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Giuseppe Di Capua is a geologist, and senior technologist at the Istituto Nazionale di Geofisica e Vulcanologia, Rome, Italy. He is Co-Founder, Secretary General and Treasurer of the International Association for Promoting Geoethics (IAPG), Treasurer of the Commission on Geoethics of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS-CG), Member of the Executive Committee of the International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences (CIPSH), Member of the CIPSH Chair on Geoethics, Co-Founder of the School on Geoethics and Natural Issues, Member of the Editorial Board of the SpringerBrief in Geoethics series, the



Journal of Geoethics and Social Geosciences, and Geoconservation Research. He has served as Member of the International Advisory Board of the European projects INTERMIN, SMART Exploration, and CIRAN. He is author of books and articles on geoethics in international journals, and co-author of the Cape Town Statement on Geoethics.

“Geoethics and the polycrisis: Navigating humanity’s role in shaping a responsible future”

The intertwined crises of humanity and the planet reflect a systemic failure requiring transformative and holistic solutions. Geoethics proposes a new vision in addressing the socio-environmental planetary challenges of the Anthropocene—a term informally used to describe the present time interval where human activities have significantly impacted the Earth’s geology and ecosystems. Anthropogenic activities are surpassing planetary boundaries, triggering cascading environmental, social, economic and geopolitical disruptions. The concept of ‘polycrisis’ encapsulates these interconnected challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality, and inebriation by technological dependence, which threaten the stability of the Earth system and humanity’s future.

At the root of these challenges lies a profound disconnection between humanity and nature, fuelled by consumerism, the dematerialization of physical and social experiences through digitalization, and exploitative worldviews, particularly prevalent in industrialized and high-income nations.

Three potential future scenarios emerge from this complex crisis. The first entails inaction or insufficient responses, leading to systemic collapse. The second involves incremental changes that, while progress, fail to mitigate the crisis adequately. The third envisions radical reforms driven by collective ethical commitment and informed scientific action. This aspirational path calls for a reimagined socioecological contract that harmonizes ethics, law and sustainable practices, based on geoscientific knowledge of the Earth system.

Geoethics offers a humanistic-ecological framework that integrates shared principles and values, planetary justice, and the recognition of humanity's interdependence with natural systems. Through the cultivation of geo-citizenship, geoethics fosters global responsibility, intercultural solidarity, and respect for ecological and cultural diversity. It emphasizes the necessity of harmonizing rationality, emotions, and spirituality, embracing the multifaceted nature of human existence. This integration fosters a deeper and more holistic understanding of humanity’s role within the intricate web of Earth’s socio-ecological relationships.

By promoting a more prudent and aware technological development, global solidarity and cooperation, and Earth system governance, geoethics redefines human progress as sustainable socio-ecological coexistence within Earth’s limits. Ultimately, geoethics offers a pathway for confronting the polycrisis from its foundations, and evolving the human being-Earth system nexus toward a more responsible trajectory.

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