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Applicant UNESCO Global Geopark

Biokovo-Imotski Lakes, Croatia

Geographical and geological summary



1. Physical and human geography

The area of the aspiring Geopark Biokovo-Imotski Lakes is located between the Mediterranean and continental Europe, in the Republic of Croatia (central Dalmatia, Split-Dalmatia County). Distance to Split (biggest city in Dalmatia, and international airport) is 87 km (connected by highway). Geopark is an area bounded on the north by the border area between the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on the south by the coastal area of the Adriatic Sea. Geopark includes the area of three cities: Imotski, Makarska and Vrgorac, and thirteen municipalities: Zagvozd, Brela, Baska Voda, Tucepi, Podgora, Sestanovac, Zadvarje, Proložac, Podbablje, Zmijavci, Lokvici, Lovrec and Runovici. Relief type of the area of the aspiring Geopark can be divided into three natural entities: the karst area of the Imotska Krajina, Imotski polje, and the area of the Biokovo mountain, with a wide view to the central and southern Adriatic islands. Climate is sub-Mediterranean, excluding the mountain. Average temperature is 11-15°C, with a minimum daily temperature in January below 0°C and a maximum daily temperature in July and August higher than 35 °C. Geopark is in sub-Mediterranean vegetation belt. The economy relies almost exclusively on the private sector of trade and catering services, and more recently on tourism where offers a home for local wine and food producers, which is reflected in the emerging range of geo-gastronomy offerings available.

Number of inhabitants: 25.000. The total area of Geopark: 431 km² Highest point: 1762 m. Lowest point: 200 m. Westernmost point: 16 ° 53'32.276 " E, 43 ° 24'6.755 " N; Northernmost point: 17 ° 4'8.772 " E, 43 ° 31'47.256 " N; Easternmost point: 17 ° 15'46.173 " E, 43 ° 26'55.172 " N; Southernmost point 17 ° 6'34.667 " E, 43 ° 13'52.85 " N

2. Geological features and geology of international significance

The area of geopark Biokovo-Imotski Lakes belongs to Dinaric Alps (High Karst unit of the External Dinarides), with all known high karst features present in its most representative form. Due to its exceptional geomorphology, beauty of the landscape and great biodiversity, geopark includes the Biokovo mountain, declared a Nature Park in 1981. On the mountain over 400 pits and caves have been discovered while the central very high plateau is characterized by spectacular polygonal karst. The prominent central ridge of Biokovo Mt. is built up of diversified and strongly deformed Mesozoic carbonates that are in a major tectonic contact with Paleogene clastics along the Adriatic coast that is partly covered by gorgeous Quaternary colluvial deposits and breccia. Imotska Krajina is situated in the hinterland of the mountain, and is made of deformed Cretaceous and Paleogene rocks. Carbonates are deeply karstified, while the thick succession of impermeable flysch rocks are overlain by prominent conglomerates. The Imotski polje is a huge field covered by thin superficial deposits, and is rich in clean water.

Owing to its specific tectonic setting and high-karst position, Red Lake is the deepest karst lake in Europe, and among the deepest in the world, originated from a collapse of the bottom of huge doline (sinkhole). The second pearl of the geopark, Blue Lake, is one of the most beautiful karst lakes in Croatia. In the spring, the lake is almost 100 meters deep, in the summer it is a favorite bathing place, but it is not rare for the lake to completely dry up in early autumn. Blue and Red lakes are protected in the category of Monuments of Nature in 1964., and are some of the most amazing world's phenomena.