



## Services of General Interest in Mountain Areas

### Position paper of Euromontana

*Euromontana is the European multisectoral association for co-operation and development of mountain territories. Euromontana brings together organisations of mountain people: development and environmental agencies, agricultural and rural development centres, territorial authorities, research institutes, etc. It includes organisations from Western Europe as well as from Central and Eastern European countries with the aim of developing international co-operation. Currently 72 organisations from 17 wider European countries are members of Euromontana.*

*Euromontana's mission is to promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life in mountain areas.*

*In order to achieve this, Euromontana facilitates the exchange of information and experience among these areas by organizing seminars and major conferences, by conducting and collaborating in studies, by developing, managing and participating in European projects and by working with the European institutions on mountain related affairs.*

*Euromontana thanks its members  
for the preparation of the position paper.*

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## Summary

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With this position paper on services of general interest in mountain areas, Euromontana aims at **raising awareness about the mountain specificities when it comes to the delivery and maintenance of high quality services of general interest**. The service sectors dealt with in this paper are postal services, public transport, information and communication technologies, health services, and daily needs.

Different kinds of **barriers** hamper a sustainable development of services in mountain areas. To improve the current situation Euromontana herewith addresses those actors that are able to provoke positive changes in this respect. Stakeholders concerned are for example **mountain authorities** and their **policy makers, regional development agencies** or **service providers**.

To overcome the barriers for service delivery in mountain areas this position paper contains, besides the **introduction (chapter 1)** and the **overview of the concept of SGI (chapter 2)**, two main chapters that should inspire and stimulate the development and implementation of actions leading to the sustainable development and maintenance of services of general interest in mountain areas.

**Chapter 3 “SGI in mountain areas – specificities and innovation of service delivery”** firstly presents the specificities of mountain areas. **Remoteness, difficult topography, high cost of maintenance, changing needs of the local population or a missing critical mass** – these are some of the barriers that hamper the development, delivery and maintenance of services of general interest in mountain areas. However, these problems can be overcome with the **implementation of innovative approaches**. A selection of **good practices** demonstrates the potential that lies within the concept of innovation and presents for the different service sectors possible solutions on how to overcome the difficulties. Be it postmen delivering the medicaments, aggregating the offer of a post office, a supermarket and a tourism information or providing ICT services to the population in a “travelling office” – actors from local and regional authorities will find stimulating and transferable ideas on how to overcome the barriers of service delivery in this chapter. The **lessons that have been learnt** in the framework of these good practices should therefore support local and regional authorities in developing the service sector in their own region in a sustainable way.

**Chapter 4 “EU and national legal frameworks of SGI – What needs to change to improve the current situation?”** deals with the **legal frameworks** on EU and national level. With this chapter we aim to demonstrate that services of general interest need to get a prominent role in legislation. Not only in view of **article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty** but also in view of the various communications published by the European Commission it is repeated that **services of general interest play an important role when it comes to achieving territorial cohesion** throughout Europe. This should be more reflected in policies adopted and implemented on EU but also national, regional and local levels. To support a development towards a better consideration of SGI in legislation and sectoral policies Euromontana formulates several overarching **policy**

**recommendations** as well as sectoral recommendations for each of the service sectors addressed in this paper. Euromontana urges policy makers to **reinforce cross-sectoral cooperation** and to **support innovative actions**, to **accelerate the roll-out of ICT infrastructure**, in particular broadband, in rural areas, to **set the right framework in spatial planning policies**, to **modify state aid rules**, to support **voluntary work** - to only name some recommendations.

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# 1. Introduction

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*"Services of general interest play a major role in ensuring social, economic and territorial cohesion throughout the European Union".<sup>1</sup>*

This statement from the European Commission underlines the importance of services of general interest as regards achieving the objective of a well-balanced development throughout all regions of Europe. This statement can further be interpreted in that way: SGI are one aspect that contribute to address the article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty which exposes:

*"In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion.*

*In particular, the Union shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least favored regions.*

*Among the regions concerned, particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, (...) regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as (...) **mountain regions.**"*

However, due to remoteness, difficult topography, high cost of maintenance, changing needs of the local population, etc. the delivery and/or accessibility of services of general interest is faced with difficulties - in particular in mountain rural areas.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Cohesion report underlines this by stating that *"access to services differs in two main ways, the most important one is the difference between more and less developed countries and the second is the difference between thinly and densely populated areas"<sup>2</sup>*. This is confirmed in the recent *"study on the inter-relationship between structural funds and the provision of services of general (economic) interest and the potential for cross-border services delivery"*, requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development which comes to the conclusion that *"largest gaps in the provision of SGI and the quality of the services can be found (...) in rural and peripheral regions"<sup>3</sup>*.

As mountain areas can clearly be associated to this characterization **Euromontana urges the European Institutions as well as national, regional and local actors to take into account the specificities of the mountain areas in Europe when designing policy and regional or local development actions.** This is the main objective of this position paper. In addition it has as an objective **to spur the further development and maintenance of SGI in mountain areas, raise awareness among policy makers at EU, national and regional level, and provide policy recommendations and good practice examples** of innovative solutions that address the challenges of service provision, service accessibility, service maintenance and service quality in mountain areas.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission 2007: Accompanying the Communication on "A single market for 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe". Services of general interest, including social services of general interest: a new European commitment COM(2007) 724 final

<sup>2</sup> European Commission 2010: Investing in Europe's future. Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament 2010: Study "The inter-relationship between the structural funds and the provision of services of general (economic) interest and the potential for cross-border service delivery" [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/regi/dv/pe438616\\_xm\\_/pe438616\\_xm\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/regi/dv/pe438616_xm_/pe438616_xm_en.pdf)

Services of general interest cover a broad range of activities, from the large network industries such as energy, telecommunications, transport, audiovisual broadcasting and postal services, to education, water supply, waste management, health and social services.<sup>4</sup> This position paper will **focus on five service areas** that Euromontana is amongst others considering key for the future sustainable development of mountain areas. These are:

- **postal service**
- **telecommunication**
- **public transport**
- **health and**
- **daily needs.**<sup>5</sup>

The area of energy/electricity will not be highlighted as Euromontana published already a specific position paper on energy in mountain areas in the beginning of 2010<sup>6</sup>.

Furthermore, the field of education was not treated in this position paper as specific importance is given to it in the framework of the INTERREG IV C project PADIMA ([www.padima.org](http://www.padima.org)).

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 1

<sup>5</sup> The area of daily needs includes for example supermarkets, bakeries, butchers, etc.

<sup>6</sup> This position paper is available online: <http://www.euromontana.org/en/themes-de-travail/energy.html>

## 2. What are Services of General Interest? – A complex and multifaceted concept

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Services of general interest have been defined in various publications of the European Commission as well as in national regulations. The concept is complex and consequently it is difficult to study services of general interest, especially from a European perspective.

To avoid potential confusion around the concept of “services” this section will explain the difference between Services of General Interest and Services of General Economic Interest. In this document we use the terminological definitions set by the EU Commission as listed in Annex 1 of the White Paper on Services of General Interest<sup>7</sup> (2004).

“**Services of general interest**” (SGI) cover both market and non-market services which the public authorities class as being of general interest and subject to specific public service obligations (EC: White Paper, 2004).

On the contrary the term “**services of general economic interest**” (SGEI) refers to services of an economic nature which the Member States or the community subject to specific public service obligations by virtue of a general interest criterion. The concept of services of general economic interest thus covers in particular certain services provided by network industries such as transport, postal services, energy and communications. However, the term also extends to any other economic activity subject to public service obligation (European Commission: White Paper, 2004).

In the Green Paper on Services of General Interest it is suggested to distinguish between three categories of services of general interest as regards the need and intensity of Community action and the role of the Member States (Green Paper, 2003<sup>8</sup>):

- **Services of general economic interest provided by large network industries;**
- **Other services of general economic interest** (not subject to a comprehensive regulatory regime at Community level but to whose provision specific rules may apply, such as environmental legislation – namely governing waste management, water supply, broadcasting services, etc.);
- **Non-economic services and services without effect on trade** (not subject to specific Community rules nor covered by the internal market, competition and State aid rules of the EC Treaty but covered by those Community rules that also apply to non-economic activities and activities that have no effect on intra-Community trade, such as the basic principle of non-discrimination. Education, health or social services belong to this sector).

Remark: economic and non-economic services can co-exist within the same sector and can sometimes even be provided by the same organisation (for example health services).

Because of the close connection between SGI and the policy, social, economic and technological

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission: White Paper on Services of general interest: COM(2004)374 final.

<sup>8</sup> **Green Paper** on Services of general interest: COM(2003)270 final.



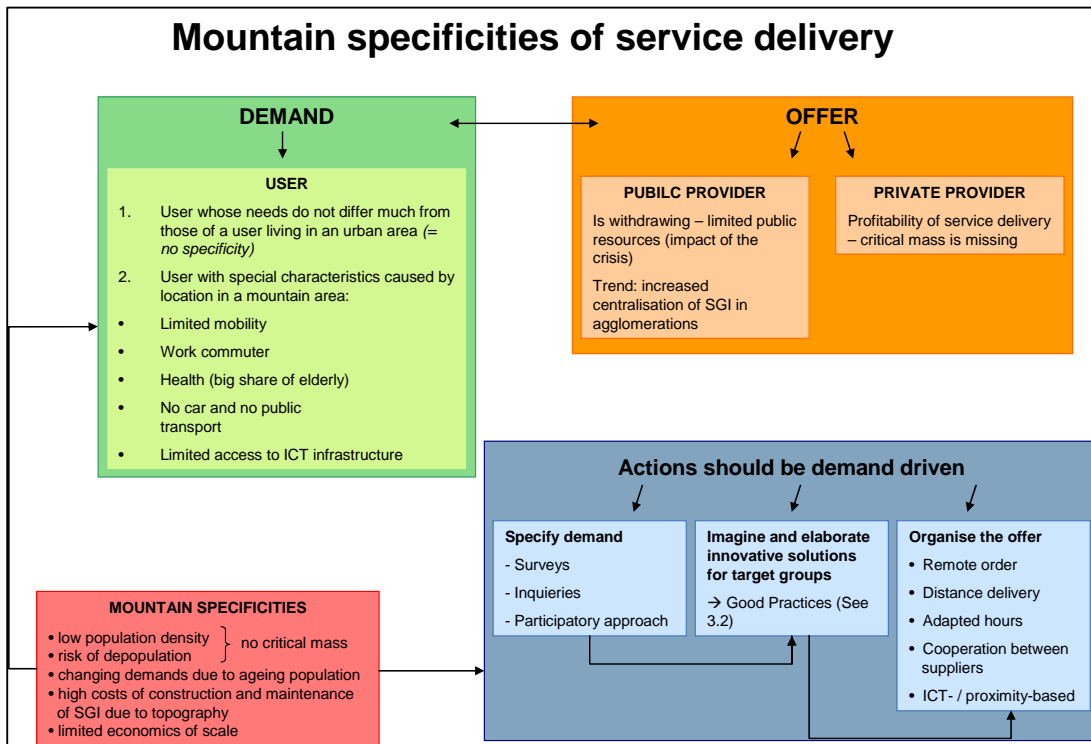
realities of the different countries, their practical characterisation is constantly evolving. Thus, their definition varies in space – between regions – and over time. Therefore, new legislations need to be flexible enough to adjust to local circumstances and must be reviewed on a regular basis.

SGI cover very different sectors of the economy including transport, postal services, telecoms, the electronic media, healthcare, education, social services, etc. Therefore, addressing SGI on a crosscutting basis requires a concurrent reference to sectoral policies.

### 3. SGI in mountain areas – specificities and innovation of service delivery

#### 3.1 Mountain specificities – Overcoming difficulties of service delivery

Providing services of general interest in mountain areas must be seen from a specific perspective due to the various specificities that characterize these areas. The following graph should provide an overview on the specificities that must be taken into account when designing policies within the sector of services of general interest.



The graph visualises the characteristics that put the mountain areas of Europe at risk of not being served by services of general interest in a satisfactory way. Actually, this risk is already a reality in several mountain areas that are facing difficulties to maintain existing services due to their poor profitability and due to the need to respond to new or changing needs of the local population. The ongoing territorial concentration of SGI leads to a vicious circle of further deterioration in the quality of provision which in turn causes a decreasing demand in the existing services. In this respect, Euromontana works for stopping and reversing this trend and herewith wants to raise awareness on the fact that the **maintenance of a spatially and socially equal accessibility to services of general interest (SGI) is a core issue to the functionality of mountain areas and any regional development strategy both on a national and transnational level.**

The negative consequences resulting from the lack of high-quality service delivery in mountain

regions are various. In fact, once SGI have been withdrawn from a region its functionality and competitiveness will be reduced and the amount of motorized mobility (costly and polluting) will increase especially in communities within sparsely populated areas. Furthermore it aggravates social inequalities: persons, who do not own a car, not have the knowledge to use ICTs etc. face problems to reach services. Often, these areas are characterized by important population losses and/or trends of over-ageing. The main challenge for the concerned communities and regions is therefore to **spur the access to demand-oriented and flexible SGI with innovative cooperation structures** in order to better capitalize the potentials of sparsely populated areas.

Mobility is an important issue in the whole framework. Contrary to a still widespread opinion, this does not necessarily mean physical transport of goods or persons in every case but implies e.g. the promotion of integrated mobility systems.<sup>9</sup>

The difficult situation of mountain areas as regards the delivery of SGI also has as a consequence that the provision of services often depends to a large extent on public spending and public decisions, which are mostly taken outside of the mountain areas in urban centres.

Therefore, mountain areas must even more **prove their capacity of innovation** and be at the forefront of new technological, societal and political developments. A sound combination of different services can be one option to increase the demand on the specific services. Furthermore, a territorial and integrative approach to SGI is needed. The different services must be seen in their interaction and relation to other territorial policies and measures.

### 3.2 Innovation in the provision of SGI

One key aspect to overcome the barriers of service delivery described under 3.1 and to make this service delivery economically sustainable, in areas where the critical mass to ensure this economic stability is often missing is **innovation**. Innovative solutions in the delivery of SGI in mountain areas must be fostered and supported in order to ensure the sustainable development of mountain areas. One might question whether innovation in mountain areas is possible as it was described above that a critical mass is missing and innovation is most often put in relationship with bigger agglomerations. However, Euromontana **proved that mountain areas are highly innovative and that innovation is not only a question of density of businesses, educational institutions and people but that innovation is a process that above all takes place when difficulties have to be overcome**. The 7<sup>th</sup> European Mountain Convention illustrated clearly the innovative potential that lies in Europe's mountains, also as regards the sector of services of general interest. On this occasion, **Euromontana has proved that mountain areas are very innovative and that innovation is not only linked to density of businesses, training institutes and population. On the opposite, innovation is generated mostly in response to difficulties that must be overcome**<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: ACCESS project:

<http://www.access-alpinespace.eu/?id=70&PHPSESSID=9825e7b69cdc62f5e62083c2eb1c20d3>

<sup>10</sup> [The Declaration of Lillehammer: taking full advantage of European mountains innovation potential](#)

The following chapter will provide an overview of good practices in different service sectors that show how the successful delivery of services of general interest, be it post service or health care, can also be delivered in areas that are difficult to access and with a sparse population.

### 3.3 Innovative good practices – Solutions to overcome the barriers

The following good practices should be an inspiration and platform of ideas for local, regional and national policy makers. We chose to display two good practices for each of the service sectors concerned. However, many of them deal with several services in an integrated way. Therefore, the ordering of the good practices could have been done differently as well. Furthermore, it has to be underlined that the good practices presented in this section were selected from a much wider range of examples that were mainly provided by Euromontana's members. Therefore, we provide a list of good practices (complementary to those listed in section 3.3.1) in Annex 1.

#### 3.3.1 Postal services

##### **Post partner cooperation in rural areas (Austria)**

The pilot project *Post.Partner Kooperation im ländlichen Raum* (Post Partner cooperation in rural areas) is realised by the Carinthian Government (Department 20 – Spatial Planning) together with the Carinthian Chamber of Commerce and the Austrian Post Corporation.

The point is to maintain an area-wide provision for postal services in the Carinthian municipalities, which should be guaranteed by the establishment of common Post.Partner services by local retailers. This new supply-model for postal services has advantages for all affected actors, like higher customer frequency and sales increase at the post-partners, longer opening hours, the possibility of a one stop- shopping for the clients and first of all the maintenance of the postal infrastructure in the peripheral areas.

##### **Status quo:**

Currently the search for interested and qualified post partners is ongoing, who guarantee the postal infrastructure in the municipalities.

**Contact person:** Dr. Kurt Rakobitsch (office of the Carinthian government) email: [kurt.rakobitsch@ktn.gv.at](mailto:kurt.rakobitsch@ktn.gv.at)

**Costs:** 60.000 Euros

##### **InnoV-Net: Using synergies – The tourism reception (Switzerland)**

Finally arrived! There cannot be anything nicer than finally arriving at your tourism destination after a long journey. In particular if you visit the destination for the first time several questions arise and specific needs will need to be satisfied. For example, to prepare a nice meal for the first evening in the holiday flat and to write first post cards.

So, there is a need for shopping – but where, what and how? "The tourist should not need to make big efforts to find answers to these questions", says Roland Ledergerber, project manager at InnoV-Net. "Our idea is that the customer is not only getting information in a competent and quick way but that at the same time he can benefit from the services of general interest in the village. We call this *tourism reception*. As examples Mr Ledergerber highlights cooperations with grocery shops,

mountain trains, hotels or the post: "Why not linking the shopping for dinner with the gathering of information on hiking trails and put together these services in one locality?"

Mr. Urs Wohler is on the same opinion. The director of the Engadin Scuol Tourism association (ESTAG) is about to restructure the Bündner Tourism-Organisation and therefore his interest in InnoV-Net was great: "In the future we would like to be successful and competitive by facilitating working structures." As a consequence InnoV-Net got the job to develop a concept for a first *Tourism Reception*, together with the ESTAG and local stakeholder groups.

The step from paper to practice was done in the pilot region of Susch: on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008 the induction of the first tourist information point was celebrated in the small 200 inhabitants-village. The location of this tourism reception is the local grocery shop called "Treffpunkt" ("meetingpoint") – "a solution that enables tourists to not only satisfy their general needs but also to benefit from longer opening hours", says ESTAG-director Urs Wohler.

Also the Minister of the government of the Canton Graubünden Hansjörg Trachsel is delighted about the result: "here is a good practice that should be transferred to other areas". Roland Ledergerber from InnoV-Net is positive about the results: "This idea is a good practice for the support of remote areas. It became possible through the engagement of SAB, Engadin Scuol Tourism and the post!"

**Contact person:** Thomas Egger, SAB - thomas.egger@sab.ch

**Costs:** In order to put this initiative into practice the post employed two dedicated persons for the two years of the project duration

### 3.3.2 Telecommunication

#### **Improved community security/telecommunication in areas without mobile coverage (Norway)**

Vinje municipality is 3106 km<sup>2</sup> and is located in the north west of Telemark county, in the southern mountain region of Norway, with Hardangervidda and the Hardangervidda national park as nearest neighbour.

The population is approximately 3,660 persons who live very spread out, with long distances between different parts of the municipality. It is a great challenge to implement infrastructure from which everyone can benefit.

For several years, we have worked to ensure access to broadband for all houses and cabins in the municipality with the result that today 97% of the households are covered.

With long distances and high mountains, good telephone coverage is a challenge, but also a necessity. We have had 'pockets' where there is no contact available by the mobile network. The supplier Telenor has assessed that it is economically not viable to build out base stations to cover these 'pocket' areas. The municipality judge this as a being a great disadvantage for the residents, and of course it is negative with respect to emergencies and community safety. Therefore, the municipality decided to contribute with the necessary financing to resolve the problem and to reduce areas without telephone coverage. The initiative that was set up is based on a cooperation between the Vinje municipality, private landowners, Telemark County Council and the service supplier Telenor. The aim was to put into place 3 base stations which include a transmitter, receiver, antennas, cables and reinforced equipment for the operation of communication systems. These have radio transmitters which act as a link between mobile telephones and the security room or security centres

and over telephone transfers. With the right placement, the weak 'pocket' areas can be covered and the effect can be improved.

To reach this objective, agreements were developed between relevant stakeholders to define responsibilities and financial means involved. On the one hand there was an **agreement** established between the **municipality and private landowners** to relinquish land for the sake of reaching the objective in the three areas that were chosen. Therefore, the contact to the landowners was established already when the work started in order to discuss the appropriate premise for setting up the masts. This was an initiative which was strongly desired by the landowners and they were very eager to cooperate. At the same time, the municipality needed their own voluntary initiative both for the practical completions, but also as part of the financial plan. In Norway it is common that **voluntary work is part of the financial plan for applications to the public sector**. It was agreed that the landowners give a certain territory at no cost in order to allow the technical constructions. They were responsible to gather the volunteers and for the completion of the clean up of the land. They have also been the contact persons during the project period. Today, the municipality is the owner of the masts and of the houses and is responsible for their maintenance. Telenor owns and is responsible for the technical equipment and its maintenance.

On the other hand an **agreement with the County Council on the use of national HØYKOM funds was developed** with the result that the municipality contributed with 650.000 NOK and Høykom with 750.000 NOK (combined costs: 1.400.000 NOK in total)

The time needed from the establishment of the contract to carrying out of the initiative will be approximately 1,5 years.

The expected **impact** of the 3 new bases stations is broad. It will give mobile coverage in the areas which were 'non-prioritized' by the supplier Telenor due to the costs involved. Thus, the base stations will contribute to covering larger, geographic areas.

Also, the initiative will not only provide a better mobile connection along the transport arteries for cars, but also to a large degree will be an improvement for those people who either live or work outside areas with roads or have their workplaces in these areas. This is of great significance for emergency personell for example.

Finally, it should be mentioned that some technical problems have occurred underway which has delayed the work to some degree, so that the implementation has been delayed in relation to the original start date (December 2010). We hope that the base stations will be operational during the spring 2011.

**Contact Person:** Dorthe Huitfeldt, Vinje commune [dorthe.huitfeldt@vinje.kommune.no](mailto:dorthe.huitfeldt@vinje.kommune.no)

**Costs:** 1,4 million NOK (approx. 180.000 Euros)

### **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for rural regions (Portugal)**

This project was set up with the intention of decentralising local government administration while reducing the bureaucratic burden to a minimum and taking the various services out to outlying communes. This was realised in the form of a **travelling office** using three appropriately equipped vehicles that visit all the villages of the municipality once a week. The service deals with a range of issues: social security, healthcare, electricity service, telephone service, town hall services or simpler matters such as sending a fax or e-mail, or services such as assistance with reading a letter or filling in forms that can also be useful to immigrants. The vehicles also have Internet access via onboard

computers and WiFi connections.

The communication networks used in the project are based on the latest technological innovations. The vehicles are equipped with laptops, printer, video-conference facility and internet access. A network was created (Mesh) in order to cover the whole territory with internet access based on 3G technology. This service helps to maintain contacts between the local population and loved ones scattered to the four corners of the globe, an aspect of the greatest importance for maintaining ties of affection to the native region.

The intention is to encourage the population to participate in this project and thus encourage them to use the Internet as a way of solving problems quickly – not only as regards bureaucratic difficulties, but also personal and family problems. Participation is very easy as no prior registration is needed.

The project offers significant benefits for the population and for businesses from the viewpoint of use of the services and access to new technology, helping to optimise existing means by making it possible for different issues and different institutions to be dealt with simultaneously. It also leads to a reduction in costs and to uniformity of response times, and also to a lowering of the physical and technological barriers to access to public services that can only improve the quality of life of local citizens.

The project aims to create new ways of accessing information, establishing new relationships between local government and citizens, improving citizen participation and the transparency of decision-making processes, opening up new dimensions in freedom of expression and the exercise of full democratic rights, creating new services and improving existing ones, and combating social and regional discrimination in access to information and public services. The county of Boticas not only made agreements with the central government of the municipality but also with other actors related to the sectors of agriculture, education, employment, health and tax services.

Given the success that similar initiatives have had, we can be confident that this project will help to improve quality of life for the populations concerned and could be repeated in other mountain regions with a socio-economic and geographic context similar to that of the commune of Boticas (Portugal).

The implementation of projects of this kind does not require the use of resources specific to a region; it calls, however, not only for the acquisition of material resources, high-tech equipment and qualified human resources, but also for the effective management of these resources, given the specific nature of the region and with the aim of providing the population with a quality service that will ensure the project's successful implementation.

**Contact Person:** Fernando Campos, e-mail: presidente@cm-boticas.pt

**Investment costs:** 210.000 €

**Maintenance costs:** 36.766 € per year

### 3.3.3 Public Transport

#### **Disco Bus (Italy)**

The general aim is to improve public transport service for young people and therefore the quality of life in mountain areas.

The pilot project foresees the realisation of innovative solution of public transport for young people in Fontanabuona valley.

Together with the Comunità Montana, with the local youth Association "Sorgente Viva" and with the Provincial Transport Services Company, GAL Genovese created a working group in order to find innovative solutions to increase the use of public services among young people and to create services more adequate to the demand of the territory. The disco bus was put into place.

The service was greatly requested by the population and the families of the valley. Through this bus the young people of Fontanabuona can reach the discos and leisure places by a dedicated public bus. This bus went two times a week and the ticket cost 2 Euros (valid for the whole night).

Through this action it has been possible to offer to young people of remote areas the same opportunities of young people living along the coast in urban areas.

**Partners involved:** Youth Association "Sorgente Viva", Comunità Montana Fontanabuona, Provincial Transport Agency ATP

**Results and perspectives:** Through the action it was possible to test this kind of service and create the structure to manage it. In the future the service will be carried out and improved by the local partnership. The service was offered from 3<sup>rd</sup> July to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010 in the course of the ACCESS project. After this experience, the service has been carried out by the local partnership until the end of the year (31<sup>st</sup> December 2010, only Saturdays) but had to stop then for financial reasons. However, during the summer period it is expected to relaunch the Discobus due to higher customer frequency during this time of the year.

The results of this experimentation will be very useful to elaborate new strategies to maintain young population in remote areas.

**Contact Person:** Development Agency GAL Genovese, e-mail: [info@appenninogenovese.it](mailto:info@appenninogenovese.it)

**Investment Costs:** 40.000 Euros

### **Maison de mobilité (*House of mobility*) (France)**

The creation of the house of mobility has as an objective to promote and animate multimodality in the region of the Natural Regional Parc of Pilat, France.

This will be done by :

- providing information on common transport and car-sharing ;
- implementation of the *Pédibus*<sup>11</sup> (information and methodology and logistics design);
- animation of car-sharing relying on a network of persons

The audience that is to be targeted is the whole population of the territories no matter if they have a car or not.

#### **Collective dimension**

The project has been developed by the PNR of Pilat in partnership with the association « Pilattitude ». This association of local volunteers has as an objective to promote the modes of transportation that associate liberty of movement and respect of environment.

#### **Problems to solve:**

Problems of non-motorized persons that even more suffer from rural isolation.

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<sup>11</sup> The pédibus is a system where children are taken to school on foot, under the supervision of volunteers

(Source: [http://en.mairie-vannes.fr/living\\_in\\_vannes/environment/environmental\\_education/pedibus/1450/index.html](http://en.mairie-vannes.fr/living_in_vannes/environment/environmental_education/pedibus/1450/index.html) )



The individual car seems to be the only way of transport in Pilat: the buses that exist are almost empty when at the same time the routes are common to many people of the region.

Urban residents that settle in the territory see their budget burdened with transport.

**Elements of the context that are in favour of the activity**

The particular geographic situation: a big territory, shared between the administrative departments of Rhône and Loire that creates difficulties to read the transport offer. Hence the need to make information available on all existing transport means in the Parc. With passage point easy to identify, the Parc of Pilat has a road network that facilitate local development.

**Contact Person:** Rachel Voron [mopi@parc-naturel-pilat.fr](mailto:mopi@parc-naturel-pilat.fr)

**Costs:**

- 1 employer payed in full-time
- communication: 8000 Euros
- animation (stand, equipment forstaff ...): 8000 Euros

### 3.3.4 Health

**The Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia (MRAS) (Slovenia)**

The main goal of Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia (further: MRAS) is to help people in emergencies in the mountains and in difficult and remote areas. Their activities also include preventive measures (expeditions, courses, competitions, trainings) and mountain safety education of its members and other visitors to the mountains. Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia is organised as the association of independent, volunteer, non-profit mountain rescue organisations. It functions as the registered mountain rescue operation through a network of its bases that undertake humanitarian tasks of public importance: protection, rescue and assistance in the mountains as well as during natural and other disasters, when human lives, health and safety are threatened. These tasks are performed by basic MRAS sub-divisions – local organizations and Mountain Rescue Service bases. They are independent and their areas of operations are geographically limited. They perform rescue, preventive and other campaigns and activities, set by Mountain Rescue Association of Slovenia rules and their own rules (see also: <http://www.grzs.si/eng/>).

**Contact Person:** President of GRZS: Miro Pogačar, [grzs@siol.net](mailto:grzs@siol.net)

**Costs:** covered by the administration for civil protection and disaster relief, by FIHO – foundation for funding invalid and humanitarian organisations in Slovenia and by other sources like donations.

**Experimentation: Facilitate home delivery of medicines by postmen for people with reduced mobility in rural areas (France)**

In rural areas a number of people with reduced mobility (elderly, handicapped) can not go to the pharmacy and due to their remote location the delivery of medicines is often not satisfactory.

The General Council of Puy-de-Dôme, as being aware of the risk of depopulation in rural areas therefore engages strongly social aspects in local development strategies in order to maintain social services throughout the entire territory.

The partnership with "La Poste Group" was considered relevant because the postmen are present 6 days a week when delivering the post mail to the local population. Even areas that are not easily

accessible are served by the post and the postmen enjoy a general confidence by the inhabitants of the villages.

When distributing the post, the postmen also deliver medicines that pharmacists have given on same day for certain patients (even if there is no mail for these patients). Each pharmacist who signed the agreement with the post has to pay to "La Poste" a sum of 4.20 Euros per delivery. This cost will be paid by the General Council of Puy-de-Dôme for the duration of the experiment (from 2010/11/15 to 2011/05/31).

76 rural communes, 10 post offices and 19 pharmacies are involved in this experiment.

"La Poste Group" has approached the National Order of Pharmacists and the Union of pharmacists to supervise the home-delivery of medicines. An agreement was established between each pharmacist and "La Poste" by signing a contract.

Thus, during the experimentation, every pharmacy under contract with "La Poste", may entrust the postmen with the home delivery of medicines to their customers.

**Contact Persons:** Brigitte Goyet, [brigitte.goyet@laposte.fr](mailto:brigitte.goyet@laposte.fr) and Rachel Corre, [rachel.corre@cg.63.fr](mailto:rachel.corre@cg.63.fr)

**Investment Costs:** The experiment is coming to an end and the analysis of costs is ongoing.

#### **IFREMMONT – Center for excellence in mountain medicine in the Mont Blanc region (France)**

People living in or visiting mountain areas (be it for work, tourism or sport), suffer from particular health problems that need a specific medicine - this is commonly called mountain medicine. These problems are direct or indirect consequences of environmental and atmospheric modifications, that are characteristic of the altitude and environment of mountains and impact the organism. This medicine requires specific skills and needs to be considered as a real scientific field for public health. The geographic specificities of mountains impose certain constraints and sometimes certain inequalities, especially in the field of medicine: being for the doctors or for the inhabitants, access to health care, to medical expertise is a major issue since it is a condition to maintain population and health practitioners in those remote areas.

IFREMMoNT was born out of a project subsidized by the Rhône Alpes region and the European Commission in 2005. Thanks to the efforts of its members and founder, IFREMMONT has set up the foundation of a work tool aimed at mountain inhabitants and professionals. With the will of doctors in the regions and especially the support of the European Union and territorial authorities (Rhône Alpes Region, Conseil Général de Haute Savoie, SIVOM des pays du Mont-Blanc) this pole of excellence in the Mont Blanc region quickly became a major actor of medical expertise in mountain areas. Since then the doctors and researchers of the institute conducted with success several European programmes. Their works, especially those of the laboratory of telemedicine, have been acknowledged with awards in France and Europe. The vocational trainings got wide acceptance from the UNO through UNITAR (United Nation Institute of Training & Research).

**Contact Person:** Pascal Zellner ([pascal@ifremmont.com](mailto:pascal@ifremmont.com)), <http://www.ifremmont.com/>

### 3.3.5 Daily Needs

#### **Delivery service for daily needs, local internet platform and target group oriented marketing (Germany)**

The project idea is building up and establishing a local delivery service for groceries and other goods of everyday needs.

"Freiamt bringt's" and "Wolfach bringt's" intend to improve the accessibility to basic goods, to strengthen the local pattern of retail and services and to generate new ways how to distribute groceries. In each case, 8 to 15 local retailers could be gained to participate, including small supermarkets, bakeries, butcher shops, pharmacies and direct selling farmers.

Since May respectively October 2010 the residents of Freiamt and Wolfach can order groceries on an internet platform as well as by phone, fax or catalogue. The local geriatric nursing service (homecare service called "Pflegedienst") delivers once a week and also picks up the goods at the different suppliers and distributes them. The service charge amounts to 4 Euro.

The citizens' use of the service is the most important requirement for its sustainable establishment. To elaborate the delivery service and the internet platform according to the citizens' demands several household surveys have been accomplished previously.

Target groups of the service are all local residents, particularly elderly people, immobile people and inhabitants living in remote settlements. The delivery service is based on an effective cooperation between several local actors. Within the runtime of the project a network of local and regional stakeholders and the delivery service were established. The local agencies of "Freiamt bringt's" and "Wolfach bringt's" act as contact persons for retailers and customers.

**Contact persons:** Regionalverband Südlicher Oberrhein (Fabian Torns, [torns@rvso.de](mailto:torns@rvso.de));

Lehrstuhl Regionalentwicklung und Raumordnung, Technische Universität Kaiserslautern (Prof. Dr. Gabi Troeger-Weiß, [fg-rur@ru.uni-kl.de](mailto:fg-rur@ru.uni-kl.de))

**Costs:** approx. 450.000 Euros for the implementation in two municipalities over a period of three years; co-funded by the Alpine Space Programme (INTERREG IV B)

### 3.4 Lessons learned

When dealing with SGI, a **proactive approach** must be followed. Municipalities, stakeholders and service providers should constantly search for innovative solutions to best provide SGI. The exchange of experiences through networks and contacts can be extremely fruitful in this respect.

Authorities dealing with SGI should consider adopting an **integrated and inter-municipal approach**. The combination of different services is one way to improve their availability. But a new commercial center in a village may lead to the closure of a small shop in another village. This is why an inter-municipal approach is needed.

When dealing with SGI, one important player is the consumers or beneficiaries. SGI should be **demand orientated**. They should provide a minimum standard for all people all over a territory. This standard must evolve with the demands of the users. Today, a simple phone line cannot anymore be regarded as sufficient minimum standard for telecommunications. Installations that allow the use of mobile phones and the internet should be added. So the question is how to find solutions in order to integrate the users into the process and thus better orientate the services to their real needs.

A demand orientated approach requires **participatory methodologies** to identify the needs of the users. On an international, national or regional level, the users are normally represented by NGO's. Mountain people in Europe are e.g. represented through Euromontana, the European association for mountain areas. Such organisations should be closely associated to the definition of SGI and to the policy making process in order to guarantee user-orientation. At local level, the organisation of participatory processes is easier to organise. Here, the needs of the economy and the society must be evaluated in dialogue with those actors. This can be done in workshops, through questionnaires, online formulas or other participatory approaches.

The provision of SGI depends also on service providers. Providers can be either public or private. When developing new forms of services, **service providers should be closely associated** to the work in order to create ownership and assure the sustainability of the actions.

A sound **combination of different services into service centers** can help to provide better and more accessible services. This combination must not be restrained to SGI but can also include commercial services like a tourism office or a grocery shop. In this respect **training opportunities** for the staff should be provided to enable them dealing with the supply of different kinds of services at the same time.

**Use the potentials of new technologies**, e.g. ICT to their best. SGI in remote areas are under pressure. It is therefore of utmost importance that the potentials of new technologies are proactively investigated and used in mountain and rural areas. Cooperations with research institutes and support through public funding for technology transfer and innovation can be helpful in this respect. Telemedicine can e.g. help to tackle the problem of decreasing provision of medical services in rural areas. Although the potential offered by ICT is huge, these tools must be regarded as the best solution of all difficulties. Elderly people do often not have the knowledge of using e.g. the internet and often adequate infrastructure is missing in mountain areas.

Service delivery is often more expensive in mountain remote areas than in lowlands and agglomerations. In order not to increase the burden for the mountain population solutions must be found so that **on-costs can be shared in an adequate way**. If only local tax payers are to be charged it might have negative impacts on the purchasing power.

Different services can be combined to improve the availability of those services especially in rural areas. The **temporal accessibility** of those services can also be improved by such combinations and by adapting opening times to the users needs. A classic example of an error in this respect is tourism offices, which are closed on Saturday, when most guests will arrive. SGI should not do the same mistake but orientate their opening hours to the users needs. Postal offices e.g. should be open, when commuters leave for work or come home. This means, that in rural villages e.g., opening hours should be from 7 to 9 in the morning and from 4 to 7 in the evening. Such flexible solutions may imply new models of cooperation or new contracting schemes with the employees.

## 4. EU and national legal frameworks of SGI – What needs to change to improve the current situation?

### 4.1 Overview of the actual legal framework in the EU and some European countries

With this chapter Euromontana aims at providing an analysis of the actual legal framework regarding telecom, postal services, public transports, health and daily needs. The analysis covers the EU-legislation as well as some selected countries. From this analysis, recommendations for policy actions are formulated.

#### 4.1.1 The EU framework

With the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 for the first time the protocol n° 26 introduces the notion of services of general interest in primary EU law whereas the previous EU treaty only referred to services of *economic* interest. The protocol is cited below:

THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES,

WISHING to emphasise the importance of services of general interest,

HAVE AGREED UPON the following interpretative provisions, which shall be annexed to the Treaty on European Union and to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union:

Article 1

The shared values of the Union in respect of services of general economic interest within the meaning of Article 14 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union include in particular:

- the essential role and the wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities in providing, commissioning and organising services of general interest as closely as possible to the needs of the users
- the diversity between various services of general economic interest and the differences in the needs and preferences of users that may result from different geographical, social or cultural situations;
- a high level of quality, safety and affordability, equal treatment and the promotion of universal access and of user rights

Article 2

The provisions of the Treaties do not affect in any way the competence of Member States to provide, commission and organise non-economic services of general interest.

This protocol provides a coherent framework that will guide EU action and services as a reference for all levels of governance. By clarifying the principles and setting out the common values underpinning EU policies it gives visibility, transparency and clarity to the EU approach applicable to services of

general interest.<sup>12</sup>

Specifically highlighted should be the mentioning “ensuring equal treatment and the promotion of universal access” in article 1 of the protocol. What does this mean for mountain areas? An explanation can derive from the EC communication “Services of general interest, including social services of general interest: a new European commitment” where the following is stated:

“Access to SGEI is recognised as a right in the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights (...) Where an EU sector specific rule is based on the concept of universal service, it should establish the right of everyone to access certain services considered as essential and impose obligations on service providers to offer defines services according to specific conditions, including territorial coverage and at an affordable price. Universal service provides for a minimum set of rights and obligations, which as a general rule can be further developed at national level. It is a dynamic concept, which needs to be updated regularly sector by sector. Promoting access throughout the territory of the Union is essential for the promotion of territorial cohesion in the EU, as mentioned above in the case of social services. **Territories with a geographic or natural handicap such as (...) mountains (...), often face challenges in terms of access to services of general interest, due to the remoteness from major markets or the increased cost for connection. These specific needs must be taken into account.**”

In this regard the article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty should be mentioned again. It was already cited in the introduction of this document and highlights that mountain areas needs to be specifically regarded when it comes to achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion throughout the EU.

These recent developments are very much welcomed by Euromontana and we call upon the relevant institutions to recognise the specific situation mountain areas are in and make it being reflected in respective policies.

Also these developments have to be put into the whole context of discussions on SGI that are ongoing within the EU institutions since a long time. Within this position paper Euromontana does not intend to go into detail with every policy change. However, we want to remind of the latest developments that have been undergone. The table below shows important communications that have been released by the EU institutions as regards SGI:

#### **Overview of progress in the EU debate and legislation on SGI:**

- 10/2001: Report of the EU Commission to the Laeken European Council on Services of general interest (COM(2001)598 final)
- 11/2002: Report from the Commission on the state of play in the work on the guidelines for state aid and services of general economic interest (COM(2002)636 final)
- 05/2003: **Green Paper** on Services of general interest (COM(2003)270 final)<sup>13</sup>
- 05/2004: **White Paper** on Services of general interest (COM(2004)374 final)<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> European Commission 2007: Services of general interest, including social services of general interest: a new European commitment

<sup>13</sup> Visit [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_protection/questionnaire\\_fr.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_protection/questionnaire_fr.htm)

- 02/2005: **Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee** on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the White Paper on services of general interest
- 07/2005: Community Framework for State Aid in the Form of Public Service Compensation (DGCOMP/I1/D(2005)179)<sup>13</sup>
- 04/2006: Communication from the Commission – Implementing the Community Lisbon programme: Social services of general interest in the European Union (COM(2006)177 final)
- 11/2007: Communication from the European Commission on "Services of General Interest including social services of general Interest. A European Commitment" (COM(2007) 725 final)
- 03/2011: Reform of the EU State Aid Rules on Services of General Interest (COM(2011)146 final)

To this list must be added the legislation and debate on EU sectoral policies. Since the scope of the present paper does not make it possible to discuss all sectors, an update is provided about the respective service sectors covered in the corresponding sections.

#### **4.1.2 Evaluation of the legal framework conditions for SGI delivery on national and EU level**

##### **A/ Postal services**

The EU has completely opened the postal market as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011. Some countries, mainly in Eastern Europe, have been provided with a longer deadline until January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 at latest. Some countries like Germany (in 2008) and the UK had completely opened their postal market some years before 2011. Others like Austria, France and Italy have opened their market in accordance with the EU-obligation. Those countries had to adapt their laws in 2010 or elaborate completely new laws. The Swiss Parliament has voted in winter 2010 against a complete opening of the market. The national provider Swiss Post maintains a monopole of letters until 50 grams.

The universal service covers letters until 2 kg and parcels until 20 kg in accordance to the EU-directive. Only Switzerland has added payment services to the universal services obligation. A dedicated Service provider can be obliged by law to deliver the universal service as is the case e.g. in France and Switzerland. In other countries like Germany and Austria the service can be put for tender if the providers do not assume the universal service. If the universal service is in deficit, the EU-directive foresees two options: either subsidies by governments or a compensation fund. Most countries have foreseen a compensation fund, where all service providers would have to pay. But this scheme has not yet been put into practice.

The prescriptions for postal offices are very different from country to country. Most countries allow the flexibility to combine postal services with other services like grocery shops or tourism offices. The service is then not run by personnel of the post but by specially trained private persons (e.g. shop owners).

The closure of postal offices is of deep concern for municipal authorities, as it affects the attractiveness and functionality of villages. Postal offices are often perceived as a symbol of SGI and are a point for social contact. But only in Austria and Switzerland the national laws foresee a special



role for the municipalities in the restructuring process.<sup>14</sup>

### **Qualitative appreciation of the situation of postal services**

**Slovenia:** "Pošta Slovenije" (PS) is 100 percent state-owned company and was established with the separation of formal PTT company (Post and Telecom) on 1st of January 1995. 10 business units exist all over the country with network of 556 post offices. The extension of network is well although there are differences by providing postal services all over the country (e-services and money services in rural areas).

In **Switzerland**, the provision of postal services is good all over the country. The network of postal offices is being reformed with more traditional postal offices run by "The Post" into agencies. A radical closure of offices was avoided by legal measures and by a dialogue between "The Post" and municipalities, cantons and other stakeholders. The only service that is not running satisfactorily in rural areas is express-services (which are not part of the Universal service obligation).

In **Norway**, the delivery of postal services is good all over the country. The network of postal offices is being reformed and the traditional post offices in most of the countries territory are now replaced by In-Store Post Offices. In the rural regions the local postman is still active. The stop of the post-monopoly for other services has resulted in a fragmentation of the tasks, which might threaten the offers.

In the **UK** the following concerns have been raised in recent studies as regards postal services:

- Moves to reduce the at least daily collection and delivery;
- Deliveries on five days per week as opposed to six;
- Higher charges for delivery to remote areas of mainland Scotland and to the islands;
- other operators accessing the Royal Mail USO service to complete delivery to the customers (over the last kilometre); and
- Licensed operators providing preferential services to high volume locations to the disadvantage of the remote and sparsely populated areas of the UK thus reducing the operating margins of the Royal Mail.

### **B/ Telecom services**

In the EU, telecom services are fully liberalized. The universal services obligation concerns mainly the access to fixed phone installations. Austria has added a "functional internet-access" to the universal services without specifying what is meant with this. Switzerland has added broadband access to the universal services and specifies in an ordinance that this means min, 600 kB/s download capacity. Swisscom as the owner of the universal services concession must provide these services all over the country and to each household. The technology is not prescribed. This aspect is very important. Fibre optics provide a high bandwidth over long distances. But to equip every house with this (Fibre to the

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<sup>14</sup> An overview of the legal framework conditions for each service sector treated within this position paper can be found in annex 2.

home - FTTH) is very costly. So other technologies like LTE (Long term evolution) or satellite communications might be more appropriate, especially in remote rural areas. All countries have foreseen the installation of a compensation fund in case the universal service provision would be in deficit. This fund would be fed by all service providers. Until now, not a single country has put this into practise. The compensation fund will anyhow not be appropriate to finance the roll out of larger bandwidths.

The regulatory authorities<sup>15</sup> are independent from governments and from service providers. In some cases, they can make ex ante regulations. The role of regulatory authorities in network infrastructures is very important. The owners of infrastructures need clear framework conditions. An unclear or erratic regulation will lead to uncertainties in investments and thus reduce considerably the willingness to invest in infrastructures. Regulation can thus hamper the rollout of infrastructures and the provision of services. This happened e.g. with the rollout of fibre optics in the USA. The regulation had to be changed after it was realized that it was too inhibitive for investments. In most cases, this affects rural areas, as urban areas are more attractive for the market.

The EU is strongly pushing broadband. But this action is not done within the telecom-regulation but within the cohesion and rural development policy. With the Digital Agenda (COM(2010) 245) the EU wants to grant access to broadband to 100% of the population before 2013. In 2020, all households should receive access to over 30 MB/s and for 50% of the households, more than 100 MB/s should be possible. The EU does not specify which technology should be used for this (technology neutral). Member states are requested to establish broadband strategies. Finances shall be provided by the cohesion policy.

Key targets of broadband strategies in EU member states can be seen from the table in annex 3.

Finally, the study "*Territorial Dynamics in Europe - Trends in Internet Roll out*" realised by ESPON and published in April 2011 gives an idea of how internet roll-out differs between different kinds of territories. The two graphs below show clearly that strong differences occur when comparing urban and rural areas and as regards mountains, between different types of mountain areas depending on their level of remoteness.

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<sup>15</sup> A definition of a sector-specific regulatory authority is contained in Commission Decision 2002/627/EC of 29 July 2002 establishing the European Regulators Group for Electronic Communication Networks and Services, OJ L 200/38, 30.7.2002: "For the purpose of this Decision: 'relevant national regulatory authority' means the public authority established in each Member State to oversee the day-to-day interpretation and application of the provisions of the Directives relating to electronic communications networks and services as defined in the Framework Directive.

Figure 3 IP addresses in different types of urban-rural regions

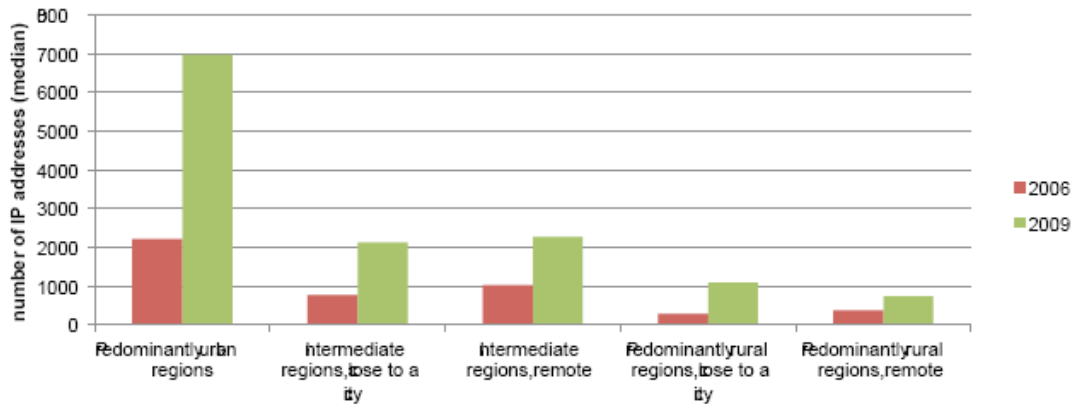
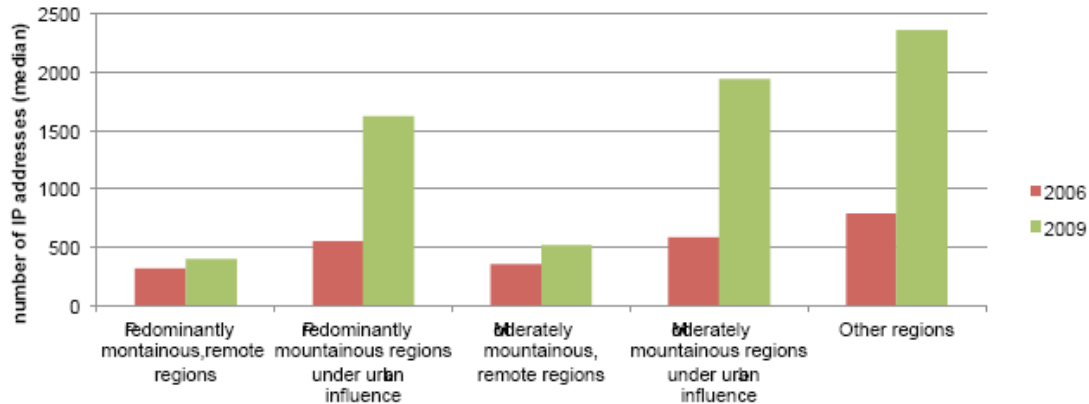


Figure 5 IP addresses in different types of mountainous regions



### Qualitative appreciation of the situation of telecom services

The universal services in telecom (fixed phone lines) are well provided in all countries. The huge challenge for the future and especially for rural areas is the provision of broadband services. Data below are mostly taken from the European Commission's Europe's digital competitiveness report.

**Austria:** Fixed broadband penetration is increasing at a low rate, Austria still being below the EU average. This is partly offset by the relatively large take-up of mobile internet, especially on laptops. DSL coverage is at 94% of the total population. It is only at 83% in rural areas.

**France:** France Télécom has begun to provide FTTH in bigger cities. The coverage with DSL is 100% of the population. Wireless broadband connections are seen as an alternative to fibre optics in rural areas.

**Germany:** Deutsche Telecom is building FTTH- and VDSL- networks mainly in urban areas. The

national broadband strategy aims at delivering a broadband-access (small broadband) to all households by end 2010 and an access of at least 50 MB/s to 75% of all households by 2014. In rural areas, mobile technologies shall help to bridge the gap. Regional projects can be supported with max. 200.000 Euros per project respective 150 Mio. Euros in total. The aim of equipping all households with broadband by end 2010 was not achieved ([www.breitbandatlas.de](http://www.breitbandatlas.de)). DSL coverage was at 97% in 2009. 85% of those lines have a capacity over 2 MB/s.

**Italy:** DSL coverage is at 96% of total population. In rural areas, this drops to 84%. Broadband population penetration is lower than the EU average. In 2009, the upward trend in broadband penetration slowed down. Only 53 % of households have an internet connection, but 74 % of the connections are broadband. For enterprises, the situation is much better: penetration is 84%, above the EU average of 83%. In wireless broadband, Italy's performance is around the average for the EU. On the other hand, Italy has a well-established mobile market with encouraging developments in mobile broadband.

**Slovenia:** DSL coverage is at 93% of total population. In rural areas, this drops to 85%. Only a minority of broadband subscribers have speeds of at least 2 Mb/s.

**Switzerland:** 98% of all households are theoretically covered by ADSL-Standard (600 kb/s). The rollout of fibre optics is starting in urban areas. It will take up to 15 years to equip rural areas with fibre optics as well. Discussions are therefore ongoing at political level on how to speed up that process.

**UK:** DSL coverage is 100%. British Telecom holds a relatively low share of only 25% of broadband lines. This is a sign of strong concurrence of service providers, which should normally favour a faster rollout. Virgin Media reaches ca. 50% of all households with CATV, which can be upgraded to DOCSIS 3.0 standard to allow fast broadband connections.

**Norway:** 99.9% of all households are covered by broadband in Norway defined by minimum 640 kbit/s. Most households are covered by using ADSL and fibre optics, but in the most remote regions also wireless broadband infrastructure is used.

### **C/ Public transport services**

The EU and its member states do not have any special legal framework for SGI in public transports. In Switzerland, the federal law on railways indicates, that every municipality with at least 100 inhabitants must be served by public transport (bus, cableway or railway). This is one of the reasons, which has led to the very dense network of public transports in Switzerland.

In most countries, public transport comes under the responsibility of regional and local authorities. They will put the respective lines for tender and then order (and pay) the services. This allows a certain element of market also in local and regional transports.

The regulatory separation between infrastructure and service provision can have impacts on the quality of public transports. The case of the UK is well known, where a complete separation has led to decaying infrastructures. The EU requests for independent regulation authorities, but this has not

been applied in some countries.

**France:** public transports at regional and local level are almost exclusively transports for pupils and to some extent for commuters. They have generally very poor standard and are not attractive. Timetables are arranged for pupils and commuters and are thus not attractive for other customers.

**Italy:** public transports are planned at regional level. This leads to problems in interregional traffic and a lack of coordination. In the extreme, it can lead to a break in the modal split with one region ordering a train, while the other region orders a bus for the same line.

**Slovenia:** In Slovenia only 24% of all travels are going to public transport and the percentage is decreasing. The best working transport activity (which is not part of ordinary public transport lines), is the transportation of the school obliged children to school which is free of charge for the users. It is local service of general interest and provided by the municipalities. It works very well. This obligation is prescribed in Article 56 of the Elementary School Act to all children that live more than 4 km away from the school, to children that do not have safe school ways and to all children in the 1st year of school.

**Switzerland:** The provision of public services is very good also in rural areas. But it is constantly endangered by budget restrictions. Large scale reductions could be avoided up to now.

**Norway:** In general, the provision with public transport services is good in rural mountain areas, despite for a very small part of the population that live very scattered. The provision of this service is constantly threatened by budget restrictions.

**UK:** primary concerns in this field focus on the diminution of accessing public transport services and their increasing cost.

### **D/ Health services (doctors, hospitals, pharmacies)**

The provision of health services is usually (at least in the cases that have been reported to us) a task of the regional and local level.

**Slovenia:** The regional hospitals as well as doctors offices are well spread all over the country, but there is lack of the medical staff in general. Pharmacies are missing especially in remote rural areas.

**Switzerland:** There are too many hospitals in Switzerland and the coordination is bad. This leads to excessive costs in the health sector. The provision with doctors is rapidly decreasing in rural areas. Pharmacies can be found all over the country. In some cantons where pharmacies are scarce, the doctors have the right to hand out medicaments.

**Norway:** There are about 80 different hospitals in Norway organised into four regional health authorities. There are also a lot of hospitals in the rural areas. In 2009 a new health reform was introduced: The Coordination Reform. It builds a bridge between major reforms and will improve the

situation for the patients, health personnel, local authorities, hospitals and the health region. The municipalities will have a larger responsibility for the patients, but can cooperate about different solutions and establish rural/local medical centres, mobile services etc.

### **E/ Daily needs**

The provision of services for daily needs like grocery shops, bakeries etc. is very seldom regulated. These services are left to the market to develop. The closure of shops in rural areas often leads to reactions by the inhabitants and by local authorities. Solutions are then sought for to reopen a shop. It is often forgotten, that consumers steer the rentability of shops by their own behaviour. If consumers buy their goods in a supermarket in the next bigger town, they contribute automatically to the decline of smaller shops in the villages. So solutions must also be sought in changing attitudes and behaviour.

**Slovenia:** Small private shops in rural areas are closing down and franchise shops from the three greatest food trade shops in the country are now predominating.

**Switzerland:** A lot of smaller shops are closing down in remote rural villages. Shops are concentrated in rural centres and in touristic centres. Inter-municipal coordination is missing completely.

**Norway:** Smaller shops are closing in rural areas despite the financial support from the state. However, a lot of shops in the rural areas could survive because they became multifunctional shops offering services such as postal, pharmacy, bank, library and video-communication directed to the municipality.

**UK:** The closure of rural retail outlets including fuel stations and the diminution of levels of service delivery in terms of scope and accessibility is a matter of extreme concern to local authorities and the Government alike. Initiatives have been undertaken and are ongoing as to exploring different models of service provision so as to sustain service provision to rural communities.

## 4.2 Upcoming developments of the EU legal framework

With the communication on the reform of the internal market (COM(2010)608), the Commission has announced a new package on SGI. The exact content is not yet known. The package should be communicated by mid 2011. In the same communication, the Commission announced that it is willing to change the state aid rules, particularly the Altmark-case<sup>16</sup>. This would very much ease cooperation models in the provision of SGI.

The Commission is to propose a new package for the reform of the railway sector. It is not expected, that SGI will figure in that package.

The postal market is just opened. It seems too early for further reforms.

The telecom-sector is constantly evolving. In 2008, after a public consultation, it was decided not to include broadband services into the SGI-provision. With the fast rollout of broadband services, this attitude could change in the future.

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<sup>16</sup> In July 2005, the Commission adopted the Altmark package ('Altmark' refers to a German bus company awarded state aid), a [Commission Decision](#) (based on Article 86(3) of the EC Treaty) that specifies the conditions under which compensation to companies for the provision of public services is compatible with state aid rules.

### 4.3 Political requests by Euromontana

SGI are an important topic for Euromontana. Euromontana requests the following policy actions.

**Grant SGI a prominent place in legislation:** SGI are the basis for social and economical activities. Their crucial role must be recognized and transposed into the legal framework at the appropriate level and wherever this should not already have happened. The EU has done a step with protocol 26 of the Treaty of Lisbon. In France, public services are prominently mentioned in the constitution. Switzerland e.g. is actually discussing about introducing an article on SGI into the Constitution. Unfortunately this is not the case for many other countries.

**Sectoral policies must give special attention to SGI:** At EU-level, the directives on postal services and on telecommunication contain some indications of universal services. These can be regarded as minimum standards. Member states should be free to add supplementary standards for their territory. In public transports, neither the EU nor the member states foresee SGI-provisions. Switzerland on the opposite has clear legal prescriptions for the provision of SGI in public transports. Every village with at least 100 inhabitants must be served by public transports. The EU and the member states should foresee such a SGI-prescription as well also with regard to the objectives concerning green growth within the EU2020 Strategy.

**Evolutional character of SGI and legislation:** The technologies but also the needs of costumers evolve over time. The legal framework must therefore be constantly adapted to these changes. Periodical reports should therefore give an overview of the actual situation and upcoming trends / needs and form the basis for the adaptation of the legal framework. An assessment of territorial disparities should be included in such kinds of monitoring activities

A **legislative framework** must be put in place that specifies i) which services must be provided and ii) what minimum standards must be respected for their supply. However, it should not be precised who will be responsible for the delivery of a certain service. This is to be analysed on a case by case basis to allow innovative and flexible solutions adapted to the specific situation in a mountain environment. Finally public funding schemes should be designed to make the service supply possible.

ICTs are a powerful tool to bridge physical gaps. Mountain and rural areas, which are often handicapped by physical distances, should therefore benefit first from broadband infrastructures which are at the forefront of technological development. The EU-broadband-initiative, the EU-digital-agenda and the national broadband initiatives are highly welcome in this respect. But new technologies are usually first rolled out in urban areas. From the point of view of accessibility and territorial cohesion, it should be the other way round. **New ICT technologies should first be rolled out in mountain and rural areas** in order to improve the accessibility of those territories and to avoid distortions in the development potentials. The rollout of broadband should be independent of the technologies. In remote areas, fibre optics can be too cost intensive. Non-terrestrial technologies like WiMax, LTE or satellite communications may be a more cost efficient solution. Broadband initiatives and regulatory frameworks should take this technology-neutral aspect into account.

**Territorial impact assessment:** New or changed legislation in SGI have a territorial impact. The opening of the postal market e.g. has a direct impact on the provision of postal services. Therefore,



each such act must be preceded by a territorial impact assessment which takes into account the specificities of mountain and rural areas.

The **regulatory framework** must be organised in order to create a maximum of transparency. Independent regulatory authorities should therefore be installed. These regulatory authorities must have as one main task to verify whether the universal services are provided as foreseen by the legislation. Furthermore, as is well known from cases like the fibre optics network in the USA and in Germany, ex ante regulations in infrastructures can be inhibitive. In both cases, a previous ex ante regulation had to be abandoned in favour of an ex post regulation. In an ex ante scheme, infrastructure owner must fear, that they have to grant access to their network to other service providers without being able to fully capitalise their previous investments in the infrastructure. This is why under an ex ante regime, the incentive for new constructions can be very low. This effect can be very marked in rural and mountain areas where competition is rare by definition.

**State aid rules must be modified in order to enable innovative solutions in the provision of SGI.** Actually, state aid rules are sometimes too prohibitive and interdict innovative solutions for instance in partnerships between public and private service providers.

**Assure long term finances for SGI:** SGI which rely on infrastructures like railway lines, hospitals etc. require important financial contributions. These financial means must be provided on a long-term basis and shall not succumb to short viewed budgetary restrictions. The higher costs of providing services in mountain areas should be shared in order to not only burden the rural population.

**Support innovative actions:** The combination of services or the introduction of new technologies can lead to an improved provision with SGI. Such innovative actions need financial support which can be delivered either through the sectoral policies or because of their territorial impact through the cohesion policy.

**Set the right framework in spatial planning policies:** spatial planning has the task to organise the territory. A sound spatial planning policy can contribute to fostering SGI. Decentralised economic activities will e.g. help to upkeep a demand on services. Inter-municipal coordination can help to avoid the widespread phenomenon of new commercial centres being built up and at the same time grocery shops in small villages closing down.

**A territorial and integrated view on SGI** (not just an addition of sectors) is necessary, focusing on the spatial distribution of services within a region / district. This should be the responsibility of spatial planning authorities.

**Evaluation of the supply situation:** Based on a monitoring system for services on local level, supply standards should be defined and regularly evaluated.

Where the responsibility of SGI's is delegated to the regional level as e.g. in the public transport sector, a **strong cooperation with the other territorial entities must be sought** in order to avoid differing standards and ruptures in the network.

Regions and municipalities are those territorial entities most directly concerned with the impacts of SGI-policy. They should therefore adopt a **proactive strategy**. This means to develop new and

innovative approaches to provide those services. Best use must be made of new technologies. The possible synergies of different networks must be investigated. Inter-municipal cooperation for providing services as well as multifunctional offers should be strengthened. The services must be demand-orientated. Actions will also often have to be taken on the demand side (e.g. promote the use of public transports). All too often, municipal authorities do not have the time or the knowledge to develop new strategies. A certain amount of **coaching** and advisory services would therefore be welcome. This could be financed e.g. through the cohesion policy or rural development policy. The same is true for the development of local projects for improving the supply situation.

**Voluntary work** is still an important factor in public services and will remain so. (In small villages it may become even more important when services provided by now by the market or by public authorities are withdrawn). Reflections should therefore be made as how to support volunteers and compensate for this voluntary work. Coaching, networks of volunteers, acknowledgement and tax reductions for individuals working as a voluntary could be ideas.

## **Recommendations for different sectors:**

### **Postal services:**

1. Introduce prescriptions in respect to postal offices in the national legislative framework. The minimal level of access-points should be fixed in the law or directive by including indicators regulating the maximum distance to an access-point. Regulations that only take into account the minimum population needed in an area in order to provide them with an access-point is not sufficient in mountain areas. There should also be a mention to letter-boxes, as this will be a theme for the future. The dialogue with municipalities and / or regions in case of closure of postal offices should also be integrated into the national legislative framework.
2. Evaluate the possibility of exempting universal service providers from VAT.
3. Enhance multifunctional use: Facilitate the installation of access points for postal services in shops, municipality offices, multi-service points etc, evaluate which hindrances there might be.

### **Telecommunication**

1. Promote the need to invest first in rural areas
2. Integrate broadband-access into the content of the SGI at the level of member states.
3. Enhance the power of the regulation authorities in particular in respect to the imposition of the SGI-obligation.
4. Avoid ex ante regulations in order not to be prohibitive for investments in infrastructures.

### **Public transports**

1. Integrate SGI into the public transport directives of the EU
2. Fix minimum standards for public transports at national level
3. Create sequenced timetables
4. Coordinate the tendering process of regions and municipalities at the superior level to avoid frictions.

5. Clarify the role of regulation authorities
6. Promote flexible and demand-oriented transport models, eliminate legal and assurance hindrances for such models

#### **Health services**

1. Establish a concept for health services provision at the appropriate level. The concept should include the provision of services by doctors as well as by hospitals.
2. Steer the education in the health sector in order to allow a steady influx of sufficient doctors which are ready to work in mountain and rural areas.
3. Integrate the territorial dimension into the financial compensation scheme of the health sector in order to especially encourage doctors and hospitals in remote areas.
4. Encourage eHealth and ICT/Postal based delivery of medicines.

#### **Daily needs**

Note: As the provision of daily needs is not regulated no policy recommendations were formulated.

## Annex 1:

Euromontana has been working on the topic of services of general interest since almost 10 years now. That way we could assemble a good repertoire of good practices. As it was not possible to entirely implement this knowledge into the text of the position paper this annex should give you further hints on sources for good practices.

- For the development of the position paper a call for good practices was launched among the members of Euromontana. You will find a document (in French only) with more good practices in the Region Rhône-Alps (France) on [Euromontana's website](#). Another interesting example can be found on [www.pointsmultiservices.com](http://www.pointsmultiservices.com) (France).
- From 2004 to 2007 Euromontana was partner in the Interreg IIIc project "*Euromountains.net – Networking of European mountain regions in order to promote sustainable territorial development*". Among the themes that were tackled theme 1 deals with services and is called "*Sustainable territorial development and improvement of services in mountain areas*". The final report of this theme (including several good practices) can be downloaded from the [Euromontana webpage](#).
- In 2006 Euromontana worked on a study for the French Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries "*Exchange of European experiences regarding the development of services of general interest in mountain areas*". This study can be downloaded from [Euromontana's webpage](#).
- Two important projects are still ongoing or were recently finished that are of interest to the topic of services of general interest in mountain areas. To learn more about them we do recommend to visit their webpages:
  - o ACCESS - Improving accessibility of services of general interest – organisational innovations in rural mountain areas ( <http://www.access-alpinespace.eu/> )
    - Several pilot-projects have been developed in the course of the project. You can access them [here](#).
  - o IMMODI - "Implementing digital development in mountain areas" ( <http://www.interreg-immodi.net/> )
    - Several best-practices have been collected in the course of the project. You can access them [here](#).

## ANNEX 2:

Overview of legal framework conditions of different service sectors in some countries containing mountain areas:

### 1. Postal Services

Country	Universal services obligation	Financial mechanism	Prescriptions for postal offices	Regulation authority	Influence of municipalities	Legal basis
EU	Letters until max. 2 kg and parcels until max. 20 kg.	Member states can chose between subsidies or a compensation fund.	No prescription.	Must be completely independent from ministries and from service providers.	No prescription.	Directive 2008/6/EC
Austria	Letters until 2 kg and parcels until 20 kg.	Compensation fund if universal service is deficitary.	Min, 1'650 postal offices all over the country. Accessible for 90% for the inhabitants of cities larger than 10'000 inhabitants within 2'000 m and in all other areas within 10'000 m. Letter boxes must be accessible within 1'000 m in	Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs GmbH and Post-Control-Comission. Advisory board on postal offices composed of representatives from municipalities and cities.	In case of closure of postal offices, an agreed solution has to be found with the concerned municipalities.	Postal law 2010

			urbanised areas.			
France	Letters until 2 kg and parcels until 20 kg. To be delivered on every working day. La Poste has obligation to provide the service by law for 15 years.	Compensation fund if universal service is deficitary.	Network of access points (actually 17'000). Reachable for 95% of population within 10 km. Min. 1 access point per locality of 10'000 inhabitants.	Independent authority	None	Codes des Postes et des Communications, revised in 2010
Germany	Letters until 2 kg and parcels until 20 kg. To be delivered at least once on every working day. Providers receive a license. Universal service can be opened for tenders if the service is not sufficiently provided.	Compensation fund if universal service is deficitary.	Min. 12'000 stationary offices (postal offices or agencies) all over the country. In rural areas min. 1 stationary office per 80 sqkm. Letter boxes in urbanised areas reachable in a distance of max. 1'000 m.	Bundesnetzagentur (for all services).	None	Postal law 1997
Italy	Letters until 2 kg and parcels until 20 kg.	Compensation fund if universal service is deficitary.	Postal offices accessible for 75 / 92,5 / 97,5% of the population within 3 / 5 / 6 km. Postal offices to be	No special agency. The ministry for communication is the regulation authority (contradiction to EU-law).	None.	Directive 2008/6/EC is applied directly. Directive of 2003 on the application of the EU-directive

			provided in min. 96% of all municipalities. They have to be open on at least 3 days and min. 18 hours.			
Slovenia	Letters until 2 kg and parcels until 20 kg. Delivery of mail at least 5 days a week.	Compensation fund if universal service is deficitary.	Obligation for postal offices all over the country.	Strong regulation authority. Can influence legislative process.		
Switzerland	Swiss Post is obliged by law to provide letters, parcels and newspapers on at least 5 working days per week as well as services for payments. Monopole for Swiss Post of letters until 50g.	Monopoly	Postal offices or agencies to be provided all over the country. Accessible for 90% of the population within 20 minutes by foot or public transport. Min. 1 letter box per municipality	PostCom. Ex post regulation.	Have to be contacted prior to closure of postal offices. Can call upon PostCom if they do not agree.	Postal law 2010 (to enter into force in 2011)
Norway	In Norway is the Norway Post obliged to distribute post 6 days a week in the whole country as well	Monopoly for Norway Post for distribution of letters under 50 g.	Postal offices or post in shops are provided all over the country. In 2010 it was 1434	Norway Post AS. It is organised as a limited company today with the Nordic region as a local market.	The municipalities are a body entitled to comments, but have in reality very small influence on the	Norway Post has licence for offering postal offices for the period 2007-2010

	as services for payments and other services. In addition there is also a village postman		post offices or post in shops in Norway with 20000 employees		decisions.	
UK	currently this is delivered by the Royal Mail Group Ltd which has a licence to operate throughout the UK on the basis that the services provides collection and delivery of letters and parcels to any part of the UK at the same rate. Postcomm the industry regulator can licence other operators to deliver postal services across the UK. The principal elements of the USO are a uniform tariff and collection and delivery at least daily and six days per week.	N/A as the service is open to market competition	collection points should be within 500m of customers for letters and 5 or 10km for the largest of parcels. Deliveries are made to each postal address each day. Deliveries are expected next day for 93% of first class letters.	Postcomm- Government established industry regulator	none but the Royal Mail has a duty to consult of closure of post offices. Recently, Royal Mail used the Highland Council as a vehicle for collating responses on such a consultation on proposed closures.	Postal Services Act 2000



## 2. Telecommunication services

Country	Universal services obligation	Financial mechanism	Unbundling / access to networks	Regulation authority	Legal basis
EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to telecom-network,</li> <li>• Access to public phone indexes,</li> <li>• Access to public information service</li> <li>• Phone cells all over the territory</li> <li>• Access to emergency services</li> <li>• Services for disabled persons</li> </ul>	Compensation mechanism or fund	Full unbundling	The regulation authority must be independent. The EU does not allow "regulatory holidays".	Directive 96/19/EC
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As EU +</li> <li>• <b>Functional internet-access</b></li> </ul>	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Full access to incumbent's network but not to the broad-band-network	Rundfunk und Telekom Regulierungs GmbH	Law on telecommunication 2003
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As EU</li> </ul>	Compensation fund financed by all service providers	Full access including fast bitstream.		Codes des Postes et des Communications, revised in 2010
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As EU</li> </ul>	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Full access.	Bundesnetzagentur (for all services).	Law on telecommunication 2004
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As EU</li> </ul>	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Full unbundling		Directive 96/19/EC
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As EU</li> </ul>	Compensation for			

		uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers			
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As EU +</li> <li>• <b>Broad-band access</b></li> </ul>	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Full access to incumbent's network, unbundling of fast bitstream-access limited for 4 years	ComCom a independent authority. Only ex post regulation.	Law on telecommunication 1997
Norway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to telecom-network,</li> <li>• Access to public phone indexes,</li> <li>• Access to public information service</li> <li>• Phone cells all over the territory</li> <li>• Access to emergency services</li> <li>• Broad-band access</li> </ul>	Compensation for uncovered costs financed by a tax to be paid by the other service providers	Full unbundling		Law on electronic communication 25 July 2003.

### 3. Public transport services

Country	Universal services obligation	Financial mechanism	Role of different actors	Regulation authority	Legal basis
EU	None	Public tendering or subsidies.	Financial but not obligatory organisational separation of infrastructure and services.	Independent regulation authority requested	Directive 2001/14EC
Austria	Federal government orders public transport on national level for several	Principle of tendering and ordering. Strong position of	Financial but not organisational		Law on railways 1957

	years. Länder and municipalities order and finance regional transports.	Österreichische Bundesbahnen including Busses	separation of infrastructure and services.		
France	Delegated to regions	Delegated to regions. Programme contracts between regions and national government.	Regions are the main actors		
Germany	None at federal level. Delegated to Länder and municipalities.	Principle of tendering and ordering	Full separation of infrastructure and services. Full access to infrastructures.	Bundesnetzagentur	General law on railways 1993
Italy	Delegated to regions. Some general criteria fixed on national level e.g. access to public administrations, schools reduction of emissions etc.	Programme contracts between regions and national government. Each region should establish a fund for financing the SGI.	National: public transports across borders and interregional. Regional public transports fully delegated to regions and provinces. Regions elaborate programme contracts with national government and receive subsidies based on them for the operation and for investments.		Ordinance from 1997

Switzerland	Each settlement with at least 100 inhabitants must be served by public transports. Cantons can fix a higher level.	Cantons and municipalities order regional transport. Compensation by federal government with Ø 50%.	Principle of tendering and ordering. Financial compensation by federal government, Cantons and municipalities.	No independent regulation authority. Federal ministry for transports assumes this task.	Law on railways 1957
Norway	Delegated to the local and regional level	The federal government has responsibility for the railway and the county council and municipalities get money from the state to organise local and regional bus transportation.	County councils are the main actors. Financial compensation by the federal government.	No independent regulation authority	Law on railways 1993
UK	None. However transport objectives are set out in the Scottish Government's Business Plan for the relevant year. However there are Public Service Orders (PSO's) in place for a number of ferry and air routes. This allows subsidies to be paid to maintain these services. <b>Air</b> - delivered on a commercial basis except for three routes which are subject to PSO's. The Scottish Government has an air discount	Public procurement/ tendering	As outlined above different actors deliver different services <b>Air</b> - Varies but PSO's delivered via Logan Air <b>Ferry</b> - David MacBrayne <b>Rail</b> - Scot Rail <b>Buses</b> - private sector companies across the country	Transport Scotland	varies as some matters are reserved to the UK Parliament

	<p>scheme for routes to the islands but this is currently under review.</p> <p><b>Ferry</b> - services are primarily delivered via David MacBrayne Ltd a wholly Government owned operation. A number of services are subsidised and delivered via public contracts.</p> <p><b>Rail</b> – service delivery is franchised to Scot Rail. Rail services to the Highlands are limited to two, one to the north coast via Inverness and the east coast to the north of Inverness and a line north from the central belt to the west coast ports of Fort William and on to Kyle of Lochalsh/Skye.</p> <p><b>Bus services</b> - are delivered on a commercial basis by the private sector. Services can be subsidised by local authorities.</p>				
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#### 4. Health services

Country	Doctors	Hospitals	Pharmacies	Legal basis
EU	None	None	None	None
Austria	None at federal level		None at federal level	None
Germany	Public services are provided by contract-doctors "Vertragsärzte". They need	Hospitals planned and financed by the Bundesländer. Strict separation between		Social Law (Sozialgesetzbuch)

	a contract with an association of insurers to exercise. These associations are at Länder-level.	stationary services in hospitals and ambulant services by contract doctors.		
Switzerland	Need an authorisation to open a medical cabinet at cantonal level. Tariffs are regulated at national level and are to the disadvantage of rural areas.	None at federal level. Are regulated at cantonal level.	None.	None
Norway	A system which provides each citizen with one particular and permanent doctor. The system was established in 2001	Hospitals planned, financed and owned by the state.	None	None
UK	General practitioner doctors are contracted by and funded by the relevant Health Boards	are funded and run by the regional Health Boards	are private sector concerns. The dispensing of medicines prescribed by doctors is funded by the regional health boards. Pharmacies are usually within retail units which sell complimentary goods and health advisory services	various UK Acts of Government and as incorporated into the Scotland Bill for service delivery in Scotland

## Annex 3:

### - Key targets of National Member States Broadband Strategies

	Coverage			NGA	
	Coverage	Speed (Mbps)	Date	Speed (Mbps)	Date
Austria	100%	Up to 25 Mbps	2013	n/a	n/a
Belgium	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Bulgaria	100%	1 Mbps	2013	n/a	2015 (larger cities)
Cyprus	100%	2 Mbps	2013	n/a	n/a
Denmark				100 Mbps (100% coverage)	2020
Estonia				Up to 100 Mbps	2012
Finland	100%	1 Mbps	2010	100 Mbps	2015
France	100%	512 Kbps	2012	"très haut débit" (100% coverage)	2025
Germany	100%	n/a	2010	50 Mbps (75% of households)	2014
Greece	56 cities	n/a	n/a	100 Mbps	2017
Hungary	100%	256 Kbps	2010	n/a	n/a
Ireland	100%	Min. 1.2 Mbps	2010	greater than or equal to those in comparator EU regions and cities	By 2012 (Comparator regions)
Italy	100%	2 Mbps	2012	fibre	2015/2018
Lithuania	98%	512 Kbps	2010	n/a	n/a
Luxembourg	100%	2 Mbps	2013	100 Mbps	2015
Malta	100%	2 Mbps	2010	n/a	2015
Norway	100%	n/a	2007	n/a*	n/a
Portugal	100%	2-10 Mbps	2009	≥ 100 Mbps	2010
Romania	100%	1 Mbps	2015	n/a	n/a
Slovakia		1 Mbps			
Slovenia	90%	2 Mbps	2010	20 Mbps	2015
Spain	100%	1 Mbps	2011	50 Mbps	2015
Sweden	100%	0,5 – 2 Mbps (on public consultation)	2010	100 Mbps	2020 (90% cov.); 2015 (40%)
UK	100%	2 Mbps	2015	n/a	2017 (cover. 90%)