European mountain forests: ripping full benefit of a precious asset

Euromontana position
Alexia ROUBY
Euromontana
2 December 2010, Brussels
Content

• A few words about Euromontana
• Mountain forests
• Initiatives from mountain forests
• Euromontana’s agenda on forestry
What is Euromontana?

- European **multisectoral** association for cooperation and development of mountain areas (since 1996)

- Around 70 members from 15 countries

- Comprising:
  - regional development agencies,
  - regional authorities,
  - chambers of commerce and industry
  - agricultural organisations,
  - environmental organisations,
  - research organisations...
Our vision of European mountains

- Our mountains are territories with a future and opportunities for Europe
  - Mountain areas are distinctive areas of Europe which need to be addressed specifically
  - We call for private and public investment in these areas. The return on investments might be longer but will be more sustainable
  - 36% of European territory, 118 million inhabitants
Building on our strengths
Overcoming our weaknesses

- **Strengths:**
  - The **positive image** of mountain areas
  - Intense community life
  - Very **rich culture**, traditions and heritage
  - **The quality of life** of mountain population
  - Rare, preserved and **renewable resources**
  - Production of **quality goods and services**
  - Modern and often **dynamic governance**
  - ...

- **Weaknesses:**
  - **Remoteness and accessibility**
  - **Sparseness** of businesses and population
  - **Competition** between economic development and environment
  - Sensitivity to **climate change**
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The main land use

- Forest = main land use in mountains: they cover 41% of mountain areas

Share of land cover of mountain areas:
- 7% in UK,
- 20% in Italy,
- 29% in Spain,
- 40% in Germany,
- 50% in Austria,
- 66% in Switzerland;


The multiple functions of Forests

• Economic role
  – renewable source of timber
  – and other products, such as resin, cork, mushrooms and berries

• Environmental benefits
  – biodiversity
  – landscape conservation,
  – impact on global and regional climates,
  – water and soil protection
  – Carbon sequestration

• Social benefits
  – recreational activities
Specificities of mountain forest

- **Difficulties to harvest** (slope, climate).
  - In France, nearly 60% of mountain forests are difficult or very difficult to exploit (against 28.6% at national level)

- **Protective function** of forests particularly important in mountain areas, sometimes overriding other function: protection of water, soil and infrastructures from avalanche, landslides, erosion...

- **Sensitivity to climate change**

  → Supporting mountain forest = supporting mountain forests economic activities + supporting other functions of forest
Supporting mountain forests’ economic activities

- Production through sustainable forest management
- Harvesting: looking for innovative solutions to facilitate and reduce the harvesting costs
Transformation of mountain wood

- **Valorisation of wood products through**
  - Wood as energy sources
  - Wood for building

- **Added-value for mountain regions to have industries: territorial vision of forest and wood sector**

- **Certification: a tool that can be integrated in all mountain forest strategies**
  
  ex: project INTERREG « bosco i legno » in Torino, Italy, and Savoie, France – certification from production to transformation
Education and training

• Example of Treringen initiative, Buskerud, Norway – collaboration with secondary schools
  – Objective
    • raising the interest of pupils about to choose their occupation towards wood sector
    • facilitating the recruitment of new employees by wood industries
  – Action taken
    • Presentation of the profession and companies in secondary schools, combined with students creating a piece of furniture
  – Results
    • Increase of number of application for apprenticeship
Positive externalities of forest

- Evaluation of mountain forest’s positive externalities – example of mediterranean forests. Project MEDFOREX (financed by Catalan government)

- Results from project 1999-2003: valuation of mediterranean forest using the method of TEV (total economical value). Average value = 133€/ha
  - Direct value: about 70%
    - From 5 to 130€/ha for wood products
    - From 1 to 143€/ha for non-wood products
  - Indirect use value of forest: about 15%, up to 50% of TEV (45 to 150€/ha) in Syria, Greece, Italy
  - Option and non-use value: strong variations between countries and rare and partial existing data. From 1 to 60€/ha
Valorisation of mountain forests’ externalities

• Ex of initiative Sunart Oakwoods, Scotland
  Management of oak forest and new plantation
  – Adding value to local forest products
    • Campaign for use of local wood
    • Use of wood for heating
    • Use of wood for buildings and for infrastructures (benches, information panels...)
  – Education and training, with involvement of local entrepreneurs
    • New forestry school
    • Training in the field of environment
    • Association with local schools
  – Tourism, interpretation and development of access
    • Creation of new paths and access to observation refuge, with explanation signs
    • Rehabilitation of parking lots
    • Realisation of a tourism strategy

How to pass from public funding to public-private partnership?
Euromontana project ideas

• Study for the French Ministry of Agriculture for 2011:
  – State of the art and legislation in the EU and in some European countries/provinces
  – Description of case studies and good practices

• Theme: links between agriculture and forestry in mountain areas
  – Cohabitation between agriculture/forest and interfaces
  – Management of environment and natural hazards
  – Forestry and agriculture stakeholders: complementarities and possible synergies
  – Land tenure and transmission of forest
Working with existing networks?

- CEPF – Confederation of European Forest Owners
- Eustafor – European State Forest Association
Sources


CONTACT DETAILS OF EUROMONTANA

• Info@euromontana.org