

## Montenegro in the International System of Protection and Management of Geodiversity and the European Association for the Conservation of Geological Heritage ProGeo

Gojko R. Nikolić, Goran Barović, Duško Vujačić

gojkorn@t-com.me

Study Program of Geography, Faculty of Philosophy Nikšić, University of Montenegro

### Abstract

Montenegrin geo-space possesses outstanding geodiversity and biodiversity potential with elements which have a global character. The number of species per unit area in Montenegro is 0.837, the highest of all European countries. Montenegrin geo-space is expressed at the international level, through two *Ramsar sites* and two *UNESCO sites*. The Ramsar sites include: Special Reserve for Flora and Fauna of Tivat Salina (2013) and Montenegrin part of the Skadar Lake, which has been a Ramsar site since 2006. The UNESCO sites include: Durmitor National Park (World Heritage List since 1980) and Kotor-Risan zaliv, (List of World Natural and Cultural Heritage since 1979).

National network of protected natural areas currently covers an area of 9.05% of the land area of Montenegro. It consists of five national parks (Durmitor, Skadar Lake, Biogradska gora and Prokletije) and 48 other protected areas, which are in a lower protection category of: natural monuments, areas with special natural characteristics and general or special reserves.

Through the Berne Convention for the protection of European wildlife and natural habitats, Montenegro applied 32 candidate areas for the Emerald Ecological Network Areas, which include 156 types of habitats in Alpine and Mediterranean biogeographical regions and cover a total of 234.399 acres.

The slogan "*A just world that values and protects nature*" of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (*IUCN*) was adopted by National Parks of Montenegro in 2013 and implemented through membership in the largest global network of organizations and experts for the protection of nature.

Montenegro is, through its main organization, a member of Europark Federation, an international organization of national parks. The World Wildlife Fund launched the project *Dinaric Arc Parks* in 2012. The document Big Win for Dinaric Arc, worked on by the World Wide Fund for Nature (*WWF*), the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro and the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Republic of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Serbia, confirms partnership and commitment of working together on improving protected areas (8 countries with 80 parks).

In addition to cooperating with the Institution of the Global Geosites, World Heritage Site (*WHS*) and International Association of Geomorphologists (*Working Group on Geomorphosites*), Montenegro has formally been a member of the European ProGEO Association for the Conservation of Geological Heritage (2015), as well as of international associations dealing with identifying and presenting geodiversity and geological heritage objects. The rank and membership in this association gives a new significance and promotes policies of protecting the current geodiversity in Montenegro. Work on the promotion,

protection and management of geological heritage takes place in the Working Group for South East Europe ProGEO (*WGI*).

So far, we have organized national scientific meetings with international participation encompassing Geological Heritage (*GEOECO* 2010). In addition to these activities, we have projects in the framework of bilateral cooperation with the Republic of Croatia – project *GIS Database of Protected Areas on the Example of Geo-heritage Objects*, in which we analyze the application of new technologies and compare the experiences and results in the establishment of a geo-heritage object databases in Montenegro and Croatia.

**Keywords:** International System of Protection and Management of Geodiversity, geo-heritage, European Association for the Conservation of Geological Heritage, Working Group ProGEO Association, Working Group for geomorphosites