

Natural, Cultural and Industrial Heritage as a Basis for Sustainable Regional Development within the Geopark Idrija Project (Slovenia)

Mojca Kavčič¹, Bojan Režun², Martina Peljhan², Ivo Mulec³

¹ *Idrija Municipality, Mestni trg 1, 5280 Idrija*

² *Idrija Mercury Mine Ltd., Bazoviška 2, 5280 Idrija*

³ *Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Science, University of Novi Sad, Serbia*

The Idrija Municipality, situated in the western part of Slovenia, extends over an area of 294 km² and has around 12,000 inhabitants. The area of Idrija is placed at the crossing of two gigantic mountain ranges: the Dinaric and the Alpine mountain ranges. It is this position that is the reason for an exceptionally diverse surface with deep gorges, high Karst tablelands and mountain tops.

The purpose of this paper is to present the outstanding natural heritage in combination with the industrial heritage found in the Idrija region. The most important is its geological heritage, which is a result of turbulent geological history with its mercury ore deposit and the Idrija fault. The Idrija region has a typical thrust structure with nappes, intermediate thrust slices and internal blocks. An important factor for geomorphology of the region is water, since it contributes to the variety of the terrain with the rivers and sources, forming Karst features (e.g. Wild Lake, Habečkovno brezno shaft, caves, sinkholes).

The Idrija Mercury Mine was the leading force in the development of the region through centuries. Today, the mine is closed but it left an outstanding cultural and industrial heritage that needs to be conserved for future generations.

Since 2007 many efforts have been put into the establishment of the Geopark, and in 2009, the first steps were taken: the inventory of natural heritage, designing

thematic trails, evaluation of geoheritage, educational activities for children and adults, research thesis in cooperation with students. With this project, we set the basis and determined the guidelines for the establishment of the Geopark Idrija. In 2010, the activities have continued at the Municipality level. The Decree for the establishment of the park has been prepared and the promotion as well as the inclusion of new partners into the project has been carried out. Marketing activities are focused on creating a new image, starting with a new logo created by designers and selected by tender. We are now looking for new partners and welcome new initiatives for the cooperation in order to put all the ideas from this project into practice.

Corresponding authors: mojca.kavcic@gmail.com, bojan.rzs.idrija@s5.net, martina.rzs.idrija@s5.net, ivo@agencija-vangogh.si