

## Geomorphosites Working Group



Since the 1990s, a growing interest for the heritage value of geology and geomorphology has been observed in several parts of the world, in relation to geoconservation, geotourism, and geopark issues. In this context, in 2001, the International Association of Geomorphologists (IAG) decided to create a specific working group (WG) on Geomorphosites, with the aim to improve knowledge and scientific research on the definition, assessment, mapping, promotion and conservation of geomorphological heritage. Several improvements have been made by the WG in the conceptualisation of this new field of research, and in several sub-areas such as assessment methods, mapping issues, and educational issues. Results have been collected in several issues of international journals and books dedicated particularly to Master and Ph.D students working on geomorphosite issues (e.g. Reynard, Coratza, Regolini, 2009; Reynard & Coratza, 2003; Coratza & Hoblea, 2018 and reference therein). In particular, the main improvements of the WG were related to the following topics: (i) definition and conceptualisation of geomorphosites; (ii) selection and evaluation of geomorphosites, in particular the issue of reducing subjectivity; (iii) guidelines for geomorphosite mapping, in particular in the geotourism sector; (iv) interpretation of geomorphological heritage, in particular the sensitive question of the adequacy of geoproducts with the public needs and previous knowledge; (v) conservation of geomorphological heritage. Nevertheless, several questions have not been solved until now, and several issues should be addressed in the future:- Dynamic aspect of geomorphosites: the influence of active geomorphological processes on the scientific value of the

geomorphosites and on their tourist and educational potential - Degradation risk assessment: theoretical and methodological approaches for the identification and assessment of both natural and anthropic threats to geomorphological heritage; - Social aspects of geomorphosites research: e.g. perception of geodiversity, citizen science projects, involving public, how geomorphosites promotion can meet UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Past activities:**

The Chairs have been engaged in the following activities of interest for the geoheritage's scientific community:

- Thematic Session “Time Scaling Issues in Geoheritage Studies” convened by Dongying Wei, Claire Portal (Co-conveners: Fabien Hobléa, Benjamin van Wyk de Vries, François Bétard) - IGU-UGI Paris 2022 Centennial Congress – 18-22 July 2022; 13 abstracts (11 oral communications and 2 e-posters).
- Session “Karst, Heritage and Resources”, 18th UIS International Congress of Speleology (Savoie-Mont Blanc, France, 24-31 July 2022), convened by Fabien Hobléa, Serge Delaby, John Gunn, Kyung-Sik Woo; 37 communications (29 oral and 8 posters).
- Thematic Session ICG2022-24 "Geoheritage, Cultural Geomorphology and Geotourism" convened by Paola Coratza, Zbigniew Zwoliński, José Brilha, Nickolas Zouros, António Vieira - ICG2022 – 10th International Conference on Geomorphology, Coimbra 12-16 September 2022. The session has received significant interest, being submitted 59 abstracts (44 oral communications and 15 posters).
- Member of the IAG committee that submitted 5 nominations for Global Geosites of geomorphological interest to the IUGS First 100 IUGS Global Sites, an IUGS initiative for which IAG offered its experience and expertise. The committee was coordinated by Piotr Migon and the other members are Paola Coratza, Emmanuel Reynard, Ghislain Zangmo Tefogoum and Zibi Zwolinski. On October 25th -28th 2022, in the Basque Coast UNESCO Global Geopark, Paola Coratza presented, on behalf of the IAG, Vajont Landslide, one of the First 100 IUGS Global Sites of geomorphological interest submitted by the IAG.
- Co-editor of the Special Publication "Visages of Geodiversity and Geoheritage" of the Geological Society of London (GSL). Editors: L. Kubalíková, P. Coratza, M. Pál, Z. Zwoliński, P. N. Irapta, B. van Wyk de Vries. The book will comprise about 16 chapters. The first part is conceptual and examines the relationships between various entities (e.g. geodiversity – biodiversity, geodiversity and geoheritage – culture and history, geodiversity and geoheritage – sustainable tourism and local development). The second and third part contains mainly case studies which present practical approaches to geodiversity and geoheritage research and brings new insights into the management of geoheritage and geodiversity reaching out to geotourism, geoconservation, geohazards or vulnerability of geoheritage and geodiversity. The volume is going to be published during summer 2023.

### **Forthcoming activities:**

The working group will be involved in the organisation of the following activities:

- Session GM11.1 Cultural and social relevance of geodiversity and geoheritage – EGU General Assembly 2023 – Vienna, Austria & Online, 23-28 April 2023. Conveners: Lucie Kubalíková, Paola Coratza, Márton Pál, Lidia Selmi, Vittoria Vandelli.

- Session Geoheritage and Geodiversity: present and future challenges – IAG Regional Conference “Geoheritage and Geodiversity” – Cappadocia, Turkey, 12-14 September 2023.
- Session "Geoheritage and enhancement" under the auspices of the WG - 3rd International Congress of Karst, Speleology and Valorization of Natural Heritage, Rabat (Morocco), 2-5 November 2023, on the theme: "Valuing and Protecting the Karstic Heritage". Fabien Hoblea keynote lecturer.