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“Territorial authorities and stakeholders: creating success together”

Euromountains.net final Conference

Euromountains.net Project

Mountain regions faced with the economic handicaps linked to their geographic and environmental situations have all across Europe had to innovate in developing various strategies in order to compensate for these difficulties. The territorial development has had to take into consideration, and adapt to, a specific local environment. “Euromountains.net” is a networking project on European mountain regions in order to promote sustainable development.

Part-funded by the Interreg III C SUD programme, the project involves 14

partners from 6 countries (Scotland, Spain, France, Italy, Norway and Portugal). Starting with the experiences of the project partners, the project aimed to identify territorial management models in mountain areas and transferable success factors through three themes:

- 1/ The improvement of services in mountain areas
- 2/ The role of territorial authorities in the development and promotion of resources and mountain quality products;
- 3/ Managing the fragile mountain landscape, rural

environment and natural resources.

The final conference of the project brings all these themes together for discussion, conclusions and recommendation under the heading of “Creating success together”. This is a newsletter summarising the discussions at the final conference held in Turin, 8-9 March 2007 that gathered a varied crowd of over 150 participants from local, regional, national and European organisations all over Europe.



Frank GASKELL, President of Euromontana

Euromountains.net pointing towards the key issues for European mountains – Euromontana willing to take the challenge

We live in an age where the European mountain areas face huge challenges. The evidence of climate change that will have an important economic and environmental effect on the mountain is accumulating. There is an ongoing polarisation of the economic activity, strengthened by a general policy focus on areas of opportunity rather than areas of need and seeing urban areas as vectors of rural development when this is often not possible. The European regulations on labelling, food safety and transhumance are often insensitive to the mountain needs and traditions. The mountain areas need integrated development instead of an artificial conflict between environment and economic development. Statistical analysis of the mountain economic social or environmental conditions will not be adequate or relevant until the focus of data collection is refined to truly fit mountain areas.

However, mountain areas should not, and need not be regarded as a burden on the better-off regions; they have huge opportunities in terms of the reputation, quality and purity of their products and in terms of the potential for innovation in their develop-

ment and in servicing their populations. Thanks to the concerted activity of mountain people and the strength of their argument there are special provisions in the European policies for mountain areas, for example in the state aid regulations and the Structural Funds. Currently we are pressing for a Green Paper on the future of the European mountain areas. The inevitable reform of the Common Agriculture policy – whenever it happens - can be not only a threat, but also an opportunity for mountain areas if their externalities are recognised and valued correctly. Mountains can also play a powerful geo-political role in Europe being perhaps the single physical – and social and cultural – factor that has the potential to bind north and south, centre and periphery of Europe. Mountains illustrate the true meaning of the motto of the European Union ‘unity in diversity’. Finally, mountain people are perhaps the strongest and resilient of populations in Europe.

The Euromountains.net Interreg IIC project has been a powerful exercise because it took a practical look at three major fields of activity that can provide the means to address the challenges

and opportunities I have mentioned: services, quality products and resources and land management. But we must ask the right questions, make the right diagnosis, propose the right recommendations and convince the rest of Europe. The project has provided further evidence of how Euromontana’s vision of self-sustaining justly rewarded mountain Europe can be realised by:

- Achieving a realistic delivery level of the universal access to services
- Freeing mountain areas to exploit their rare comparative advantage in the field of local products
- Recognising the value of positive externalities

“We the mountain areas have a massive responsibility of ensuring the survival of our unique mountain communities to the next generations. With our world class products this should be an achievable goal.”

Peter Mehlbye, Director, ESPON Programme

Key messages from the ESPON Programme: Recognising trends in the European mountains

Mr Mehlbye presented some territorial trends that are in particular relevant to the European mountain areas from the ESPON, the European Spatial Planning Observation Network, point of view. He also mentioned that

ESPON has not done a specific mountain study so far, something that could be envisaged in cooperation with DG Regio if they also showed interest. Further the mountain regions could cooperate with ESPON under the new

Priority 2: Targeted analysis based on user demands strand of the programme.

The full presentation is available at the www.euromountains.net

Moray Gilland, DG Regional Policy

Onwards and Upwards: The Future of Interregional Co-operation INTERREG IVC

On the Final Conference of the Euromountains.net project Mr. Moray Gilland from DG Regional Policy provided a presentation on the latest information concerning the new Structural Funds and the INTERREG IVC programme.

The Structural Funds Policies 2007 – 2013 will focus on three objectives: Convergence; Competitiveness and Employment; and European Territorial Co-operation.

Concerning the European Territorial Co-operation, he highlighted that:

- It is an Objective in its own right
- Increased funding
- Improved legal framework

Concerning the Interregional co-operation in Convergence and Competitiveness programmes, he said that:

- Specific priority for interregional cooperation can be included in the Convergence and Competitiveness programmes
- Will allow co-operation between Convergence and/or Competitiveness regions
- Interregional co-operation covers topics of the regional programmes concerned
- Each project partner funds his own activities from his own programme
- Aim = enriching the implementation of the regional programmes

Mr. Gilland referred to the Interregional Co-operation in the

INTERREG IVC programme and the novelties that it will bring:

- €321mil ERDF in one single programme
- One Managing Authority: Conseil Régional Nord-Pas de Calais – Lille (F)
- Four Information Points in Rostock, Katowice, Valencia and Lille
- Focus on Lisbon and Gothenburg agenda
- Whole EU territory is eligible
- Rate of assistance up to 75 -85%.

The aims of INTERREG IVC will be:

- to improve the effectiveness of regional development policies and contribute to economic modernisation
- to contribute to the Union's strategy for growth and jobs. As such the programme is an important instrument for the implementation of the EU initiative Regions for Economic Change (RFEC)

Within the INTERREG IVC there will be two types of operations:

1. Types of operations – “Regional Initiatives”
 - Flexibility regarding the types of operations
 - Co-operation can still vary in intensity (from light networking to mini-programmes)
 - Priority 1: Innovation and the knowledge economy (Research, technology and development; Information society; Entrepreneurship, SMEs and economic sectorial development; Employment, human resources and edu-

cation)

- Priority 2: Environment and risk prevention (Energy and sustainable public transport; Biodiversity and preservation of natural heritage; Natural and technological risks; Water & waste management; Cultural heritage)

2. Types of operations – “Capitalisation / the Fast Track option”

- The broader context: Regions for Economic Change Initiative
- Expected results: Transfer of good practice identified in regional networks to the Convergence and Competitiveness programmes for implementation
- List of 30 themes
- Enhanced Communication effort

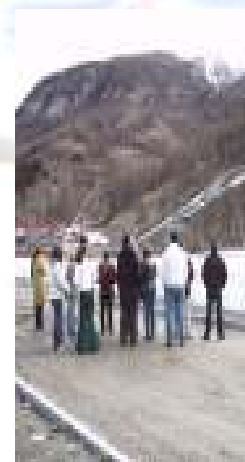
Since the INTERREG IVC programme is still in programming phase, the estimated time frame is as follows:

- March 2007: submission of Operational Programme to the Commission
- Summer 2007: approval of the Programme by the EC
- September 2007: Start of programme implementation

The slides of Mr. Gilland presentation are available at:

<http://www.euromountains.net>

http://www.interreg3c.net/web/fic_en



Study visit at the Olympic installations on 10 March



Jean-Michel COURADES, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

Mr. Courades explained some Community guidelines:

Axis 1: the priorities of knowledge transfer and innovation in the food chain and focus on priority sectors for investment in physical and human capital.

Axis 2: three EU level priority areas: biodiversity and preservation of high nature value farming and forestry systems, water, and climate change.

Axis 3: the overarching priority of the creation of employment opportunities in the fields of diversification and quality of life.

Axis 4 (Leader): the priority of improving governance and mobilizing the endogenous development potential of rural areas.

Mr. Courades recommended that the Member States ensure maximum synergies between and within the axes and avoid potential contradictions. The Commission also hopes for reflection on how other EU level strategies can be taken into account.

The Commission had by the end of January received about 25 of the 100 rural development programmes. Although Mr. Courades said it is too early to draw proper conclusions, it looks like:

- The vision is still concentrated on farmers rather than a territorial approach
- There seems to be a trend in delegating the programme

implementation to sub-regional level, in particular in axis 2 and 4

- Few particularities such as mountain areas seem to have been taken into consideration
- There seems to be less concentration on job creation than hoped
- The programmes seem to be supporting more the strong than weak rural areas
- Environment is still considered in a very defensive way.

The slides of Mr. Courades' presentation are available at:

www.euromountains.net

Finding a common ground all over Europe – the round table discussion

The round-table of decision-makers gathered a diverse crowd from Norway to Portugal and Italy, Scotland to France to discuss the project recommendations.

The group saw many similarities in the challenges in the mountain areas all over Europe. The population in mountain areas is decreasing and aging, in some areas reinforced by an economic growth such as Norway or by an imbalance between development efforts between the inland and coastal areas as in Portugal.



Where the population is not decreasing such as in some Alpine areas the demography is changing. As a consequence the public services are being threatened.

According to the Italian Member of the European Parliament Gianluca Susta "the main issue for the mountain areas now are the lacking services". Poor levels of services give people another reason to move away from the mountain areas. Postal offices are being closed everywhere. "Obviously we cannot apply the same model to services in the mountain as in urban areas", says Lido Riba, from UNCEM, the Association of the Italian Mountain Municipalities, "we need to adapt our models to local conditions". There needs to be a correct mix of costs and services closer to the citizens in the mountain areas.



Norwegian mountain regions have traditionally had a very good level of services: "health care in some rural areas is better than in cities", according to Arne Vinje from the Vinje municipality. However, also in Norway



small local hospitals are closing down and new regional organisations have to be established to run hospital services. Services are a central issue for the Val d'Aosta region in Italy that has tried to solve the problems caused by for example the discrepancy between privatisation and the need to monitor the services by decentralising.

The panellists agree that there is a gap in mountain policies and need for new approaches. The policies have to be more integrated and learn from the past. Sometimes it seemed for example that in the mountain energy sector lack of planning led to environmental disasters, loss of landscape and hence ruined tourism potential. Yet, renewable energies can be a great opportunity for mountain areas, as demonstrated by the Alto Tamega experience in Portugal with dams and windmills.

Another approach could be based on new kinds of products, quality products, traditional products, or short-circuit products that the European consumers with increasing purchasing power look for. The European Charter for Mountain Food Products works in the philosophy of adding value in the mountain areas. As Arne Vinje put it: "Mountain areas are rich in resources but they are used as raw materials, so that the added value leaves the mountains. This is a colonial pattern leading to poverty that needs to be changed". The European agriculture policy has partly helped to sustain the mountain farming so that we still have these kinds of products available, but now with the single farm payments there is a risk that some of the local production disappears or gets diluted.

Mountain areas need to in particular develop the research and knowledge resources. There is an abundance of local knowledge in mountain areas, but often it does not get utilised and is in risk of disappearing. This local knowledge needs to be combined to specialist knowledge to add value to both. Possibilities for bridging the digital divide through proper information infrastructure, information, training, and possibilities in long distance need to be developed.

Finally the mountain areas need to develop new forms of participative local governance and change the vertical approach. Val d'Aosta has good experiences of bottom-up local federalism. We have "finally overcome the myth of urbanisation and industrialisation" as described by Gianluca Susta. The relationship between the town and mountains is no longer a conflict but an opportunity for both.

Some areas such a Rhône-Alpes in France have taken a specific approach to their mountain areas, after an analysis and prioritisation of the different areas, specific policies have been devised for the mountains which account for two thirds of the regions surface.

The panellists agree that interregional cooperation seems to have contributed to development in the mountain areas. It has provided access not only to additional funding but also to learning by participating, new contacts and even new ways of influencing policies at the European but also national and regional levels. Euroregions could be a way to tackle larger

issues such as climate change and transport in a larger scale.

Commitment of all levels, public and private, European, national and regional is needed to bring the European mountain regions forward. We need to think in an entrepreneurial spirit and build synergies between different initiatives. Finally, the mountain lobby needs to gain an even stronger voice.

Moderated by Drew MacFarlane Slack, Highland Council and Member of the Board, Euromontana, with the participation of: Gianluca Susta, member of the European Parliament, Italy; Lido Riba, President of the UNCEM Piemonte delegation, Italy; Francisco Tavares, President of ADRAT, Portugal; Claudio Brédy, Mayor and chief of the community policies service, Valle d'Aosta, Italy; Arne Vinje, Mayor of Vinje, Telemark, Norway; Marco Bellion, member of the Piemonte regional council, Italy; François Trussion, Mission Montagne, Région de Rhone-Alpes, France.



Study visit at Usseaux on 10 March

Workshops

1. FOSTERING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Workshop chaired by: Emmanuel Mingasson, SUACI – France; and Jean-Claude Jauneau, ISARA-Lyon – France

The workshop discussed about the existing and possible new partnerships; who and how to be involved in partnerships; the possibilities they offer in transfer of knowledge, information and viewpoints; and the good relationship within partnerships.

The participants presented their views and provided some local examples.

The participants identified many types of partnerships:

- local, close to the ground
- niche projects
- experimentation, laboratory

- institutional
- PPP; development agencies
- different levels: local to international
- comparison with the LEADER approach may be worthwhile

2. LINKS BETWEEN MOUNTAIN AND LOWLAND AREAS; ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Workshop chaired by: Elena Di Bella, Province of Turin - Italy; and Becky Shaw, Scottish Crofting Federation - Scotland

The workshop discussed about the linkages between mountains and lowlands in relation to services provided by mountains (recreation, tourism, quality of life and environmental services) and towns (financial, cultural, medical, education, trade, employment, common interests and identity).

The participants presented their views and provided some local examples.

The conclusions of the workshop

were that the focus should be on common interests:

- municipalities with similar characteristics and needs
- regional (mountain) networks shared identities based on human, cultural, environmental resources & values

Other recommendations were made in the line of linkages in SLOT regions:

- an effective SLOT approach should be based on common

problems, needs, interests of mountain and lowland / urban people

- functioning networks; which are multiple & overlapping
- common interests may be sectoral, e.g. tourism, food, protection from natural hazards
- the SLOT approach may work better where population centres (large to small) are close to mountains

3. AVOIDING DEVELOPMENT VS. CONSERVATION CONFLICTS; INTEGRATING INTERESTS

Workshop chaired by: Cécile Levret, Euromontana; and Dave Roberts, Highland Council – Scotland

The workshop discussed about the conflicting environmental and development interests of the wider public and the local/regional needs. Special accent was given to finding a balance between these interests; integrated approach to the issues; and finding the common ground to

resolve issues.

The participants presented their views and provided some local examples. Propositions on management were made, landscape management is more complex than land management and it should focus on people:

Local people manage landscape and should benefit from decisions and investments

Communication is essential to: identify and focus on community needs; highlight common interests; achieve consensus on local/national issues; find an integrated approach.

4. ENSURING CAPACITY IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATIONS

Workshop chaired by: Emmanuel Mingasson, SUACI - France; and Jean-Claude Jauneau, ISARA-Lyon – France

The workshop discussed about the involvement of territorial authorities in development and implementation of projects; the limitations in capacities of local administrations (development, support, monitoring and evaluation).

The participants presented their views and provided some local examples.

It was concluded that the best way to ensure capacity in local administrations is through successful partnerships, on which several factors were identified:

- reciprocity between local authorities, governments, other stakeholders
- common interests:
- project facilitator

- communication
- general (not only technical) - training & education
- at the end of the project: data, recommendations for future use and for comparison purposes



5. FOCUSING ON THE LONG TERM: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY DURING AND BEYOND PROJECTS

Workshop chaired by: Elena Di Bella, Province of Turin - Italy; and Becky Shaw, Scottish Crofting Federation - Scotland

The workshop discussed about the funding mechanisms; funding sources; and the best methods to ensure sustainability of funding, their responsibility, accountability and complementary benefits.

Ideas for possible themes for collaborative projects were made during this session:

- environmental services (& climate change)
- risk and hazard prevention (& urban-

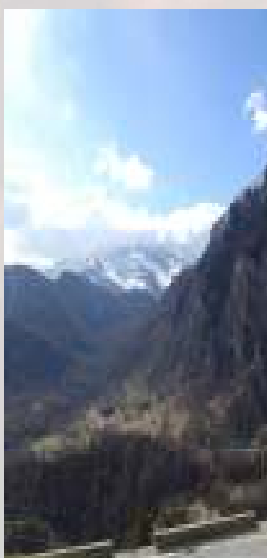
- mountain linkages)
- waste treatment
- development of marginal areas/agrotourism
- share methodologies and experiences
- 'good practice bank'

Further results were the conclusions on different types of added value that projects can provide:

- Economic: more funds, more financial and material resources
- Institutional: capacity building, complementarity
- Policy: new projects, new policies
- Socio-cultural: peace in Europe

6. RECOGNISING MOUNTAIN NEEDS, AND FOSTERING MOUNTAIN KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

Workshop chaired by: Cécile Levret, Euromontana; and Gordon Summers, Highland Council – Scotland



The workshop discussed about the needs of mountain areas and people; changes that occur in mountain regions; local mountain innovations; and local and scientific knowledge of mountain regions.

The participants presented their views and provided some local examples.

Conclusions were made in the area of mountain research:

- needs to be linked to local knowledge, expertise,

strengths, opportunities (especially for employment)

- should provide information: to evaluate changes over time, environment, economy, population, etc.
- mountain peoples' aspirations
- to clarify mountain realities and specificities
- to inform policy-makers and visitors

Further needs of mountain regions were identified in support and establishment of research and further / higher education structures:

- to support training
- traditional and new sectors
- to encourage people to stay
- long-term employment, non traditional employment
- to support sustainable development: economic, cultural, social

Proposals for future projects / initiatives

The Euromountains.net Interreg IIIIC project led by the Province of Trento and Ilaria Goio from the Trento University undertook a questionnaire on the networking activities within the current project and some options for further cooperation between partners. The partners also met in Milan in February specifically on future projects.

Among the ideas to reinforce cooperation in the future the partners mentioned having more targeted strategic objectives of the project the next time, taking the next step from the good practices to pilot projects and from exchanges to innovation.

The partners came up with several ideas for continued cooperation in the

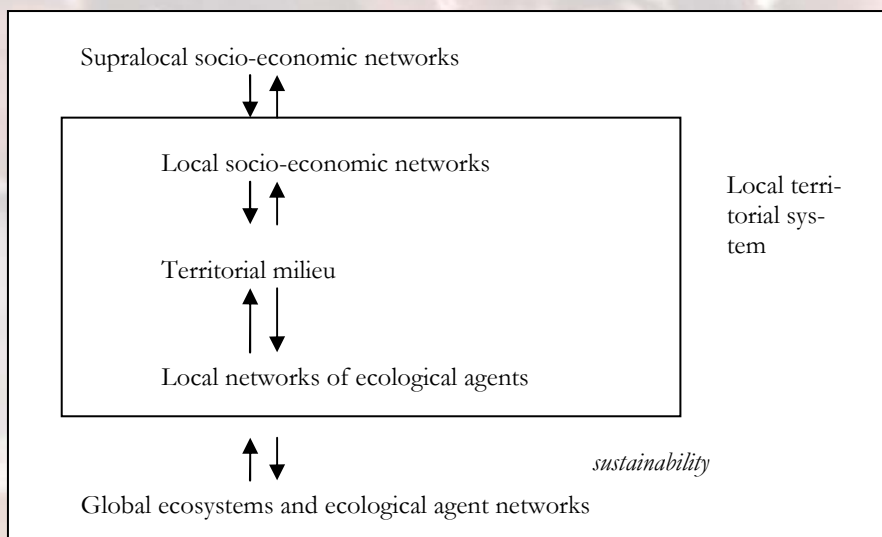
fields of land management, tourism, in particular linked to mountain products, diversification etc. Euromontana would take upon the task of building synergies among the possible future projects within Interreg IVA and B and making sure at least one of the themes was followed up by also a larger Interreg IVC project application.

Study cases

The SLoT model for local development of the mountain areas

Federica Corrado and Marco Santangelo, Dipartimento Interateneo Territorio, Politecnico e Università di Torino, Italy

The SLoT model for local development of the mountain areas



The SLoT (sustainable local territorial systems) model describes a system that stimulated with governance actions can be auto-representative, auto-planning and auto-organising.

Viande de Maurienne project

Région Rhône Alpes



The Maurienne Valley is a long Alpine valley where altitude varies from a maximum of 3200 m. to a minimum of 300 m. The project stakeholders are the Association of butchers and farmers of the Maurienne Valley, which is small food supply chain including 15 butchers, a maximum of 500 farms and handles limited small volumes (200 tons / year).

The origin of this project was the closing of some small local slaughter houses,

which provoked the mobilisation of farmers, butchers and local authorities.

The aims of the projects are: the creation of a slaughter house and to develop sales in a short delivery chain to the consumers.

Several actions were carried out to implement the project, such as advertising the project, coordination between the activities and construction of slaughterhouses.

Interventions:

- In the slaughterhouse:

U.E.	Etat	Conseil général (Nuts 3)	Autofinancement (Communes) (Nuts 5)
6 %	25 %	22 %	47 %

- In the short delivery chain:

U.E.	Région Rhône- Alpes (Nuts 2)	Autofinancement (G.D.A.)
37 %	27 %	36 %

At the end, two objectives have been partly achieved: the short delivery chain organisation and the association between producers and butchers. The objective of ensuring a supply of quality local meat for the butchers was insufficiently achieved. Nevertheless, effectiveness of the subsidies and good use of the different funds has been demonstrated.

As final results, we found that a regular control of the actions implemented and an analysis of the quality of the results and of the measures was somewhat lacking. Also more discussions between the different territorial authorities supporting the project should have been arranged.

Development vs. conservation - balance through locally based management?

Oppland County Council

The study area was the Rondane massif which is characterized by a fragile mountain eco-system, in which the wild reindeer is the main focus. It is a popular recreation area, and has a large potential for development of second homes.

Development of second homes in Rondane had of course some pros and cons which were studied; there is the importance for the local economy, but on the other hand the second homes generate increased traffic into wild reindeer habitat.

The wild reindeer habitat is protected by two acts: the Nature Conservation Act, which is strict and offers very limited possibilities for development and the Planning and Building Act. Management should be based on both, but in this case mainly the Planning and Building Act has been applied.

The regional plan has a partial success: the reindeer herd is still a vital one and the plan has allowed for economic exploitation of the area. Nevertheless, the municipalities have in varying degrees for committed themselves to preserve the habitat of the wild reindeer and there is an uneven distribution between western and eastern parts of the planning area and municipalities where second homes have been developed.

New development of second homes has been restricted and almost no new development within core area is allowed. Moreover, new development has been concentrated into existing



development areas and in many municipality plans the number of second homes have been reduced through the planning process.

However, the municipalities expect to get a new development quota by revision of the municipality plans (after 4-10 years), which demonstrates that the pace of new developments has slowed down, but continues.



Thomas Egger, Treasurer of Euromontana and Director of SAB, Switzerland

“Mountain areas face a variety of challenges such as the climate change that forces ski-stations at lower altitudes to close down, postal offices, and railway and bus lines in sparsely populated areas being terminated. Although these are common problems they accumulate at a local level and the stakeholders may have the impression that a particular problem is only a problem for them. Projects like Euromountains.net can help exchange experiences on how to deal with common mountain challenges. In that respect I feel that Euromountains.net was a great success.

Organisations such as Euromontana and the regional authorities do not only have the task to react to challenges. We should be proactive, identify upcoming challenges and find ways of dealing with them. What was also shown in the Euromountains.net was that for example the proposed new postal services directive will put the delivery of postal services in rural areas under an even stronger pressure. Financial

restrictions of national and regional authorities will further endanger public transports.

These developments should encourage us to work on two levels: the political and the project level. Euromontana must use its unique network and formulate political recommendations. In parallel, we must search for innovative, consumer-adapted ways of supplying services in the affected regions. We should build value-added chains etc. Or in short: we must innovate. The final report on Euromountains.net gives us quite some hints in this respect and it deserves a profound analysis.

This report comes at a very important moment. 1) We are currently in discussion with the

European Commission on a new Green paper on mountains. 2) The European Ministers for spatial planning are preparing a “Territorial Agenda”. This follow-up to the European Spatial Development Perspective will be adopted by the ministers in Leipzig in May 2007. The agenda builds on a polycentric approach, where urban areas play a crucial role. We have a major role play in this process and a duty to bring in our knowledge on rural and mountain areas.

We should not get stuck on our daily problems and be only reactive. We should look into the future and adapt a proactive innovative approach so that we can continue to build on our own future on our own mountain areas.”



Tor Bremer, Vice-President of Euromontana, Sogn og Fjordane County Council, Norway

“...The partners of the Euromountains.net project will hopefully take advantage of the findings of the project and find ways of taking the work further. There is a need to go into more detail in the development issues, to involve the grass-root level and thus produce more concrete outputs. There are also issues that could be followed-up by analyses – contributing both to the planned Green Paper on mountain areas and to the future European spatial planning.

Euromontana for its part will further discuss the recommendations of the project. We will find ways of taking the different recommendations further in our work. We will promote the main ideas from the project in different lobbying actions – the project being of special importance for our contributions to the future Green Paper. We will back project initiatives that take further the work started in the Euromountains.net. Euromontana will play a role in the future mountain related projects.

I personally learned a lot from the way the project succeeded in combining the thematic development work with related political issues. Coming from a non-EU member state I would also like to underline the importance of the political outcomes of the project for the Norwegian partners. The European policy has a direct effect also on Norway as an EEA member.”

The final report of the Euromountain.net project will be available shortly in EN/FR/IT/ES/PT/NO/DE.
 The synthesis of the three themes and the regional reports are available at www.euromountains.net



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<p>ADRAT Associação de Desenvolvimento da Região do Alto Tâmega Alto Tâmega Portugal</p>	<p>Diputación de Palencia Castilla y León Spain</p>	<p>The Highland Council Highlands UK</p>	<p>Provincia di Torino Assessorato all'Agricoltura e Montagna Piemonte Italy</p>	<p>Provincia Autonoma di Trento Assessorato alla programmazione ricerca ed innovazione Trentino Italy</p>	<p>Oppland fylkeskommune Oppland County Council Norway</p>	<p>Sogn og Fjordane fylkeskommune Sogn og Fjordane County Council Norway</p>

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