

Global geoparks network: from the voluntary network to the international association

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The Global Geoparks Network (GGN) established in 2004, under the umbrella of UNESCO, as an international network, which provides a platform of cooperation among Geoparks. The GGN brings together governmental agencies, local authorities, universities, research institutions, non-governmental organizations, scientists and experts from countries around the world. The GGN consists a unique worldwide partnership including 111 Geoparks in 32 countries working to protect Geological heritage and promote local sustainable development. The GGN mission is to influence, encourage and assist local societies all over the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of abiotic and biotic nature, to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and sustainable and to support economic and cultural development of local communities through the valorisation of their unique heritage and identity. In 2014 after one decade of successful operation as a volunteer network the GGN was ready to gain legal personality. The GGN General Assembly during the 6th International Geoparks Conference in Stonehammer Global Geopark, Canada agreed to the new GGN Statutes and the GGN became an international non-profit association, operating under the French law. Thus GGN will be able to participate in the procedures and become partner with UNESCO for the creation of the UNESCO Global Geoparks under the umbrella of the International Geosciences and Geoparks Programme (IGGP). Thus the GGN, since September 2014, is a non-profit association subject to French legislation (the 1901 law on associations) and a non-governmental organisation maintaining formal relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).