

**Application**  
to Extend the area of  
the LESVOS PETRIFIED FOREST  
EUROPEAN and GLOBAL GEOPARK  
and the recognition of the LESVOS ISLAND GEOPARK  
for membership in the **European Geoparks Network**



LESVOS – GREECE  
2011

## **The Territory**

The island of Lesvos is located in the NE Aegean Sea. It is situated close to the coast of Asia Minor with an area of 1.636 km<sup>2</sup> and 370 km of coastline and a population of 90.463 inhabitants (2001 census).

Lesvos Island is well known for the Petrified Forest, its geodiversity and biodiversity, its protected areas that cover the largest part of the island presenting a variety of birds and wildflowers, the ancient olive groves and rare pine forests, the hot springs, its antiquities, the medieval castles, traditional villages and culture. Lesvos has an excellent network of trails, unique specimens of industrial architecture, monasteries and churches .

The island is the birthplace of famous people of art and literature like the philosopher Theophrastus, the singer and guitar-player Arion, the famous poet Sappho and Alkaios, the musician and founder of the guitar Terpsandros, the philosopher Pittakos, the painter George Jakobidis and the Nobel Prize winner poet Odysseas Elytis.

Mytilini is the capital town of the island and the administrative center of Lesvos Municipality and the Region of North Aegean, the seat of the General Secretary of the Aegean & Naval Policy and of the University of the Aegean. It is the commercial and cultural center of the island and has a population of 37,881 inhabitants (2001 census). Mytilini is largely built on the ancient town. It spreads amphitheatrically around the harbour with extension to the north and west hills. On the north of Mytilini the Venetian castle crowns a magnificent pine wood which reaches down to the shore. It is one of the largest mediaeval castles in the Eastern Mediterranean. Places of special interest are the Ancient Theatre with marvellous acoustics, the Archaeological Museum, the Byzantine Museum, Theophilos Museum, Teriade Museum of modern art and some of the monumental churches, having both impressive architectural features and ecclesiastical articles.

On the Northern edge of the island stands the Mythimna Municipal Unit (2,375 inhabitants) which is the centre of the tourist development. Its capital is the picturesque town of Mythimna (Molyvos) which has been declared a settlement subject to preservation. Its castle crowns it from Byzantine times and makes it even more charming.

Other Municipal Units of the Island are Kalloni with 8,073 inhabitants, Polichnitos with 5,163 inhabitants, Plomari with 6,385 inhabitants, Agiasos with 2,581 inhabitants, Agia Paraskevi with 2,454 inhabitants, Petra with 3,721 inhabitants, Mantamados with 3,024 inhabitants, Loutropoli Thermis 3,481 inhabitants, Evergetoulas with 3,242 inhabitants, Gera with 6,945 inhabitants. On the extreme Western edge of the island lies the Eressos-Antissa Municipal Unit with 5,111 inhabitants (2001 census). The villages of this area are of incomparable wild beauty, where appear large accumulations of fossilised tree trunks comprising the well known «Petrified Forest of Lesvos».

The local economy is based on the agricultural production with an emphasis on olive oil production (of exceptionally high quality), cattle-raising (mainly dairy products) and fishing. Distillery is developed and its main product is the world famous ouzo. Many of the island's inhabitants are professionally engaged in agricultural tourism.

The climate is mild Mediterranean, the mean annual temperature is 18 °C (64°F), and the mean annual rainfall is 750 mm (29 in). Its exceptional sunshine makes it one of the sunniest islands in the Aegean. Snow is extremely rare as are temperatures below freezing.