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Values of geodiversity: a geoheritage oriented comparison

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The characterization of geoheritage has a relevant role in the discussion of geoethics. What is geoheritage and what element of geoheritage should we conserve for the future generations? According to many authors, geoheritage are those parts of geodiversity that are relevant for human kind and are worthy to be included into geoconservation programs. The relevance of geodiversity is often expressed in literature through the use of lists of values that, according to the author who publishes it, make a geologic feature/a geodiversity element as part of geoheritage.

Several authors proposed their lists of values. However, these lists present some differences: someone includes values that are not considered by other authors, or expresses them with different words. The consequence is that some elements of geodiversity, or, more in general, some geologic features could be considered as geoheritage only if a given list is taken into account. This situation may bring ambiguity when it comes to decide whether a feature is geoheritage, and can consequently bring to choose an inadequate strategy for geoconservation. For example, an underestimated feature will not be included into geoconservation programs, and an inappropriate use could ruin it. Viceversa, an overestimated feature can be overprotected, resulting in an obstacle for the local economy.

This contribution aims to present, as an example, the differences between some of these lists of values. The core of the presentation is a table that highlights which of the values are the same and what are the differences (missing or differently expressed values). This is a step of a wider research, whose goal is to identify a method to limit ambiguities in the definition of geoheritage features, in order to support geopark and geosite's stakeholders in the management of their territories and in the transparency of their decisions.