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Challenges in the development of the geodiversity concept

José Brilha

Institute of Earth Sciences, Pole of the University of Minho, Braga, Portugal (jbrilha@dct.uminho.pt)

The concept of geodiversity, despite being in use for almost 30 years, still has little impact on society. It is not easy to explain the reason for this dissociation, considering that the elements that constitute geodiversity are intrinsically part of nature, play an essential role in ecosystem services and, consequently, in human well-being.

During the last decade we have seen a great development in the interest of the geoscientific community in this subject, represented by the increase in the publication of papers and doctoral and master theses all over the world. One of the main challenges is now to transpose all this scientific knowledge into society. Obviously, theoretical and conceptual discussions about geodiversity are an integral part of science and must continue, but if we want that society recognizes the importance and value of geodiversity, we must be able to demonstrate clearly how geodiversity can help to solve some of the problems we face today.

Among other priorities, the geoscientific community has to be able to demonstrate in an structured way:

- The importance of geodiversity in implementing nature conservation actions and its direct relationship with biodiversity;
- The contribution of geodiversity for ecosystems restoration and its accounting as part of natural capital;
- The need to quantify the role of geodiversity in ecosystem services;
- The urgency of make environmental impact assessments including all possible effects that may affect geodiversity elements and processes;
- The importance of integrate the concept of geodiversity in pre-university education curricula;
- That the information and environmental interpretation provided to visitors of protected areas and other conservation areas should always include geodiversity.

Once the importance of geodiversity is fully recognized by policy-makers, managers, and the society in general, the fulfilment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals will be for sure closer than it is today.