

## Letter of Commitment

### KATLA Geopark – November 2010

The area that we have chosen to refer to as KATLA Geopark is known to the world as active volcanic area. Traditionally the area was isolated from the rest of Europe due to the lack of harbors in the area. The seashore is rough and dangerous and there are many stories of European ships stranding and of many seamen being saved by Icelandic farmers in the area.

In this day and age, international visitors are much more likely to visit the area by car, but Katla Geopark is less than two hour drive from the international airport in Keflavík.

Geologically the area has been of a great interest to international researchers for over 100years. KATLA Geopark holds a fascinating geological story in an accessible setting. A number of scientific publications have emerged from this region. KATLA Geopark wishes to support the facilitation of further research, and is aware of the special responsibility of passing on the results of such research to both our own population and to visitors from outside.

KATLA Geopark wants to contribute towards sustainable tourism, where respect for nature, local culture and identity are the essentials. KATLA Geopark represents a unique geological heritage, and will continue to be of interest to researchers, to the local population and to tourists interested in nature and culture. We are shaping the Geopark so that it will present fresh opportunities for outdoor life and recreational activities, which again will lead to improved public health. The expansion of the various Geopark activities will partly be staged by us, and partly in co-operation with a number of partners. We consider that our aims towards sustainable innovation and tourism would be considerably strengthened by membership of the European Geopark Network/ UNESCO Global Network of Geoparks.

We are aware of the commitments that we would be undertaking by joining the European Geopark Network, and we believe that we can contribute positively to further development of this important international network. We wish to join the European Geopark Network in order to be able to collaborate with other Geoparks, and to expand our own Geopark in accordance with the principles of the European Geopark Network.



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