PRESS KIT

The Beaujolais, labeled « UNESCO Global Geopark »

April 2018
## Summary

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Press release

By official decree,
Beaujolais is now a ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’!

April 17, 2018,

UNESCO has officially declared Beaujolais a ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ (‘Géoparc mondial de l’UNESCO in French).
This is a real victory for all those involved in supporting this cause, rewarding a long-term endeavour initiated in 2012. If Beaujolais is already renowned all over the world for the quality of its wine, from now on, it will also be known for the richness, complexity and exceptional nature of its geological heritage.

Indeed, the certificate has recognised not only the remarkable character of Beaujolais’ geology, but also its regional project centred on the protection and development of geo-heritage. Daniel PACCOUD, president of the Beaujolais Mixed Union, in charge of Beaujolais’ application to UNESCO, declares: “Today, the support and hard work of a whole region has been rewarded! The associations, the scientists, the communities, the Geopark team and also the local businesses and inhabitants all came together and got involved in Beaujolais’ geo-heritage. It is recognition of the extraordinary value of this region and all those who live here”. In another demonstration of Beaujolais’ richness and the importance of the region’s coordinated efforts, in September 2017 Beaujolais Geopark had already received the honour of being named among the 26 Emblematic Tourist Attractions of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region.

To date, of the 140 ‘UNESCO Global Geoparks’ recognised over the world, France possesses 7: those of Haute-Provence, Luberon, the Bauges Mountains, Chablais, the Ardèche Mountains, the Quercy Plateau and now Beaujolais. The role of Geoparks is primarily directed toward the preservation of geological heritage, education, geo-tourism, international cooperation and more.

The label recognises actions already taken but also those to come, as the projects’ progress is re-evaluated every 4 years.

With this in mind, Beaujolais Geopark is committing to implementation of the following:

- A geo-events programme which is none other than the fruits of the 2018 Geo-Initiatives Competition selection;
- A comic book aimed at raising awareness of Beaujolais’ geological history, for the younger and general public;
- The development of new sites which will add value to the Geopark (Espace Pierres Folles, the Terrasse de Chiroubles, Lucenay Quarry, Mont Saint Rigaud…);
- The creation of a Beaujolais Geopark discovery guide, and other measures.
Editorial

Beaujolais has inherited one of the richest and most complex geologies in France, and in certain respects, on Earth. The international and unique value of its geological heritage paved the way for its classification as a ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ on the 17th April 2018, after more than five years of groundwork.

“Today, the support and hard work of a whole region has been rewarded. The associations, the scientists, the communities, the Geopark team and also the local businesses and inhabitants all came together to get involved in Beaujolais’ geo-heritage. It is recognition of the extraordinary value of this region and all those who live here. There is no doubt that the official confirmation of the UNESCO label on our Geopark will represent a crucial moment in the history of Beaujolais’ territorial development.

It is also the starting point for a formidable dynamic of promoting tourism. We are expecting perceptible economic returns for all the local communities.”

Daniel Paccoud,
President of ‘Syndicat Mixte du Beaujolais’.
What is an « UNESCO Global Geopark »?

The label ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ is attributed to regions which offer a remarkable geological heritage of international importance, and which are pursuing a project of development and protection of their geo-heritage.

Created in 2000 at the suggestion of 4 European regions (one of which is the Geological Reserve of Haute-Provence in France), the Geopark label was quickly supported by UNESCO. Since the 17th November 2015, with the ratification of UNESCO’s 195 member states, the label took on a new status, integrating the International Geoscience Programme and officially assuming the name of ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’.

The UNESCO Global Geoparks strive to raise awareness of ‘geodiversity’ among the general public, while supporting conservation measures, as well as those of education and tourism. Each of the Geoparks tells of some of Earth’s 4.6 billion year history, as well as the geological events which shaped it and which influenced the evolution of humanity. They bear witness to past climate change, while offering information about modern-day challenges, helping also to better prepare for natural dangers.

Geoparks are working on 4 parts:
- Recognition and conservation of geoheritages
- Education, training and sensibilization of publics
- Economic and touristic development
- Cooperation and networking with the offers geoparks

At present, there are 140 Geoparks in the world, including 74 in Europe and 7 in France:
- Haute Provence
- PNR du Luberon
- PNR des Bauges
- Chablais
- PNR des Monts d’Ardèche
- PNR des Causses du Quercy
- Beaujolais

The motto of the UNESCO Global Geopark network:
“Celebrating Earth Heritage, Sustaining local Communities”

More informations: www.globalgeopark.org
www.unesco.org/new/fr/natural-sciences/environment/earth-sciences/global-geoparks

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Why a Geopark in Beaujolais?

The ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ of Beaujolais, known all over the world for the quality of its wines, is situated in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, in south-east France. The region enjoys an extraordinary geological diversity which has been shaped over nearly 500 million years. The region is characterised by three types of topographic reliefs: the plains of Val de Saône to the east, the wine-making area made up of gentle slopes interrupted by wooded valleys, and the Beaujolais mountains stretching out to the west and reaching a height of over 1000 metres at the edges of the region.

1 - An extraordinary geological history

Situated on the eastern border of the Massif Central and facing the Alps, the ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ enjoys a favourable location in the heart of Europe and possesses a rich and complex geology.

The magmatic and metamorphic crystalline bedrock offers a reasonably complete history of the Hercynian orogenic belt’s evolution, which forms a mountain range that developed at the end of the Palaeozoic era (350 to 290 million years ago) following the collision between the supercontinents of Gondwana and Euramerica. This period of Beaujolais’ geological history is remarkable evidence of the geological processes which occur at the deepest roots of mountain ranges, and which are of prime importance for the world’s paleogeographic history.

The secondary sedimentary structures cover a period of nearly 80 million years. The diversity of the rocks and structures is linked to the diversity of the epicontinental marine geology’s history, marked by a wide range of sedimentary environments.

The tectonic plate movement during the Paleogene era (45 to 25 million years ago) and during the Neogene era (10 to 5 million years ago), linked to the formation of the Pyrenees and then the Alps, created a large fracture in the bedrock and sedimentary covering, raising western Beaujolais and changing the geological sequences in the east.

By means of the large depression which formed between the mountains of Beaujolais and Jura, a vast perialpine river network developed at the end of the Paleogene era and during the Quarternary (which began around 3 million years ago) and progressively created the large alluvial and fluvioglacial landform of the Saône river.

Enjoying a wide variety of geological formations, Beaujolais is the subject of numerous scientific studies, which address all the great scientific questions about fundamental and applied geology.

Beyond its geology, the physical geography has led to the establishment of specific natural environments, such as moors, dry grasslands, pastures and forests on acidic or chalk soil, peat bogs, high wetlands and peri-fluvial tributaries which are inhabited by certain species of flora and fauna.
2- A strong bond between the land and its human inhabitants

Beaujolais also offers a rich cultural heritage, which is manifest in the many historical buildings such as the châteaux, churches, and villages of character. All these buildings stand out for their remarkable architecture and the range of stones used for their traditional construction reflects the geological diversity of Beaujolais.

Beaujolais has always known how to draw its riches from its underground and its land. Its economic development is based on the use of its geological or natural resources: the diversity of its land and the reliefs have allowed wine-making, the market gardening and grain culture took root on Val de Saône’s alluvium, the quality of river water allowed for the establishment of textile industries while the volcanic earth nourishes the Douglas forests.

The Beaujolais Geopark aims to include inhabitants and local communities in the management and planning of its region, with the objective of raising public awareness about the area’s geological heritage, and also reinforcing the feeling of pride at belonging to this remarkable region. The Beaujolais project has not only adopted a local approach, but one that is also participatory, in order to create and consolidate a long-lasting exchange network with other regions.

The Beaujolais ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ is also a land of ecotourism, which has hidden treasures for those who appreciate countryside scenery, bountiful nature and local produce.

The objectives for the years to come:

- Revealing the region’s riches to the general public and its inhabitants, in order to better conserve them;
- Developing Beaujolais’ economy and tourism
- Mobilising local participation: working closely with those involved in tourism, education and teaching, economy, culture, wine-making and heritage;
- Offering a backbone to existing projects and promoting the emergence of new projects revolving around the region. Making Beaujolais Geopark a catalyst for enthusiasm about the emergence of new projects.
The stages of earning the name of Beaujolais Geopark

- **2012**: The idea first emerges, beginning of general considerations.

- **2013**: Feasibility study, contact made with the European network of Geoparks. Beginning of a participatory inventory of sites, with nearly 150 sites of interest identified in the region.

- **2014**: Submission of the first application dossier by the Beaujolais Mixed Union.

- **Summer 2015**: Dossier accepted, and an expert assessment of the region is carried out.

- **September 2015**: Submission of an experts’ report with recommendations. Acquisition of a ‘yellow card’: integration into the Geopark network is postponed for 2 years.

- **November 2015**: Integration of the label into the UNESCO International Science and Earth Programme, and a new name: ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’.

**New procedure = new application**

- **November 2016** : Submission of a second application dossier within the framework of the new UNESCO specifications

- **December 2016 – March 2017** : Analysis of the dossier’s scientific form and substance (geological value examined by the International Union of Geological Sciences and UNESCO).

- **Spring 2017**: First positive recommendation of Beaujolais’ application, volunteered by the global Geopark network. A new expert assessment of the Beaujolais region is scheduled.

- **23-27 June 2017**: Expert assessment of Beaujolais: two experts commissioned by UNESCO visit the sites and meet local participants. Following their visit, they produce a report which will be essential in the final decision on classification.

- **7-9 September 2017** : 14th European Conference of Geoparks, in the ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ of Açores (Portugal). Examination of applications, presented by the member states.

- **17 April 2018** : 204th meeting of the Executive Committee of UNESCO member states in Paris. Official vote on the classification of Beaujolais Geopark
Beaujolais Geopark Initiatives

A programme of initiatives has been approved by the Beaujolais Mixed Union, the structure responsible for the dossier, for the 2016-2022 period. Various leading themes, in association with those recommended by UNESCO, have been developed:

- **Knowledge, Preservation and Protection of geo-heritage**: scientific knowledge of the region and sites linked to the scientific committee and universities;
- **Development of educational initiatives**: creation of teaching resources, presentations in schools and training for regional mediation;
- **Communication**: website, production of a Beaujolais Geopark discovery guide and information brochures, exhibitions and diverse information and communication resources;
- **Management and equipment of geosites**: technical support for geosites, deployment of a signage system on sites welcoming the public;
- **Development of economic and tourist offers**: geo-initiative competition, development of an ambassadorial network, support for the development of tourist and economic product offers;
- **Partnerships and networking**: presentations and partnerships with other institutions, as well as with French and international ‘UNESCO Global Geopark’ networks.

**A FOCUS ON ...**

Between 2009 and 2018, a study of **regional characterisations** was led by SIGALES, at the request of the wine-making industry (Inter Beaujolais). Thus, to analyse and chart the Beaujolais wine-growing region, more than 15,000 soil surveys, nearly 1000 excavations and around fifty guided tours were carried out. It is a formidable resource for improving knowledge of wine-makers’ soil, with the aim of better cultivating the grapevines and increasing the wine’s quality. This scientific research is also one of the cornerstones of the Geopark project in Beaujolais.

In 2018, Beaujolais Geopark is working on the creation of a comic book, in collaboration with Eléonore Ampuy, a local illustrator. This comic book, entitled ‘Histoires de Pierres’ (Stone Story), recounts the geological history of Beaujolais. This collaboration is an innovative project, where science, art and scientific mediation come together.
And what does the future hold?

After more than 5 years of work, the official Beaujolais Geopark label allows the region to plan new initiatives and also to expect economic benefits.

**Expected benefits:**
- A significant improvement of Beaujolais’ image as a destination and region for study and research;
- An increase and diversification of visits to sites and geosites;
- Increased benefits from tourism, both direct and indirect;
- General economic development with the development of new partnerships (scientific, economic, tourism...)

The official Beaujolais Geopark label augurs a bright future for the whole region. Indeed, this might diversify the image of Beaujolais, which is not only a predominantly wine-making destination but which deserves to stand out for the richness of its geology and geo-heritage, to discover in the field and by meeting the local population.

**In September 2017, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region selected Beaujolais Geopark as one of its 26 Emblematic Tourist Sites.**

The Beaujolais Geopark receives aid with regard to reinforcing promotion and support. Thus, the region has allocated a subsidy of 2 million euros to Beaujolais Geopark with the aim of supporting large future projects, with regard to investment and management of the following sites:

- Reorganisation of interpretive centres (interior and exterior) at the Pierres Folles site (Saint-Jean-des-Vignes);
- Continued development of tourism at Mont Brouilly;
- Creation of a belvedere and discovery trail at the Terrasse de Chiroubles;
- Maison Vermorel development project, in Villefranche.
Feedback

Sylvie Babin, Biology teacher and in charge of the cultural, scientific and educational projects for sustainable development at the Academic Delegation of Arts and Culture (DAAC in French)

‘When I discovered the Beaujolais Geopark project I was immediately enthused. During my distant or nearby trips I had already had the opportunity to travel round it. I am delighted by the clarity and accessibility of geological, geographical, historical and cultural information, made possible by the work of local enthusiasts, all of which resonates with my teaching career but also with my work in the DAAC, where our fundamental values are partnership, action and pursuing projects to the full.’

‘For 2 years the Geopark has also been in partnership with training courses that we organise at the DAAC for teachers wishing to carry out projects on the subject of the countryside, heritage and architecture. This process of bringing together local enthusiasts could easily be taken beyond the region.’

‘I experienced the availability, professionalism, and efficiency of the Geopark team [...] during a project with my pupils who helped make, in Chatillon town hall, some models to prefigure the organisation of two roundabouts which neighbour our school in order to protect the local geology.

‘The Geopark is a valuable parter for all those teachers who want to lead a project in relation to the local area, and it doesn't just have to be about geology.’

Ann Matagrin, guide de Pays, association Déambule

“Congratulations to the Mixed Union team and all those who supported it!

Here are some words I associate with Beaujolais Geopark, which resonate with me and some of which have helped the development of the Déambule Association in the last five years:

- Geology, Geo-heritage, Geomorphology,
- Exchanges, Enthusiasm, Encouragement, Europe, Experts,
- Observations,
- Participation, Passion, Persistence, Provincial built heritage, People from the local area,
- Ambassadors, Aficionados, Authors, Alliances,
- Riches! Resources, Reflections, Reflecting on the region, Reunions, Rediscoveries,
- Kindness,
- Bravery, Businesses,
- Education, Exhibitions,
- Attractions, Activities,
- UNESCO, Universal,
- Jewel,
- Outings, Déambule Association discovery and geo-outings in Beaujolais,
- Label, Links, Lithophone,
- April 2018, Agonising wait,
- Interests, Impatience,
- Super...proud of Beaujolais Geopark, a UNESCO Global Geopark!’

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Beaujolais Attractions, network of tourist service providers

“Along with other tourism professionals, we were taken immediately with the idea of our colleague Chantal Pégaz who began the Geopark project in Beaujolais: since its launch in 2012 we have worked in partnership with the Beaujolais Mixed Union on the initiation of a Geotourism project which promotes discovery of the many attractions in Beaujolais... A region often known only for its wine’ [...]’

‘We will be able to count on both the worldwide renown of UNESCO Geoparks and our promotion of Geotourism to visitors, to develop Beaujolais’ tourist dynamic as well as the value of local produce and expertise!’

David Thomasset, directeur de l’école de Montmelas-Saint-Sorlin, projet paysage/géologie

« This project was concrete, following the interventions of the geopark team, the students made presentations in front of other classes. Landscapes reading tables, with a focus on geology, were made by the children and installed on the nature path of the village. »

Gabrielle Caramanna, Ampl’yflore Association

‘This project has allowed me to create links, contacts, opportunities for exchanges and meetings among local enthusiasts. It has promoted a greater knowledge of the value and distinctive characteristics of the local geology. By means of the training courses on offer, I will be able to showcase this richness, in my activities, work placements and conferences in order to present it with professionalism and passion. Thank you and well done to all those who have made this magnificent project possible.’

Brouilly Group, a team of Brouilly vintage and Côte de Brouilly winemakers

“The Brouilly Group has always believed in the Beaujolais Geopark. It is one of its ambassadors. The value of our countryside is unrivalled, and Mont Brouilly has been involved in a promotion project since 2010 with its Brouilly wine-growers. This work has allowed us to understand the interest of inhabitants and tourists for the wonderful features of our region. Such interest has materialised in the sale of bottles of our Brouilly vintage and Côte de Brouilly. The work has only just begun.’

‘The project which has resulted from the acquisition of the UNESCO Global Geopark label has opened up possibilities for us to communicate about our region, our work, our soil and our designations, but not just that... Geology as a science, the architectural varieties, the tourist interest that will come from the label, are all also sources of future cooperation. The UNESCO Global Geopark label allows us to collaborate in the development of the region, its inhabitants and visitors welcomed to Beaujolais.’
The Team Responsible

The Beaujolais Mixed Union (SMB, Syndicat Mixte du Beaujolais in French) was founded in 2010 on the basis of the existing SCoT Beaujolais Mixed Union. Under its current title, the Beaujolais Mixed Union has been responsible for various regional development initiatives:

- A territorial development program called SCoT
- The Beaujolais Geopark
- The forest charter
- The welcoming program for rural territoires (Beaujolais Vert votre Avenir)

Its action area of 1550km² is made up of 4 intercommunities: The Agglomeration of Villefranche Beaujolais Saône, The agglomeration community of “Ouest Rhodanien”, The community of municipalities of “Beaujolais Pierres Dorées” and the community of municipalities of “Saône Beaujolais” This represents a total of 127 communities, totalling more than 225,000 inhabitants.

Why is it the Beaujolais Mixed Union that is responsible for the Geopark?

Its responsibility for the Beaujolais Geopark has been in effect since the end of 2012. The instructions of UNESCO are clear:

‘Each Geopark project must be led by a management body with a stable political situation and sustainable financial support to consistently safeguard the development of regional projects.’

The Geopark perimeter corresponds to that of the Beaujolais Mixed Union. Two other communities outside the SMB perimeter are also contractually associated with the project, for they house sites of interest (or geosites). These are Saint-Germain-Nuelles and Saint-Victor-sur-Rhins.
Practical information

Informations general public

Website :
www.geopark-beaujolais.com

Social network:
@GeoparkBeaujolais

Information leaflets
(available on-line and in tourism office)

Annual forums (6 forums already organised)

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Iconography

Mount Brouilly geoscope ©Geopark Beaujolais

Mount Brouilly Gazebo ©Geopark Beaujolais

Beaujolais vineyard and mounts panorama ©Geopark Beaujolais

La Rock of Ajoux ©Geopark Beaujolais

Chevennes Chapel ©DestinationFood

Harvest ©Destination-Beaujolais & Cameras Rouges

Vines ©DestinationFood

Lake of pines ©Destination Beaujolais & Cameras Rouges

Lake of pines totem ©Geopark Beaujolais
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The partners

La Région
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes

Rhône
Le Département

Communauté d’agglomération de l’Ouest Rhodanien

Villefranche Beaujolais
Agglo

Beaujolais Pierres d’Orées
Communauté de communes

CCSB
De Savoie en Beaujolais

Destination Beaujolais
... Destination Surprises!

Fédération des Offices de Tourisme du Beaujolais