

Buzău Land NGO | Asociația Ținutul Buzăului

Beșlii 20, Mânzălești Commune,

Buzău County, Romania

In partnership with: **Buzău County Council**

and the **University of Bucharest**

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Secretary of the International Geoscience and Geoparks Programme

UNESCO Section on Earth Sciences and Geo-Hazards Risk Reduction

Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences, Natural Sciences Sector

7 place de Fontenoy, F-75352 Paris 07 SP

LETTER OF INTENT

Regarding the application to obtaining the status of UNESCO Global Geopark for

BUZĂU LAND, ROMANIA

It is our pleasure to announce our intent of undergoing the application process for aspiring UNESCO Global Geoparks during 2020, for the **Buzău Land Aspiring Geopark**, in Romania.

This letter of intent is submitted by a consortium of partners from the Civil Non-governmental, Public Administration and Academic sectors, consisting of (i) Buzău Land NGO (Geopark management and development), (ii) Buzău County Council (governmental regional administration) and (iii) the University of Bucharest (national scientific and educational partner).

Buzău Land (Ținutul Buzăului) is a sustainable development territory located at the Carpathian's Bend Area in Romania (Buzău County). It is a rural, mountainous and hilly territory covering approximately 1036 km², the extent of the territory corresponding to that of 18 communes. Buzău Land is inhabited by circa 40,000 people. The territory is rich in both natural and cultural heritage.

From a natural point of view, Buzău Land records 40 million years of uninterrupted earth history in exposed sedimentary and volcanic (pyroclastic) outcrops. It tells the story of the formation of the Carpathian Mountains, recording environmental changes that trace the transition from a deep sea, to a shallow, littoral and terrestrial environment. Located in a highly active geodynamic area (close to a triple junction between the Moesian plate, Tisia-Dacia plate and the East European Platform) Buzău Land exposes many peculiar geological phenomena, such as active mud volcanism, natural eternal flames, salt diapirism with karst features, sandstone concretions, petroleum springs and water mineralization. In addition, there are other important geological features, such as stratotypes or an unique and endemic species of amber (rumanite).

From a cultural point of view, Buzău Land is a place of diversity. It is an area that was historically transited by populations migrating from northern Europe (goths), from Asia Minor (Anatolia) and from Asia (Huns, Mongolians), and it was a buffer area between the three medieval Romanian countries (Vallahia, Moldavia and Transylvania). Due to the territory being effectively isolated during more modern times (mostly due to its mountainous landscape), Buzău Land has preserved a unique blend of culture, both on a tangible and intangible level. One of the greatest cultural values of this territory, however, is the clear connection between geodiversity and cultural diversity. Each valley having a different geological peculiarity (amber deposits, or salt domes, or mud volcanoes) also has its own specific set of tangible and intangible cultural features.

A great deal of stories and legends connected to natural phenomena have been preserved throughout the years. Examples include dragons being responsible for the mud volcanoes, ogres using mud ponds as traps for animals, the spirits behind eternal flames, the art of soothsaying in pieces of amber, or giants building rock walls (tectonic features).

The Buzău Land Aspiring Geopark initiative was started in 2007, with planning and discussion stages with the local communities, regional administration and stakeholders. In 2010 it was officially accepted as a development strategy for the territory through County Council Act no. 51/29.04.2010. Since 2010, the consortium of partners has collaborated with the local community to develop Buzău Land according to Geopark principles and guidelines. Local, national and international projects that included many other national and European partners have been carried out since, with educational, tourism infrastructure, environmental, economic and social objectives.

Buzău Land functions as a *de facto* Geopark since 2017, under the management of Buzău Land NGO (Asociația Ținutul Buzăului). The management and development team includes specialists in Earth Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Protected Areas, Sustainable Development, Community Engagement, IT&C, Design and Marketing.

It is a professional team dedicated to constantly improving Buzău Land according to the UNESCO Geopark guidelines, and to bringing innovation in the various fields of activity required by our mission.

After almost a decade of work, we are confident that our territory has made significant progress in the direction of sustainable development and conservation of Earth Heritage. We are therefore ready to move to the next step and present the Buzău Land Aspiring Geopark for evaluation. Hence, it is our intention to send the full application dossier to UNESCO by late November, 2020.

We hope that our application is in line with the expectations of UNESCO, and we are looking forward to the prospect of joining the prestigious family of Global UNESCO Geoparks.

Sincerely,

24.06.2020

In the name of the partnership,

Dr. Răzvan-Gabriel Popa

Alice Popa



Executive Director,

President

Asociația Ținutul Buzăului

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