



## “Active marketing solutions to the depopulation problem on depopulated and mountain areas”

Organised by EUROMONTANA and ARC LATIN networks  
Thursday 29 May 2008, Brussels

Euromontana, in cooperation with the Arc Latin network, and under proposition of the Deputation of Teruel, organised a seminar, the main goal of which was to exchange active marketing solutions to fight against depopulation in mountain areas. A number of participants intervened to explain the demographic problem in the mountains and the ways to solve it, and to present case studies from different sparsely populated European regions.

The speakers present at the seminar were the following:

- **Frank Gaskell**, President of Euromontana
- **Alessandro Mazzoli**, President of the Italian Province of Viterbo and President of the Arc Latin working group on Territory and Sustainable Development
- **Susan Bird**, from DG Employment
- **Eric Dufeuil**, Director of Spanish Unit, from DG Regio
- **Pascual Rubio**, from the University of Zaragoza, Spain
- **Carmen Urbano**, consultant in international marketing
- **Margaret McSporrán**, Highlands and Islands Enterprise representative, Scotland
- **Eivind Brenna**, mayor of Vestre Slidre, Norway
- **André Marcon**, President of UCCIMAC (Union des chambres de commerce et d'industrie du Massif central), France

Mr Gaskell opened the session by insisting on the similarity and **necessary co-operation of the European mountain regions** confronted to the same depopulation problems. Mr Mazzoli presented the co-operation between Euromontana and the Arc Latin Network as a model partnership and developed some ideas regarding **the improvement of territorial competitiveness and the quality of life**. Mrs Bird explained the European Commission action in favour of Local Employment Development and **Corporate Social Responsibility**. Mr Dufeuil insisted on the **necessary recognition of demographic change in the upcoming preparation of the territorial cohesion policy**, reminded the initiatives already undertaken by the Commission in favour of fragile areas, and presented **the new microcredit financing instruments** of the DG Regio. Mr Rubio addressed the subject of **the importance of migrants in the demography of rural areas**, shedding light on the case of the Spanish province of Teruel. Mrs Urbano explained the importance of the image of a territory for its development, and hence the advantages of **active marketing to attract businesses, long-term residents and tourists**. Mrs McSporrán reported on the efforts of the Scottish Highlands and islands to **fight against the handicaps of the region through**

**a dynamic territorial attractiveness policy.** Mr Brenna depicted the realisations of the Norwegian region of Valdres in terms of development and territorial attractiveness with many **concrete proposals such as university decentralisation.** Finally, Mr Marcon presented the strategy and innovating measures of his organisation for the development of the Massif Central, by emphasising **the need for enterprise competitiveness.**

At the end of the seminar, **several points of agreement** had been found between the participants to fight against depopulation in mountain areas:

- **The effectiveness of INTERREG programmes** in connecting new territories and giving them opportunities
- **The key role of the European Commission** (in particular DG Employment and DG Regio) in developing strategies and supporting local authorities financially
- **The importance of local financial institutions** for the support they can bring to local communities
- **The need for an active and precise marketing strategy** to change positively the image of a territory

For more information, see the full report on Euromontana website.