

Welcome adress

The Ruhr Area was awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture for 2010. This award reflects the astonishing developments in the region during the last 200 years. Based on the use of an abundance of natural resources as coal, salt, and ores, and, likewise important, building materials like clay or dimension stones, a remote, rural area changed within a few decennia into one of the busiest centres of heavy industry in Europe. Now, after somewhat more than one century, the area faces the decline of mining and steel-industry, and new developments lead to the formation of a metropolitan region with diversified economics and a multi-sided cultural scene. However, the identity of the region still is based on the “Revier”, once the biggest mining district in Europe. In hardly any of Europe’s regions the close relationship between the cultural and economic development and the use of geological resources is as evident as in the Ruhr area. This relationship serves as the focus point for the Ruhr Area GeoPark, which was founded in 2004, and evaluated as ”National GeoPark” in 2006.



However, geology of the region is not limited to the history of mining and a richness of mining heritage objects. Numerous descriptive geosites, some of them awarded as “National Geosites in Germany” witness earth’s history from the Lower Devonian to the Holocene. Among them are highlights as the Vorhalle Quarry in Hagen, with the oldest and probably most spectacular findings of Namurian insects in the world.

It is the intention of the Ruhr Area National GeoPark to implement the knowledge about these relationships into the public, to make people aware and proud of the treasures of geological heritage in their home area, and to promote these features supra-regional.

Therefore it was seen as an appreciation of its work so far and a great honour for the Ruhr Area National GeoPark, to be entrusted with the organisation of the joint International Conference on the Conservation of Geological Heritage “Geotop 2010” by the Geo-Heritage Section of the German Society for Geosciences and ProGEO.

The central themes of the conference “Geosites: Resources for the Public” and “Palaeontology and Conversation of Geosites” are expressions of the focal points of the geology in our region.

We wish all our guests an interesting conference and an inspiring stay in Hagen and the Ruhr Area, and I, personally, wish to express my thanks to all those, who have contributed to the success of this event.

Volker Wrede
Chairman