



## **New geoethic challenges in the framework of the UNESCO Global Geoparks**

Elizabeth Silva (1,3,4) and Artur Sá (2,3,4)

(1) Portuguese Forum of UNESCO Global Geoparks, Lisbon, Portugal, (2) Department of Geology, University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, 5000-801 Vila Real, Portugal, (3) Geosciences Centre, University of Coimbra, Pólo II, 3030-790 Coimbra, Portugal, (4) Portuguese National Committee for the International Geoscience Programme (IGCP), Lisbon, Portugal

Since the creation in 2000 of the European Geoparks Network (EGN) and later on, in 2004, with the establishment of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN), geoparks became a concept mainly applicable to rural areas where an exceptional geological heritage is the base of a strategy to promote the well-being of the populations, while maintaining maximum respect for the environment. Nowadays, accordingly to the definition presented by the new scientific International Geoscience and Geoparks Program, the UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development. In this sense, taking into account the role of geoscientists in this innovative territorial management process seeking to contribute to an effective regional sustainable development and the role of the ones chosen to become evaluators regarding missions on new UNESCO Global Geoparks or revalidations, more than ever it is important to consider geoethics the conducting wire of all the decisions and actions of these important key-actors and it should also be at the core of the UNESCO Global Geoparks concept, at all levels. But how can this be implemented in a Network that counts already with 119 territories across 33 countries and that it will be increasing every year? Which main actions must be developed and who should be involved? Can capacity-building on this issue be spread out worldwide through this Network? Who is responsible for it? These are some questions that need to have constructive and positive answers from all those involved in this new UNESCO designation.