



- The Middle European area is consistent in copying especially Western Europe, therefore the above mentioned development occurs here as well. In the Czech Republic, there is currently a national certification authority represented by the National Geopark Council that controls the whole national geopark network by use of approved tools. In Poland, however, there is a rather different situation, because such a subject guaranteed by the state controlling the whole network does not exist there yet.

- The Czech Republic example is illustrative of the fact that networking of geoparks both in national and international level is the key to success and development of the whole idea. Although every single geopark is unique in its own way, there are certain common principles that apply. Networking can share individual examples of good practice and help in areas where this principle is suppressed or does not function. At the same time, networking creates power. While one geopark does not mean much, nine geoparks already represent a significant area and number of inhabitants.

- The GECON project is based on networking and sharing experiences and examples of both good and bad practice. The cooperation on the Middle European platform is based on shared history, similar natural environment and comparable socioeconomic conditions. Mutual study tours, workshops, and summer schools pointed out common problems, approaches and demands of geoparks on both sides of the Czech-Polish border.

- GECON, which means Geology Cooperation Network, is definitely not a closed subject. It is open for any other partner within the frame of the Middle European area and it offers experiences, know-how and a helping hand.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GECON PROJECT

WHY IS IMPORTANT TO COME TOGETHER?



GEOTOURISM AND GEOPARKS

have been developing since 2000. With respect to their formal existence, the geoparks are going through transition from their adolescence to early adulthood. Even though it has been a relatively short period of time, now it is clear that geoparks found their place and became an important part of regional development.



- The geoparks are used as a tool for the regional development not only from the touristic point of view, but they also participate in protection of geological heritage, promotion of regional production, and provision of pedagogical support to state educational system, and in general, which is probably the most important thing, the geoparks join all the people active in sustainable development of the territory.
- Different levels of geoparks emerge almost all over the world. Although the basic idea of origin of geoparks “from below”, it means from the local communities, is being suppressed by centralised approach of governments in some parts of the world, it can be generally stated that geoparks serve as a development tool for local inhabitants.
- The above mentioned statements can apply practically without exception to all European geoparks. The initial spontaneous development of geoparks without transparent regulation has gradually stabilized. Consequently, the clear rules for acquiring a certificate in both national and international level in combination with its four-year validity helped to create a unique system of quality, which other world-class interest groups as well as professional organizations could only envy.

