GOAL: an international project to develop geoethics and its educational potential

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“GOAL - Geoethics Outcomes and Awareness Learning” (https://goal-erasmus.eu/) is an international partnership project aimed to develop the potential of geoethics with the aim of improving its concepts and practices through an innovative and creative approach. The members of the different partner countries (Portugal, Austria, Italy, Israel, Spain, Lithuania) are working bringing together their expertise in overlapping disciplinary areas and intellectual synergies to develop an articulated approach and contribute to an advancement of the geoethical thinking. In particular the project integrates researchers and practitioners with skills in geoscience education, geological heritage, georisks, environmental sciences, theoretical aspects of geoethics and information and communication technologies in education.

The project "GOAL" aims to develop a geoethics syllabus and to offer suggestions on educational resources to be used in Higher Education, in order to promote awareness-raising on ethical and social implications of geoscience knowledge, education, research, practice and communication, thus enhancing the quality and relevance of students’ knowledge, skills and competencies. The creation of this international network and subsequently the syllabus and other educational resources will develop operational capacities for strengthening the conceptual substratum of geoethics.

The Italian team has contributed to frame geoethics from a theoretical point of view, by introducing definitions, values and contents. It has also clarified some concepts of utmost importance in geoethics, like that of responsibility, intellectual freedom, research integrity, prevention, sustainability, resilience, etc. Moreover, some specific issues have been addressed, such as the difference between ethical issues and ethical dilemmas, as well as the necessity to reach a reasonable alignment of values when dealing with geological activities that may have an impact on environment and population. Finally, through the use of videos, some important connections that link geoethics to several geosciences issues have been explained, such as georisks and georesources management.

The target group of GOAL project is formed mainly by Higher Education students, professors and researchers. Practitioners in the field like, for example, “geoheritage site” guides and secondary teachers, are also groups of interest for the project activities.