



“600 Million years of Nature wonders to discover...”

Report 2 October 2006

Olá/Hola/Hello

October was the month of decisions. Several meetings were made to decide the administration board (Geopark Management Office) of the new European Geopark under the auspices of the six municipalities composing Naturtejo intermunicipal association and tourism company. Armindo Jacinto is the General Director, Carlos Neto de Carvalho the new Technical Director, Rui Tomás Marques operates Marketing and Commercial and Rafael André is in charge of the Management structure and leads Planning. Cristina Prego, Fátima Rodrigues, Alice Marcelo and Eliana Antunes are multifunctional administrative supporters and Jesús Alarcón is our Delegate for Spain. *Alias*, all the team is very plastic due to so many and diversified activities we usually have to do. Of course, there is a strong connection and the support of the six municipalities by their town-councillors for Tourism and Culture and respective tourism offices staff, as well as with presidents of local associations such as Américo André (Association for Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage of Penha Garcia), Helder and Jorge Gouveia (Association for Studies of High Tagus), Octávio Catarino (Group of Friends of Foz do Cobre), Bruno Ramos (Pinus Verde Development Association) and António Realinho (Association for Development of the Centre-South Borderland). During this month Geopark Naturtejo prepared proposals for the Program of Activities 2007 for all territory and the Tourist Development Action Plan. It was decided, with the approval of the coordination board of European Geoparks, the promotion of GNMM representing EGN in BTL and FITUR International Tourism fairs next year.

1) Activities

October – **Post-Graduation Course for specialization on Applied Geology – 2nd Edition 2006/2007 – Professional probation.** Naturtejo with the Faculty of Sciences (University of Lisbon) is offering during 2006/7 probation entitled “The mining territory of Naturtejo: identification and geotourist promotion”. Naturtejo seeks graduated geologists to collaborate in the Geomining Museum of Idanha project.

1st October – **Presentation of Local 21 Agenda chart of Idanha-a-Nova.** Idanha-a-Nova meeting for Local Agenda 21 presented the first stage for the program of Municipal Local Sustainable Development. During this public event there was an information session about Local Agenda 21, presentation of projects, inventories and initiatives. In Geopark Naturtejo, Idanha-a-Nova municipality was the fourth to join the international program for sustainable development Local 21 Agenda, after Vila Velha de Ródão, Castelo Branco and Nisa municipalities.



3-5th October – **Visit of the coordinators of the new Geopark Nueva Esparta.** Jesús Salazar and Roigar López, from the Facultad de Ingenieria, Universidad Central de Venezuela, visit for 3 days the Geopark Naturtejo during their educational tour by EGN Geoparks. With Carlos Neto de Carvalho they visit several geomonuments of the Geopark, including the Penha Garcia Ichnological Park, Conhal do Arneiro Roman mine and Portas do Ródão Natural Monument. GNMM and the coordinators of the future Geopark Nueva Esparta signed a protocol for scientific/educational/promotional cooperation between geoparks starting in December, with the technical visit of Carlos Neto de Carvalho to the Venezuelan territory. GNMM is carefully supporting and technically helping this new promising Geopark, the first Caribbean one, which may be considered in the future one of the most dynamic and

exemplar Geoparks in America and a solid bridge between EGN and a future American Geoparks Network, actively promoting the concept and the Geological Heritage.



5-15th October – **Visit to Azores Islands.**

During 10 days Carlos Neto de Carvalho visited 3 islands of Azores, S. Miguel, Pico and Faial, to understand the improvements of regional government concerning geoconservation and promotion of geosites. Carlos visited the new Vulcanological and Geothermal Observatory of Azores in Lagoa, S. Miguel, where was invited to become a new member, and met the most prolific promoter of Geological Heritage and Geotourism since long time ago, Prof. Vitor Hugo Forjaz (Azores University). The idea presented by Carlos Neto de Carvalho to Prof. Forjaz was to create a new Portuguese Geopark in an Azorean Island with the help of GNMM. Besides, Carlos visited the new Interpretive Centre of Gruta das Torres lava tube in Madalena, Pico and several other geomonuments, museums and geological landscapes of the three islands.

12th October – **One page promo in the Reconquista Newspaper** – After the integration of Geopark Naturtejo in the GGN there was a bet to promote the moment in the most read newspaper from the Geopark territory. The message was: “Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional -1st Portuguese Geopark. UNESCO included GNMM in its world geoparks network. The integration in this network confirms the exceptional and significance value of the geological heritage of the place, which must be respected in the benefit of humankind”.



19, 27th October – **Course on Implementation**

of a Tourist Quality Management System in the Geopark Naturtejo – Field visits to Nisa and Vila Velha de Ródão municipalities. In an important course for the territory, Rui Tomás Marques prepares 20 technicians related with tourism offices of the six municipalities for this new age of the Geopark Naturtejo. The main purposes are to deeply understand the EGN concept, to exchange knowledge and working habits with visits to all the territory and to homogenise practises, promotional strategies and tourism offices. During this course started field visits to each municipality in order to understand the tourist resources, accommodation, handcraft and restaurant quality and programming performance. Carlos Neto de Carvalho presented the Geopark philosophy and geomonuments (natural and cultural tourism resources) in Nisa and Vila Velha de Ródão municipalities. Lots of rain during these days did not stop the enthusiasm of the participants.

25th October – **Course on Implementation of a Tourist Quality Management System in the Geopark Naturtejo – Workshop “Tourism Offices” in Proença-a-Nova.** Fátima Rodrigues presented the Geopark Naturtejo and its role in tourism homogenization and good practises in the territory.

28th October – **Participation of the Geopark Naturtejo coordinators in the commission for one year commemorations of the 750 years of Penha Garcia.** Armindo Jacinto and Carlos Neto de Carvalho were invited to be part of the commission for celebration of the History of Penha Garcia. Both presented several activities for 2007 relating with the Program of Geopark Naturtejo. It will be very important for strong interaction between local people and the Geopark. During the opening ceremony of these one year event, with the presence of the President of Idanha-a-Nova municipality, Álvaro Rocha, a new book about Penha Garcia was presented to the local people and guests. **Penha Garcia – uma Vila Templária**, by António Pires Nunes presents Penha Garcia 50 years ago and now, referring the tourism resources (history, culture, nature and the geological heritage) of this ancient town. After that, almost one hundred people participated in the Route of



Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional – UNESCO European and Global Geopark

Contraband through the Ichnological Park of Penha Garcia were they could actively acting in a live theatre as local smugglers and policemen. Very nice afternoon ending with a taste of local bread and smoked sausages!

2) Geopark's Impact in Media

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4th October – Armindo Jacinto is interviewed by phone for a Venezuelan TV about the social impact of Geopark Naturtejo in Portugal. This opportunity resulted from the visit of Jesus Salazar and Roigar Lopez to the Geopark Naturtejo and the cooperation between Portugal and the new Geopark Nueva Esparta.

12th October – **Portugal Directo news in RTP1 (national TV)** – A special interview of 22 minutes live from Penha Garcia, about the new Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional and the integration in EGN and GGN, with the main interventions of Armindo Jacinto and Carlos Neto de Carvalho, mayors, environmental organization and tourist companies.

Radio

25th October – **TSF daily program “Mais cedo ou mais tarde” with national broadcasting.** Armindo Jacinto was interviewed to talk about foot path network and events integrating the Geopark Naturtejo – European and Global Geopark.

25th October – **Onda Zero daily program “Gente viajera” for Castilla-León province, Spain.** Jesus Alarcón, Delegate for Spain of Geopark Naturtejo, talked about the integration of GNMM in the GGN and EGN and its heritage relevance for the development of tourism in this region of Portugal.

Newspapers

27th July (Travel Trade Gazette, Czech Republic) – “Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional”

28th July (Ecosfera) – “UNESCO approves the first Portuguese geopark from Beira Baixa and North of Alentejo

August (O Concelho de Vila Velha de Ródão’s front page) – “Geopark Naturtejo approved by UNESCO”

August (ARESP) – “Approval of Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional by UNESCO”

24th August (PRWeb) – “Portuguese natural área added to Global Network of Geoparks”

30th August (Search the Outdoors) – “Portuguese geo-park gets UNESCO backing”

31st August (O Distrito de Portalegre) – “The first Portuguese Geopark”

September (Infoquadros) – “Geopark approved by UNESCO”

September (geoRoteiros) – “There is gold in Foz”

September (Caminar) – “Geopark Naturtejo integrates UNESCO network”

28th September (Jornal do Fundão) – “Seeking gold in Foz do Cobreão”



Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional – UNESCO European and Global Geopark

- 29th September (Reconquista) – “European journeys on heritage”**
October (Primenegócios) – “UNESCO approves the first Portuguese Geopark”
October (Fundação Alentejo – Agenda Cultural e Informativa) – “Naturtejo belongs to the Global Geoparks Naturtejo of UNESCO”
October (Folha Florestal) – “Beira Baixa already has a Geopark”
12th October (Raiano’s front page) – “Geopark Naturtejo in the UNESCO Geoparks Network”
12th October (Jornal do Fundão) – “Portas do Ródão are Natural Monument”
13th October (Jornal das Freguesias Alentejo) – “Naturtejo belongs to the Global Geoparks Network of UNESCO”
16th October (Alentejopress.com) – “Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional integrates European and Global Geoparks Network of UNESCO”
21st October (NS Magazine) – “There is gold in Beira”, pp. 36-41.
21st October (Fonte Nova) – “Naturtejo integrates UNESCO Global Geoparks Network”
24th October (Turisver) – “Geopark Naturtejo Meseta Meridional integrates UNESCO Geoparks Network”

3) Publications

Promotional

- NUNES, A.L.P – *Penha Garcia – uma Vila Templária (A Templar town)*. Câmara Municipal de Idanha-a-Nova, 108p.



Photo Geopark of the month – “Foot paths for all”(Mediterranean Pond Turtle, *Mauremys leprosa*)