



ALTA MURGIA ESCARPMENT - THE GREAT FAULT

The Alta Murgia Escarpment is one of the most extensive, majestic and diverse geosites in the territory of the Aspiring Global Geopark. It extends along the southern margin of the plateau and consists of a series of faults that elevate the area relative to the surrounding regions. The formation of the bedrock dates back to the Mesozoic era, in the ancient Tethys Ocean where the old Adria Plate, the almost lost continent, survives. The fault documents the uplift of the continents during the Quaternary and the formation of the present landscape and geological setting.

An extraordinary biodiversity develops along the steep ridge, with endemic species such as *Stipa* and migratory species such as numerous bird species, which find refuge in the rock fissures. Because of the arid and impervious landscape, humans have also had to adapt to survive, creating a unique cultural heritage. This includes farmhouses and “jazzi” (particular sheep enclosures) built along the ridge, due to its proximity to the Premurge, which facilitated access to water for the large transhumance herds.

Traveling the escarpment from north to south, a variety of landscapes and viewpoints can be observed, offering views of the surrounding geological settings, including the Gargano, the Tavoliere delle Puglie, the Vulture volcano, the Apennine chain, the Fossa Bradanica, and the Ionian Sea, allowing an understanding of the evolution of the entire peninsula.

SP8 Geosite – regional significance

Location: the whole territory south of the Murgian plateau

Interests: Geology - Stratigraphy - Karst - Archaeology - Architecture - History - Water reserves, climate change - Hydrogeological risk

