

## **GEOLOGICAL HERITAGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE BALKAN PENINSULA**

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The Balkan Peninsula has a rich geological heritage that has been systematically neglected and/or underestimated. It consists both of Sites of Special Scientific Importance, and of sites (mostly geomorphic) of wide public interest. Many of these sites possess also considerable cultural, archaeological, historic or ethnographic value, and/or are combined with areas of rare botanical and zoological biocoenoses.

The conservation of the geological heritage should be performed both through protection of individual sites and areas or establishment of national or transnational geoparks, and by the complex protection of geodiversity, biodiversity and cultural heritage. Threatened mineral and/or fossil sites should be effectively protected, and the best specimens, exhibited in local and national museums. Urban and landscape planning and management of the natural resources should take into consideration both the management of the geological heritage for cultural, touristic and educational purposes, and the effective protection of the most important sites in natural reserves with restricted admission.