



## **Geological nominations at UNESCO World Heritage, an upstream struggle**

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Using my 10 years experience in setting up and defending a UNESCO world Heritage Geological nomination, this presentation aims to give a personal insight into this international process and the differential use of science, subjective perception (aesthetic and 'naturalness'), and politics. At this point in the process, new protocols have been tested in order to improve the dialogue, accountability and transparency between the different stakeholders. These are, the State parties, the IUCN, the scientific community, and UNESCO itself. Our proposal is the Chaîne des Puys-Limagne fault ensemble, which combines tectonic, geomorphological evolution and volcanology. The project's essence is a conjunction of inseparable geological features and processes, set in the context of plate tectonics. This very unity of diverse forms and processes creates the value of the site. However, it is just this that has caused a problem, as the advisory body has a categorical approach of nominations that separates items to assess them in an unconnected manner. From the start we proposed a combined approach, where a property is seen in its entirety, and the constituent elements seen as interlinked elements reflecting the joint underlying phenomena. At this point, our project has received the first ever open review by an independent technical mission (jointly set up by IUCN, UNESCO and the State party). The subsequent report was broadly supportive of the project's approach and of the value of the ensemble of features. The UNESCO committee in 2016, re-referred the nomination, acknowledging the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the site and requesting the parties to continue the upstream process (e.g. collaborative work), notably on the recommendations and conclusions of the Independent Technical mission report. Meetings are continuing, and I shall provide you with the hot-off-the-press news as this ground breaking nomination progresses.