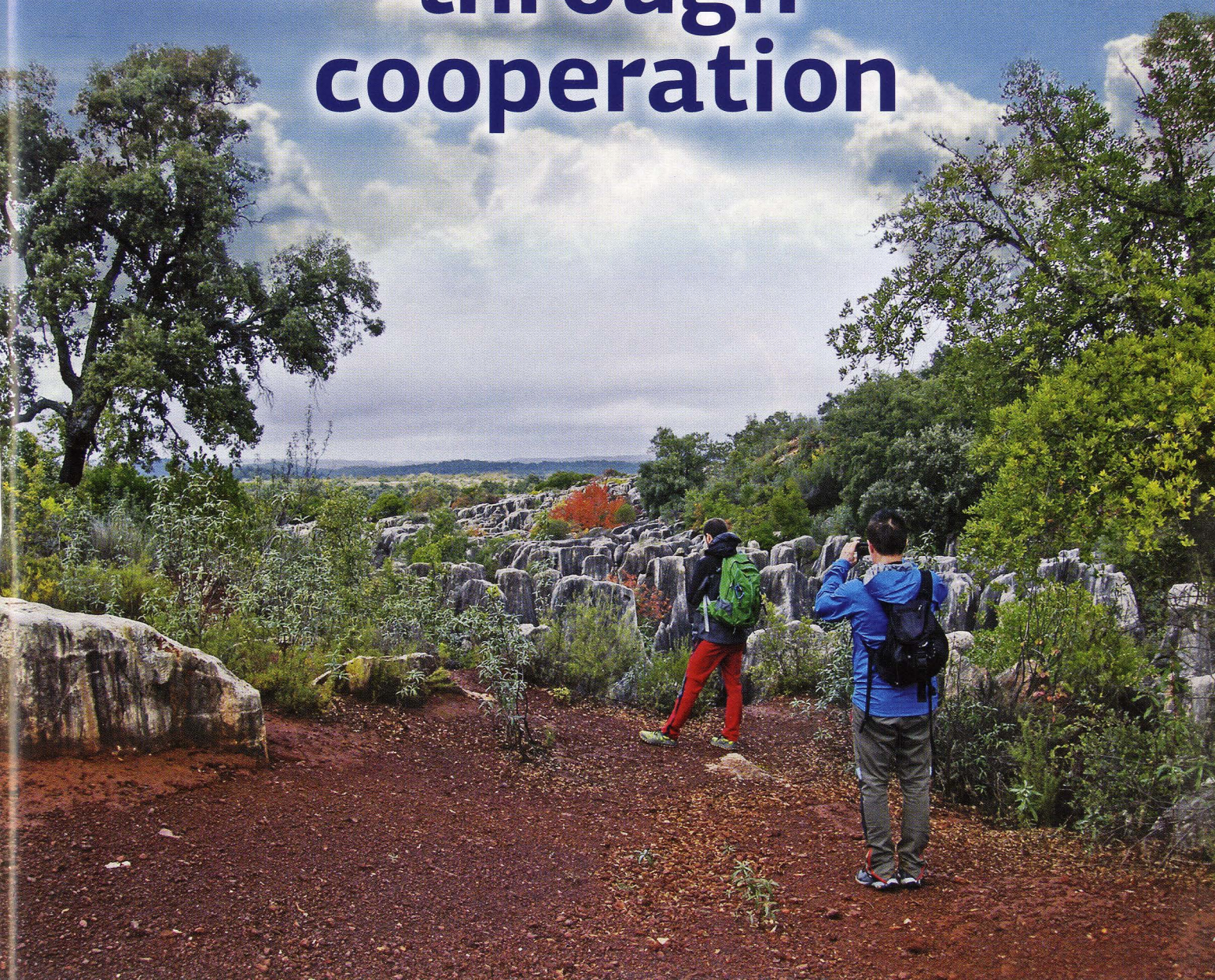


EUROPEAN GEO PARKS NETWORK

European Geoparks Magazine ● Issue 16

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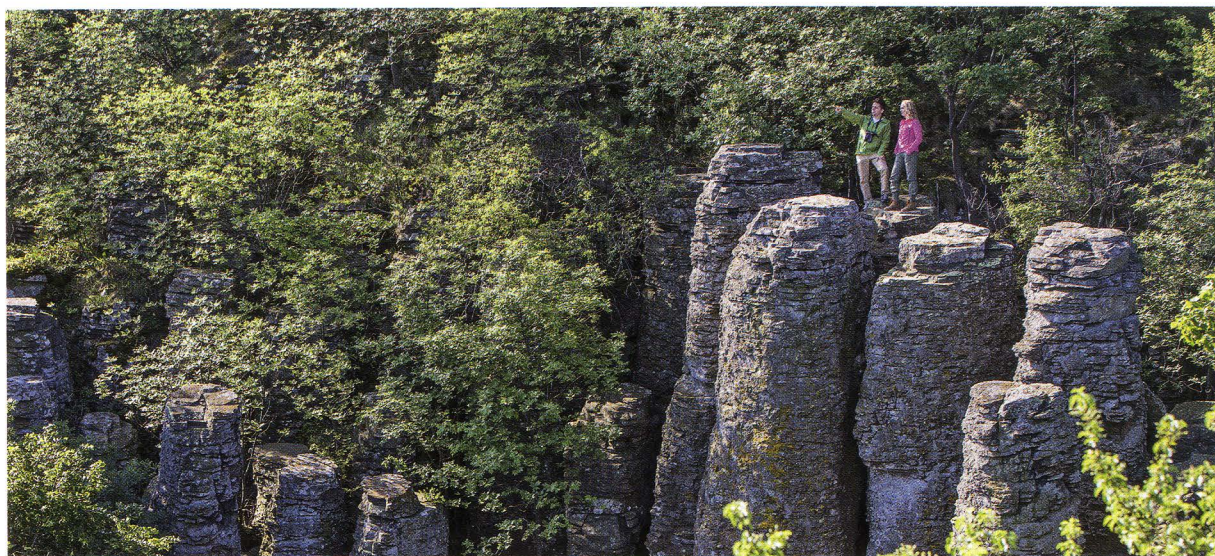
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Routes of fire: wandering on new volcanic trails



The 'Basalt Organs' of Szent György Hill.

Photo by Zoltán Szenthe.

Bakony–Balaton UNESCO Global Geopark has an outstanding geodiversity (172 rock formations) but its most iconic landscapes were undoubtedly, formed by volcanism. Approximately 50 volcanoes erupted in this area 8–2.3 million years ago: the emblematic basalt-capped volcanic remnant hills, landmarks of the Geopark, were shaped by erosion processes.

The volcanic landscapes are popular destinations for our visitors, and also pillars of geotourism. Balaton Uplands National Park Directorate, as the management organization of the Geopark, operates 14 visitor centres and interpretive sites. Seven of these are connected to the rich geological-volcanic heritage.

The disused basalt quarry of Hegyestű is one of the most important geological interpretive sites in the Geopark where, thanks to the Interreg Danube

Geo Tour Project, a new volcanological exhibition to attract visitors with a set of science-based interactive attractions and visual take-home experiences will open in the near future. Visitors will find a unique exhibition at this matchless site (did we just forget to mention that you are actually standing inside the crater of a former volcano?), with a fantastic panorama, but do not focus only on the characteristic basalt columns, as these are just an appetizer for further exploration.

At the gate of the picturesque Káli Basin, we still have a long way to go and wondrous lessons to learn in addition to the Geopark's volcanic, natural and intangible heritage. The 27-km-long route of our brand new 'Fire Nature Trail' reveals various events in the history of the area, and an accompanying booklet also provides a glimpse into the volcanic heritage of the Danube region.

Our journey ends at yet another spectacular 360°panoramic site. The surrounding hills, the remains of former volcanoes, line up at your feet like desserts on a menu card. The "Geopark's chef" presents you with the just redesigned and much shorter 'Ring of Fire' and 'Basalt Organs' nature trails in the remarkable Badacsony and Szent György hills. If you are really hungry why not try out some of our recently developed geoproducts? Congratulations, you just discovered a part of the Danube GeoTour.

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Visitors at Hegyestű Geological Interpretive Site.

Photo by Barnabás Korbély.



One of the 31 new interpretive panels presenting the volcanic heritage of the Geopark and the iconic landscape of the Tapolca Basin.

Photo by Barnabás Korbély.