

## **Trails and connections of geosites throughout the geological, mining, historical and environmental Park of Sardinia, Italy**

ROBERTO RIZZO, FRANCESCO MUNTONI, AND FRANCESCO USALLA - *Parco Geominerario Storico e Ambientale della Sardegna, 09016 via Monteverdi 16, Iglesias, Italy <francescomuntoni@tiscali.it>*

An internationally recognized Geopark is a territory that has a particular geological heritage and a sustainable development strategy. It must have well-defined boundaries and sufficient extension to allow an effective economic development of the area. Geoparks represent a special category of territories that are gradually establishing themselves nationally and internationally for the implementation of specific policies for the protection and enhancement of geodiversity and geological heritage. The geological, mining, historical and environmental Park of Sardinia is a Geopark developed throughout the island with a strong propensity for the development of a local economy. Sardinia's geology is one of the most comprehensive in Europe and the entire circum-Mediterranean area. In just 24,000 km<sup>2</sup> is documented a geological history spanning over 500 million years, which houses the testimony of extraordinarily diverse events belonging to different geological cycles occurring in an interval of time from Paleozoic to Quaternary. This geodiversity is didactically well illustrated in the sequence of sedimentary, igneous and metamorphic rocks present throughout the Sardinian territory distributed in roughly equivalent different areas.

With the aim of helping to create the conditions for sustainable development in the context of environmental and of industrial archaeology tourism activities the Consortium of the geological, mining, historical and environmental Park of Sardinia formalized with various Sardinian institutions, a multi-year partnership to define common strategies to realize the Regional Network of trails. This planned network should be shared, interconnected, uniform and furnished with hiking maps specifically made for hiking and trekking, also downloadable from the Web.

The park will lay out new trails in Sardinia in the territory falling within its competence, winding across important natural and environmental scenery through mining areas of stated big historical and cultural importance. The objective, connected to this network, is to bring the general public, including experts and lovers of hiking and trekking, not only to the knowledge of the natural environment, but also to those traits derived from years of industrial archeology of mining activity in the region that has left tangible signs of a great culture. In particular, this refers to the geological and geomorphological assets denominated geological sites. In this context, specific places or parts of the territory characterized by paleontological, mineralogical, petrological, geochemical, volcanological, structural or morphological peculiarities or related to deposits or climate, may be of big geological interest and stand out from others to constitute in some cases even real uniqueness within the Mediterranean area. These, defined by the term Geosite, are decreed an opportunity for conservation. The geological sites are thus clear examples and testimonies of geological events that occurred in the past and help to define the geological heritage of a given territory or region.

As part of the geological heritage of Sardinia, the geological sites are important elements in the territory planning and environmental protection. These activities belong to the policies for the protection and enhancement of history, culture and environment, with particular reference to that part of natural heritage defined as geo-sites and / or geomorphosites, with the aim of supporting sustainable development by the spread of the values of industrial archaeology as well as environmental and cultural tourism activities.

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