of the geopark are exhibited in the Lavender House Visitor Centre of Tihany. The Bakony–Balaton Geopark Contest – „Our Geopark” has been organised annually.

About 250 primary schools operating in the geopark receive the announcement and many teams of two students participate in the contest every year. The aim is to make students get closer to the geological heritage that surrounds them, to gain useful knowledge about them and to make students aware of the importance of protection. Almost 30-70 teams participate in the contest annually and the best 10-17 teams can take part in the final turn of the event, including a field trip and oral presentations.



The 1, 587 km² large territory of the transborder Novohrad – Nograd Geopark comprises the administrative area of 64 settlements in Hungary and 28 municipalities in Slovakia inhabited by the Palots ethnic group.

In the case of the Novohrad-Nógrád Geopark, the name comes from the Slovak and Hungarian names of the county, where the globe's first transborder Geopark is located.

The emblem of the Geopark depicts the Somoska/Somoskő Castle. At the very foot of the castle marked the border line between Slovakia and Hungary after the First World War, separating communities from each other and artificially the landscape for 85 years. The castle stands on a basalt outcrop which represents beautifully the human interaction with the geological past.



Hungary

Slovakia

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European Diploma

Thank You!

The geopark grassroots movement, inspired by enthusiastic locals, brought together private experts, agencies and municipal entities to create the coo-management organization of the Geopark. Its ancient world is now without borders, with the help of Ipolytarnóc EDPA, from past to future it reunited people and landscape again.