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YOUTH IN MOUNTAINS

SUMMARY OF THE PRELIMINARY RESEARCH CARRIED OUT BY EUROMONTANA

FOR THE VIIITH EUROPEAN MOUNTAIN
CONVENTION

**YOUTH TO THE TOP:
THE MOUNTAIN PATH TO THE FUTURE!**
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 **EUROMONTANA**

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Attracting young people: a strategic issue for mountain regions

Mountain young people, like all young people, everywhere in Europe, dream of broader horizons, of travelling, of dialogue and of a modern lifestyle. They want to be connected to the world. They also want to have a job they like, to be able to change jobs if they want to, and be able to undertake training. While traditional job sectors still attract some young people, many also want to be able to work in industry and services. They are worried about finding a job, especially in the troubled times we are going through now. And youth unemployment figures in the various European countries prove them right.

But their career prospects are by no means their only concern. Their quality of life, the possibility to do sport, relax, take part in cultural activities, and especially the quality of their relationships with the communities to which they belong are major considerations in their plans for life. For this reason, the majority of young people who live in mountain areas are happy about the idea of staying there to live and work. And that's good news! But fear of not finding the training courses and jobs they want in the mountains makes them leave for the agglomerations where universities are concentrated, and they do not always come back.

Can young people satisfy their aspirations if they stay in the mountains? Or only by leaving the mountains for a few years then coming back, with experience and new skills, to put their plans for life into action? What sectors do they find attractive? What are the barriers that prevent them from coming to settle and stay in the mountains?

To prepare for this VIIIth European Mountain Convention, we have asked young people about their hopes and aspirations with regard to mountain regions, thus converging with the Rhône-Alpes Region initiative "Mountain 2040", which has drawn from dialogue with young people elements to build the future. We also explored the opportunities that European policies can open up for young people, supplementing the national and regional policies we implement in our regions.

We hope this summary of our preliminary research, undertaken during several months with our partners from European mountains, will provide a useful basis for debate at the VIIIth European Mountain Convention, hosted, for this 2012 edition by the City of Chambéry (Savoie).

André Marcon
President, EUROMONTANA

Jean-Jack Queyranne
President, Rhône-Alpes Region

INTRODUCTION

For the purposes of this convention, we have taken "young people" to mean people under the age of 30. Interaction with children under the age of 18 implies conducting surveys in schools. Surveys of this type were carried out under the INTERREG IVC PADIMA project. The results were presented in the project's final report, which is also accessible within the framework of the conference. For the rest of the preliminary surveys, we focused on young people between the ages of 18 and 30, with whom we tried to interact online through social networks and a survey. A blog was set up on youth in mountain areas, in English, French and Italian. It was visited by 2,079 readers over the summer of 2012. This document draws on articles written for the blog. An online survey was also set up for young people to complete. Part 1 of this document sums up the main results of the survey. Part 2 takes an initial look at how European youth programmes might meet young people's expectations.

1 | WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS? ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The online survey set out to gain a better understanding of what young people (between the age of 18 and 30) expected in terms of employment, settlement and short and long-term development in mountain regions.

The people polled were aged between 18 and 30, and came from a wide variety of educational backgrounds and professional categories (students in upper-secondary school and higher education, engineer, policy maker, soldier, farmer, ski instructor, local government employee, NGO employee, medical profession, business studies, etc.). Because the people polled were not evenly distributed geographically, the survey results cannot be considered fully representative.

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO SPEAK:	
French	59
English	11
Italian	8
Romanian	3
Norwegian	1
Total	81

Even so, the survey has returned an interesting and relevant sample of young people's varied expectations for our mountain regions.

The majority of the respondents are young Europeans, and they do not speak the same languages. These young people also come from different mountain ranges, with different characteristics, so their expectations naturally differ sometimes. Even so, there are some common points, which we have tried to bring out in the table below.

Similarities = expectations	Differences = barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The young people's motivations are the same, wherever they live (Alps, Carpathians, etc.): the setting, the quality of life, and the fact of being close to loved ones and the people they mix with every day. These are essential factors, and the mountain's main draw cards as a place for living and working. ▶ In the Carpathians and the Alps alike, there is the same desire to protect the mountains from galloping urbanisation. People want it to be a lively place to live and work, with amenities, service infrastructures and jobs - not a carbon copy of the urban model of business, property or even tourist development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The barriers that young people encounter vary with the mountain range: people's expectations regarding the development of personal services are not the same in the Carpathians as in the Alps, for example. ▶ Young people in the Carpathians think that there is insufficient access to health care and transport. In the Alps, on the other hand, they think there is sufficient public transport for leisure purposes but not for commuting to school or work. Internet access is considered overall satisfactory in the Alps, but insufficient in the Carpathians. ▶ Whereas people living in the Alps see the future in terms of "sustainable, environmentally-friendly development", people living on mountain ranges with fewer infrastructures (e.g. the Carpathians) stress the importance of not copying a development model based on overly large-scale developments that do not blend into the landscape (as for mass tourism).

1. QUALITY OF LIFE: THE MAIN MOTIVATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO LIVE IN MOUNTAIN AREAS

The main reason why young people want to live in the mountains is the quality of life. They all stress the importance of the natural setting and *"the atmosphere, which is warmer than in town"* in their decision. The family circle and loved ones, when they live in the mountains, are also a powerful motivation for young people to stay there. Others readily acknowledge that, for them, going to live in the mountains would be like going back to where they grew up - which is a powerful motivation.

2. THE DIFFICULTY OF FINDING WORK: THE MAIN BARRIER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WANTING TO SETTLE IN THE MOUNTAINS

The barriers most frequently cited by young people are the lack of job offers, the lack of specialised training courses for finding work in mountain areas, and the general lack of vitality. Most of them (nearly 80%) would be tempted to go and work in the mountains if they were given the opportunity, which corroborates the findings of the PADIMA project.

However many do not find any job offers that match their profile, and/or cannot see any compatibility with their sector. When asked *"What are the barriers to your finding work in the mountains?"*, the young people replied, for example, *"What work can you get with an*

What young people say
"Mi piacerebbe lavorare e vivere in montagna ma le opportunità per un laureato in economia sono scarse"

engineering degree?" "There are no research jobs in the mountains", "My current job is not available in the mountains", "It's difficult to find jobs that match my profile in the mountains", "I'd like to work in the mountains, but there are very few openings for economics graduates." A young pharmacy student in Romania said it was hard to find work. In the artistic professions, respondents said there were virtually no jobs at all.

What young people say
"– Agent de vanzari in domeniul farmaceutic.
– Aveti dificultati in a gasi un loc de munca ?
– Da"

For others, the main concern was job security: it is very difficult to find a steady, long-term job and the competition is stiff. A few more quotes for the survey: *"buoyant industry, but very few open-ended contracts", "it is difficult to work in the mountains because there are a lot of applicants for each job and you have to have very good training to be able to shoulder the responsibility".*

There are other sectors, though, where young people think it is easy to find work, such as jobs in the leisure industry or jobs specialised in the mountains.

3. SETTING UP YOUR OWN BUSINESS: AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION TO OFFSET THE JOB SHORTAGE

Setting up your own business is often seen as an alternative to the shortage of jobs in your field. One young person said, for example, *"There aren't many jobs for electronics engineers in the mountains. The only possibility is to set up my own business, but that takes commitment".*

Some young people are tempted to set up their own business, but they run into obstacles and it means taking a big risk in terms of market possibilities. One young person said, for example, that he wanted to work as a professional photographer, but was afraid it would be hard to offer his customers a full service. He was also afraid there would not be enough demand.

What young people say
"Vorrei lavorare come fotografo professionista, mi piacerebbe lavorare in montagna [...] ma troverei difficoltà a mettermi in contactto e offrire un servizio completo ai clienti"

Those who have no hesitations at all are the young people who want to enter segments that are already well-established in the mountains, such as tourist facilities, sport, or civil engineering. *"Might start my own business, but only after getting experience in my current job: civil engineering, preferably projects in the mountains."*

4. YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPECTATIONS AND VISIONS FOR OUR MOUNTAINS

Most of the young people who took the survey are in favour of concerted, integrated development of mountain areas. They do not want to repeat the land-development schemes that resulted in very artificially mapped out areas, with dense housing, mass tourism and so on. For most of them, the ideal is *"a little village with everything we need in it", or "a place that is protected by the law and the authorities; Internet and a minimum of infrastructure is a must-have for any mountain village".*

What young people say
"A place that is protected by the law and the authorities. Internet and a minimum of infrastructure : it is a must have for any mountain village"

The young people say how important it is to develop soft modes of transport in the mountains. When asked "If you can and would like to do so, write a few lines describing the ideal mountain setting in which you would like to live in 2020", the young people replied "more soft, accessible transport", "it is a place where you can't go by car, you should deserve to go on a summit, moreover it is beautiful and I feel good there and it is a good place to train", "[...] we could ban cars (or restrict their use to a few times a month)".

For the future development of mountain regions, young people are more in favour of having a number of centres, with business fairly distributed among them, rather than only one. They want to maintain the idea of the mountains being "in contact with the valley", "a place that is accessible by a well-maintained road, not far from a large town (above Grenoble, for example), half way between living in the wild and town life"). Towns are business centres that are interesting from time to time, if you need something in particular. The same idea can be found in health care services. In areas that are readily accessible, such as the Northern Alps, young people do not feel the need to intensively develop access to health care in the mountains. The situation is different in isolated, hard-to-reach areas, where being a long way from health care centres can represent a real risk. Young people are also in favour of striking a balance between natural areas and developed areas: "dynamic mountains in a number of well-defined sectors, while keeping some mountain ranges untouched and natural by striking a balance in the distribution of development sectors".

What young people say

"It is a place where you can't go by car, you should deserve to go on a summit, moreover it is beautiful and i feel good there and it is a good place to train"

To sum up, the vision that young people would overwhelmingly support for mountain regions in the future could be described as: "Mountain regions that remain true to their identity, their environment and their culture, and that know how to promote it while at the same time developing coordinated, compatible access to new infrastructures, jobs, health care and so on" (a student in Toulouse).

5. ANY IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE??

The young people mention modern business sectors that would fit in well in the mountains and where the mountains would have a competitive edge. For instance one young person said: "There are no job offers for computer engineers in the mountains. And yet, in my line of work, we work on supercomputers that have to be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms. It would make more sense to install these info centres in high, cool locations instead of cities...".

More broadly speaking, they like to imagine innovative development models. "If we want jobs, cultural diversity, housing and culture that don't destroy the environment and are based on non-polluting, sustainable models, the only way to do it might be an "eco-city", where all sorts of skills would be needed to make everything work: architects, teachers, doctors, farmers, shopkeepers, tradesmen, etc. And the mountains would be the perfect spot for launching an experimental eco-city [...] People who work, live or sleep up there could be given subsidies in the form of tax breaks, subsidised housing, etc. Designing such a city alone would give work to a wide variety of people [...]".

CONCLUSION:

The online survey gave us insights into young people's needs and expectations for the future of mountain regions. Some EU policies can help meet their needs by giving them tools for putting their projects into action. We therefore carried out an analysis of these tools, which is presented in the next section.

2I HOW CAN WE MAKE MOUNTAIN AREAS MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE? SNAPSHOT OF EU YOUTH POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

This document overviews EU policies from the 2007-2013 programming period aimed more specifically at young people. Since the content of EU programmes for 2014-2020 has not yet been defined, we have not been able to discuss them here. We will however sometimes refer to planned changes for the period to come.

This document is intended to be a snapshot of the policies provided for youth, with a view to finding out what might be useful to young people now and what could be improved in the near future. We have written this document with two audiences in mind: young people who live in or would like to live in mountain areas, and the administrative and political stakeholders who today create the policy framework and programmes for young people.

The aim is not to be exhaustive but to **provide an overview of the potential and the possibilities opened up by the EU for young people living in the mountains**. This includes the **range of training options available, job prospects and the general attractiveness of the regions**.

What resources does the EU provide to help young people living in mountain regions, or wanting to set up a business there, fit into the social and economic fabric? What opportunities are they given in terms of carrying out their projects for life? We hope this document will provide some ideas for the future.

I. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

In all, 85.5% of the young people who did the online survey thought that there were not enough specialised training courses for finding work in the mountains.

Study and work are generally the main factors influencing young people's decision to go and live in a particular location: 85.6% of the young people polled who do not live in the mountains acknowledge that work and study are barriers that stop them from going to live there.

A competitive range of educational and training options for the inhabitants of mountain regions is a key factor for making these regions more attractive and diversifying their economy. At European level, stakeholders across the border agree that the European economy of tomorrow will be a knowledge economy. This means that, **in the future, there will be growing demand for increasingly qualified and readily employable people with specific skills**. The Europe 2020 strategy sets a target of lowering school drop-out rates and raising the percentage of 30 to 34-year-old tertiary graduates to 40%. The PADIMA project showed that the number of highly-qualified people was lower in the mountains than in the plains, and that people who wanted to obtain qualifications had to leave mountain areas to do so.

It is vital therefore to offer young people high-quality training options in the mountains so they are not obliged to leave for more attractive training elsewhere. **It is also important that the training options available in the mountains can guarantee young people of finding work locally**, since this is a crucial point for ensuring that our mountains are dynamic, attractive locations in the future.

The geographic location of universities and training centres is largely the responsibility of States and regions. However many EU programmes are aimed at promoting **training and knowledge-building** through **exchanges and intercultural dialogue**. They span a wide range of profiles, from school pupils to young people already in employment. At present there are no EU programmes aimed specifically at mountain regions. Even so, the various existing programmes can make a useful contribution to developing mountain regions.

What EU strategies for education and training could be of use to young people in the mountains?

► 1. The lifelong learning programme: ensuring high-quality training options in the mountains

The European Union encourages young people to learn new skills by facilitating their mobility within Europe. One such initiative is the Erasmus lifelong learning sub-programme. Designed for young higher-education students, it helps them do part of their university course in a different European university.

Comenius, another lifelong learning sub-programme, is designed for school pupils. Aimed at strengthening the European dimension of pre-school, primary and secondary education, it facilitates the mobility within Europe of both pupils and teachers, and the development of skills. To achieve this, it links up 11,000 schools and 850,000 pupils and teachers, who are invited to develop a common European project. The programme also fosters collaboration to improve teaching.

The total 2007-2013 budget allocated to the lifelong learning programme comes to €6.97 billion, of which 40% is set aside for Erasmus and 13% for Comenius.

What are the potential benefits for mountain areas?

To begin with, mountain schools' involvement in these programmes would appear to be a significant learning aid. Secondly, even though it is clearly important to prevent young people leaving the mountains "for good" and do more to encourage them to stay, they obviously have to be **allowed to acquire the qualifications they need to enter the workforce**. Insofar as the lifelong learning programme involves only temporary mobility, it can help young people go and train abroad but does not prevent them from returning to the mountains after their stay, providing they can find a suitable job. The study carried out as part of the INTERREG IVC PADIMA project (Policies Against Depopulation in Mountain Areas) showed that **the majority of young people living in the mountains hope to stay and work there once they have finished studying**. The problem, therefore, lies not in mountain areas' image but in the lack of training options and job prospects for young people in the mountains.

So broadening the range of training options and facilitating the mobility of young Europeans could be very productive for mountain areas, especially if they want to attract other young people not originally from these areas. Universities and schools in mountain areas **can take advantage of this temporary mobility to get known and attract future students** who might not otherwise have come to the region without the opportunity offered by the exchange. Many studies show that students often look for work close to the place where they finished their studies, so these students could be potential residents and workers. By the same token, this temporary mobility can **enable young**

mountain-dwellers to do courses that are not available locally, and diversity their educational background. More active networking between universities, schools and training centres situated in mountain areas across Europe could open up new avenues here.

Find out more:

- ▶ If you are a policy-maker or administrative stakeholder, visit the European Commission's website: **ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme**
- ▶ If you are a young person interested in the Erasmus programme, visit www.erasmusworld.org
For further information on the Comenius sub-programme: **ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme**

▶ 2. Promoting e-Learning: coming to grips with information and communication technology in mountain areas

Mountain areas stand to gain by offering young people high-quality training options that will raise their profile and notoriety. While some training centres are able to run classroom training courses, another option is **e-Learning**. The EU promotes the effective use of information and communication technology in general and vocational teaching systems in Europe. The vast majority of sub-programmes in the lifelong learning programme include an objective **for developing and strengthening innovative ICT-based teaching methods and practices**. In July 2001, the European Council adopted a resolution aimed at encouraging Member States to facilitate the use of information and communication technology in education and training. It is a significant asset for mountain areas, since **distance-learning courses are an opportunity for these regions to raise young non-residents' awareness of this particular environment** by introducing them to the areas' culture and distinctive features (e.g. by including a "mountain and local culture" subject in the course).

For young people living in rural and mountain areas, this can also be a very useful initiative because it gives them access to a very diverse range of training. E-Learning has other benefits too: it means young people are not obliged to leave their family and social circle, and it spares them long commutes. This can also keep the costs of schooling down (accommodation, transport costs, etc.) - preventing discrimination against lower income-earners - and enable older pupils/students to work as they study.

The e-Learning initiative is not associated with any particular target programme, but it **is very popular and used across a variety of EU programmes**. A number of funds can be asked to finance projects with an e-Learning component: EU structural funds (such as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), or the dedicated rural development fund EAFRD), community programmes in education and training (such as the Erasmus, Comenius and Leonardo Da Vinci programmes), or research programmes (Information Society Technologies (IST)).

Find out more:

- ▶ If you are a policy-maker or administrative stakeholder, visit the European e-Learning database: **www.elearningeuropa.info/fr**

High-quality university courses in the mountains? Why not?

Mountains are great places for rest and recreation, but we don't always think of them as a place for quality training courses that boost our chances on the job market!

Several mountain regions have already taken the gamble of providing a wide range of training options for their young secondary school students. In the Teruel province, for example, the local branch of the University of Saragossa offers apprenticeship courses for electricians, computer technicians or car mechanics. These training courses attract many young people and, in time, allow them to work in their own locality.

Teruel also offers university courses: a paleontology course is currently open for future curators and conservators under the age of 25.

In the Norwegian county of Hedmark, the municipalities of Tynset, Røros and Trøndelag offer advanced qualifying courses in engineering, tourism, law, finance, or information and communication technology.

Other regions have decided to add distance learning courses to their traditional line-up, making them available to not only regional pupils but also pupils from other countries. For instance the University of Dalarna in Sweden offers a distance learning course for the county's young people, giving them the option of not leaving their social environment. The course also accepts students living abroad (the majority of whom are Swedish expats), with 62 different countries represented!

The advantage of distance learning is not only that it delivers high-quality teaching, but also that it introduces other students to the history, culture and future of the region running the course. This is one of the points covered by the Master of Science at the University of the Highlands and Islands in Scotland, which offers a distance course in sustainable development in mountain regions. This very high-quality course takes a multidisciplinary approach to the issue by covering such topics as mountain policies, the environmental aspect and the cultural aspect.

Sources: study carried out by the PADIMA project (Policies Against Depopulation in Mountain Areas), University of Highlands and Islands.

University of Saragossa website (Teruel is a branch of the University of Saragossa) www.unizar.es
University of the Highlands and Islands website www.uhi.ac.uk

► 3. The LEADER programme: boosting rural development

A varied range of training options for young people should equip them to find work in mountain areas. The aim is to take full advantage of the LEADER programme to offer more jobs in mountain areas, through partnerships between different structures with the potential to give young people local jobs in sectors such as the wood industry, agronomics, catering, etc.

Among the rural development aid programmes that take young people's training and learning into account, we would like to mention LEADER, which is financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). LEADER sets out to address the problems of social exclusion and combat the widespread exodus of young people from rural areas. The LEADER programme can provide backing for setting up educational projects by establishing partnerships between local private and public stakeholders (known as LAGs, or Local Action Groups).

This type of educational project can take a variety of forms, such as **setting up a network of centres to help young people find local employment**. Fostering a collaborative approach between the partners also helps make mountain areas more attractive for young people by creating places where people want to live and work. **When used properly, LEADER is a significant means of increasing and diversifying young people's job prospects.**

And tomorrow? The LEADER approach should be maintained in the 2014-2020 policies, and possibly even strengthened and especially broadened through a community-led local development approach. Local Action Groups should be able to solicit all of the funds, including the ERDF, which can help develop research infrastructure, and the ESF (European Social Fund), which focuses on training courses. New LAGs could be set up in both rural and urban areas.

The European Network for Rural Development, which is tasked with analysing the successes and failures of current programmes in order to make recommendations for future programmes, and forming a network of programme managers, is beginning a study of youth in rural areas, under Sweden's leadership. Euromontana will keep its members informed of the results.

🎯 Find out more:

- If you are a policy-maker or administrative stakeholder, visit the European Network for Rural Development's LEADER portalenrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/en/leader_en.cfm
- A few youth and rural development initiatives identified by the ENRD:
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/social-aspects/youth/fr/youth_fr.cfm
- Database of the ENRD's youth projects:
http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm

Developing new management tools in the rural Ayrshire county in Scotland

This project was carried out by the Ayrshire Local Action Group as part of the LEADER Programme in 2011. The Ayrshire Local Action Group is a group of private and public socio-economic partners established in rural areas. It is comprised of local government members and representatives of public establishments such as enterprises, chambers of commerce, industry or agriculture, and associations.

The project was designed for young people aged 14 and over, and aimed to help them gain experience in managing a bar by providing support and guidance. The project also backed those who eventually intended to start their own business, by granting them funds to take ownership and a proactive role in their managerial functions.

Over time, the project was also an opportunity to learn new skills and increase their employment opportunities. The secure, stable environment that was created also generated a positive interest among employers, including the renowned Turnberry Hotel, where a number of participants went on to secure part-time work.

This initiative was a great success, mainly because it highlighted values such as sharing knowledge and forging ties among young people in rural communities.

In the final analysis, the project showed that a community's ability to join forces and youth's combativeness can make a difference in isolated and rural areas.

Sources: South Ayrshire council's website (www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk)
European Network for Rural Development database (enrd.ec.europa.eu)

► 4. The Youth in Action Programme: an initiative that helps young people undertake projects

The European Union encourages non-formal learning (i.e. learning acquired outside educational or training establishments) **by fostering exchanges among young people**. The Youth in Action Programme focuses precisely on this type of learning. The programme aims to develop exchanges among young people with a view to increasing their mobility and heightening their awareness of European citizenship.

The principle behind the Youth in Action Programme is based on **carrying out projects or "actions" that draw on transnational partnerships**. This cooperative approach aims to help young people build knowledge and skills as they learn about other cultures and dialogue with other nationalities. The action also aims to help young people design their own projects by fostering their spirit of initiative and enterprise, and their creativity.

The Youth in Action Programme embraces the following types of action:

- **Action 1 "Youth for Europe"**, is mainly aimed at stepping up exchanges among young people with a view to increasing their mobility and heightening their awareness of European citizenship. These exchanges draw on transnational partnerships.
- **Action 2 "European Voluntary Service"** aims to support young people's participation in voluntary activities in Europe. Young volunteers take part in non-profit, unpaid activities in another European country for a period of two to twelve months.
- **Action 3 "Youth in the World"** supports projects conducted with non-EU countries in the field of youth, encouraging exchanges of young people and youth workers and youth organisations.
- **Action 4 "Youth Support Systems"** supports organisations involved in the active participation of young European citizens, and regional and local partnerships involved in European cooperation initiatives. It also supports projects encouraging innovation and quality, and actions to improve young people's access to information. Grant applications in connection with this action are often subject to specific calls for proposals.
- **Action 5 "Support for European cooperation in the youth field"** aims to organise structured dialogue between the various youth stakeholders, i.e. young people, those active in youth work and those responsible for youth policy. The activities can concern cooperation and the exchange of ideas and best practices, or setting up the networks necessary for bringing about a better knowledge and understanding of youth. This action also embraces seminars on social, cultural and political issues organised for young people.

The Youth in Action Programme has two potential benefits for mountain regions. Firstly, it enables young people living in the mountains to sharpen their skills and their spirit of initiative by organising a project of their choice and carrying it out with the help of the appropriate support bodies (adults, teachers, etc.). For young mountain-dwellers, **it is an opportunity not only to meet other young people but also to acquire the necessary skills for starting up a business**. Secondly, the Youth in Action Programme can also be an effective way of making mountain areas more attractive, mainly because it provides an opportunity for other young Europeans and other European institutions get to know the mountain areas through meetings, seminars and other projects. Youth organisations in mountain areas can become host organisations for European volunteers.

🕒 Find out more:

▶ If you are a policy maker or administrative stakeholder, visit the website of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency eacea.ec.europa.eu/youth

▶ If you are a young person, visit the website of your national Youth in Action Programme agency.

A few examples:

Scotland: www.xchangescotland.org

Romania: www.tinact.ro

France: www.jeunesseenaction.fr

Spain: www.juventudenaccion.injuve.es

Norway: www.aktivungdom.eu

La liste complète des agences est disponible sur

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth/doc152_en.htm#sectNAS

A training course on "youth" project management in Predeal (Carpathian Mountains of Romania)

In June 2012, one of the projects subsidised by the Youth in Action Programme was organised by the Romanian National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training in the city of Predeal.

The project's goal was to train young people in supporting and coaching other young people in youth projects. It set out to show the young participants how to support and involve young people throughout a project, and how to give them the support they needed, based on their requirements. Another of the project's aims was to teach participants how to strike the right balance between leading a project and letting the other project partners assume a measure of autonomy - a vital lesson.

Communication between participants and mutual understanding helped encourage the exchange of knowledge, tools and the right attitudes to take. The target audience was young Europeans: people in jobs, interns or project officers keen to learn how to coach.

Sources: Salto Youth database (www.salto-youth.net)

II. JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Nearly 80% of the young people polled would like or would be tempted to work in the mountains if they had the chance.

The main barriers stopping young people from going to live in mountain regions are:

- *the lack of job prospects,*
- *the difficulty of finding a job that matches their skills,*
- *the difficulty of finding steady work.*

One of the main objectives set by the Europe 2020 strategy is to help young people enter the workforce. **The financial crisis has made young people more vulnerable because they have less experience:** a young person without experience is a greater risk for an employer. **This instability is heightened by the time taken to find a job after graduating:** the longer a young person remains without work, the more difficult it will be to start work again. This is compounded by the disadvantages of dropping out of school, which is unfortunately frequent in rural areas far removed from centres of education.

The Europe 2020 strategy is striving to make education and training systems more attractive and open to all by 2020. The aim is to make the systems more flexible so that young people can retrain or resume their studies if they want to get ahead easily in their career. It also makes it easier for young people to adjust to the constraints of the job market.

One of the biggest challenges still facing policy makers is to design a suitable guidance and support system for young people, and help them progressively enter the job market by giving them the know-how necessary for carrying out their professional projects. We spoke earlier about **a network of structures set up to help young people find work locally**, with the backing of the LEADER programme. This rationale can be applied at various levels, from secondary-level apprenticeships to higher-education sandwich courses. Public-private partnerships have an important role to play in helping young people enter the workforce, especially as **this type of partnership guarantees high-quality teaching that is totally suited to the needs of the market.**

To more fully meet these needs, the European Union has provided general tools to help young people find jobs. The most useful of these job-search tools is the EURES network - an essential source of information. Run by the European Commission, the EURES website is designed to be the European portal for job mobility. It provides full information on opportunities for employment, education and training in all of the EU Member States. Other very useful tools are the recognition of qualifications within the European Union, and mobility programmes for young workers. These tools are discussed in greater detail in our analysis below.

Even if there are no tools specifically designed for mountain regions, the general tools provided by the European Union are quite flexible and can be used for this purpose. For instance, EURES proposes specific actions for cross-border regions - which are very often mountain regions - to help workers commute from one side to the other. Both job-seekers and employers could use these tools to facilitate the recruitment process.

The PADIMA project (Policies Against Depopulation in Mountain Areas) mentioned several examples of young people and employers making contact this way. One such example is in the Buskerud county in Norway, which developed an initiative to facilitate recruitment in the wood industry (Best Practice No. 33, Education and Training section).

In 2009, the Dalarna region in Sweden set up a platform for cooperation between educational establishments, industry, and job market partners, with a view to improving relations between schools and employment professionals (Best Practice No. 23, Education and Training section).

Find out more:

- ▶ For information about the Europe 2020 strategy, visit the 2020 thematic portal ec.europa.eu/europe2020
- ▶ EURES European portal www.eures.europa.eu

Innovative rural learning facilities help tackle depopulation in Slovenia's countryside

This project, which is also part of the LEADER programme, was carried out in the vicinity of the city of Laško in Slovenia (in Lower Styria). It included setting up a network of new training facilities in rural areas. Several organisations joined forces to form a Local Action Group comprising youth groups, schools, forestry and tourism authorities.

A flexible system was established to cater for the needs of the different target groups of young people. An innovative teaching method was brought in for day nurseries and schools, covering topics such as the relationship between agriculture, nature and food. A network of host organisations for young job-seekers was created, comprised of farms, forestry structures or other home-help service providers.

A total of 38 municipalities are now part of the project, which undertook no fewer than 60 training sessions to ensure that effective training was provided for young people, from day nursery level through to their first job.

The goal was also to build a collaborative approach between partners to enhance rural areas' attractiveness for young people as a place where they would want to live, work and enjoy their leisure time.

Find out more: the European Network for Rural Development's database enrd.ec.europa.eu

Information sheet on the initiative:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm?action=detail&backfuse=jsview&postcard_id=6820

► 1. Recognition of qualifications in the European Union: a procedure that can prove gratifying for mountain areas

Some of the EU's tools work towards formal recognition of professional qualification levels through **recruitment platforms** (the EURES network) and the **European system for the recognition of professional qualifications**. Other systems are available to facilitate this recognition, such as **Europass** (which recognises skills and abilities) and **Youthpass** (which recognises informal knowledge). The Europass system gives young Europeans five documents with which they can make their skills and qualifications clearly and easily understood in Europe:

- The Europass Curriculum Vitae and Language Passport, with which young people can clearly state their skills and qualifications for employers in Europe;
- The Europass Mobility, a document to record knowledge and skills acquired in another European country;
- The Certificate Supplement, a document describing the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of vocational training certificates;
- The Diploma Supplement, a document describing the knowledge and skills acquired by holders of higher education degrees.

The Youth Pass is provided for projects co-financed by the EU Youth in Action Programme.

The introduction of these tools has tended to standardise recruitment procedures on the European job market. This can be **a good thing for employers in SMEs and SOHOs** in mountain regions, as it increases their chances of recruiting **qualified, competent people for the jobs they need to fill**. The PADIMA project showed that **migration was the most effective way of combating depopulation**. The majority of the people who migrate to mountain regions come from within the European Union. Additionally, many mountain regions are in fact borders, so they can be propitious for mobility, even if this is not always the case. Mountain regions stand to gain by taking advantage of this geographic feature.

🎯 Find out more:

- If you are a project manager, visit the YouthPass website **www.youthpass.eu**
- If you are a young person, visit the Europass website on having your skills and qualifications recognised **europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home**
- EURES network website **ec.europa.eu/eures**

► 2. EU mobility programmes for young workers: a way of broadening your skills

EU mobility programmes help local and regional authorities in mountain areas, as well as EU Member States, **develop internationalisation strategies**. They are a way of making these regions more attractive, if the latter are capable of **offering a range of high-quality jobs that match the needs of the job market**. The **Leonardo da Vinci** programme for young people in employment is designed to facilitate transnational mobility. It aims to help programme participants **acquire and use knowledge and qualifications, to increase their employability and their participation in the European job market**. On top of this, there is the **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme**, which helps young people interested in starting their own business sharpen their knowledge and skills by going to work in another SME in Europe. These programmes could be used for young entrepreneurs in mountain areas, so that they **can build their skills in other regions (including other mountain regions)** before coming back to use their new skills.

🎯 Find out more:

- If you are a policy-maker, visit the European Commission's website: **ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme**
- If you are a young person or a French-speaking regional stakeholder, visit the website of the French national agency for the Leonardo Da Vinci programme **www.2e2f.fr/leonardo.php**
- If you are a young person interested in starting your own business, visit the website of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme **www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu**

► 3. Entrepreneurship and innovation have a strong impact on mountain regions

Supporting innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives for young people can be a very profitable venture for mountain regions. Mountain regions also stand to gain by **supporting the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises, which have enormous potential for revitalising a region.**

The European Entrepreneurship Action Plan aims to promote education and the spirit of entrepreneurship in young people, and encourage them to become young entrepreneurs. More specifically, the EU plans **to teach young people the spirit of entrepreneurship** through educational initiatives in schools (such as role plays, for example). EU Member States have been asked to include entrepreneurship education in the curricula of all educational establishments, run awareness-raising campaigns, provide teaching material, design training modules for teachers, and, in cooperation with industry bodies, give entrepreneurs an active role to play in training programmes.

For mountain areas, management and entrepreneurship training can be a very effective way of equipping young people to set up a business.

The EU also wants to simplify tax law, which would be a huge advantage for young would-be entrepreneurs in SMEs. The **Small Business Act** has set out to ease the administrative formalities for SMEs (by simplifying VAT invoicing rules, setting up a single-window system, etc.) and give them easier access to financing (support for financial intermediaries, increased microcredit availability, support from the European Investment Bank for long-term finance, etc.).

✦ For more information about EU funds and programmes for businesses, see the **chapter "III. Opportunities for settling in mountain regions", section "Opportunities for young entrepreneurs".**

🎯 Find out more:

- If you are a policy-maker, visit the European Commission's Enterprise and Industry portal for full details of the measures introduced by the Small Business Act **ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/small-business-act**
- If you are a young person, visit the website of the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme **www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu** and the Young Entrepreneurs of the European Union website **www.jeune-pme.eu**

A business start-up project for secondary-school students (aged 16-19) in Norway

The project was conducted by the local young entrepreneurs group ("Ungt Entreprenørskap") in Norway's Sogn og Fjordane county.

Ungt Entreprenørskap is a partner of the Junior Achievement Young Enterprise initiative (www.ja-ye.org), which offers entrepreneurship training throughout Europe. The initiative is based on the idea of facilitating international exchanges between the various young people, to develop and sharpen their entrepreneurial skills.

In practice, the young people were taught the "REAL" (Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning) method, which is directly inspired by the United States. The REAL method was originally created to train young people from rural communities in entrepreneurship. The method consists in assisting students with the business start-up process by drawing on support from the teachers and local stakeholders. What sets this experimental method apart is that it puts the students in real-life situations.

Some lessons span a variety of activities, such as simulating a meeting with the bank manager, or going for a business lunch with the owners of the restaurant you want to take over, etc. To convey their experience and their impressions, the young people can act out an interview with a class-mate, or produce a work of art.

In Sogn og Fjordane, the project culminated in an exchange with young European partners in the "Enterprise without Borders" initiative, at an international "gründer-camp" (literally "entrepreneur's camp") in 2008. In 2012, there are plans to hold a young entrepreneurs' camp in the mountains, focused on the issues of innovation in agriculture, tourism and renewable energies, ICT and other career opportunities in mountain regions.

Sources: Ungt Entreprenørskap's website (www.ue.no)

Website of the inventors of the REAL method (www.ncreal.org)

III. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SETTLING IN MOUNTAIN REGIONS

The most important asset of mountain areas is their quality of life. A total of 89% of the young mountain-dwellers who completed the online survey acknowledged that it was one of their main motivations for staying on in the mountains. Those who do not live in mountain areas say that it is the main factor that would encourage them to go and live there.

Out of all of the young people who did the survey:

- *70% consider the available housing stock overall satisfactory;*
- *96% consider the cost of living there reasonable;*
- *Nearly 90% stress the importance of the natural environment;*
- *The majority say they would like to go and live in the mountains to have "warmer relationships with people"*

While finding a job is of the utmost importance, it is no guarantee of a successful, long-term settlement. Experience has shown that **young people have to have a sufficient income and access to appropriate services and aids if they are to settle on a stable, lasting basis.** That said, what is the European Union doing to support young people when they decide to settle in a new environment? Are there grants to help a young entrepreneur or a young farmer who wants to put his professional plans into action? The EU is trying to address all of these issues by bringing in youth support measures.

Most of the measures to help young people find work are part of sector-specific programmes. This means that they do not cater for young people in general but instead address the establishment of a specific young farmer, young entrepreneur or young employee. Moreover, **although the European Union is working on helping young people enter the workforce, its efforts are always combined with what the Member States, regional or local authorities are doing: the EU is only authorised to support and consolidate national initiatives in this area.**

► 1. CAP measures to help young farmers set up business

Measure 112 of the Common Agricultural Policy deals specifically with the setting up of young farmers.

It is aimed at **supporting the inherent expenses incurred by a young first-time farmer** who is taking over an existing farm or creating a new one. There are two types of support for setting up on a farm. The first is a capital endowment paid once the farmer is in place. The second is in the form of subsidised loans to finance the purchase of the capital assets and carry out at least part of the investments necessary for implementing the business project.

During the first five years, the baseline payment for a young farmer (aged under 40) who has just set up on a farm is increased by a 25% supplement. Additionally, young farmers can combine certain aids to include **business start-up grants** (up to €70,000) as well as **training and advisory services.**

Farmers in mountain areas are granted additional subsidies of up to €300 per hectare.

Measure 112 is cofinanced by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and each Member State's budget. The upcoming programming period for the Common Agricultural Policy wants to increase support for

young farmers. It should be possible for the Member States to create thematic sub-programmes aimed at specific groups or areas, **such as young farmers, small farms, mountain areas or short channels**. Where direct payments are concerned, the Commission has included in its legislative proposals a mandatory additional payment for young farmer, and an optional additional payment for farmers in mountain areas. If these two measures are approved, it will be easier for young farmers to set up their business in the mountains. Appropriate rural development measures and investment aids are also seen as top priorities for helping young people set up in the mountains.

It can also be **easier for young farmers to find the support they need if they are referred to the appropriate networks, which will support them through the start-up process**. For instance, young farmers in a variety of countries have set up farmers' trade bodies to defend their industry-specific interests, mainly in connection with the notion of setting up on a farm. Young farmers everywhere are actively involved in these networks.

🎯 Find out more:

- ▶ If you are a policy-maker, visit the website of the European Network for Rural Development and download the brochure on Measure 112
enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/agriculture/young-farmers/en/young-farmers_en.cfm
- ▶ If you are a young farmer, visit the website of the European Council of Young Farmers
<http://www.ceja.eu> or your Member States' young farmers' website. Here are a few examples:
France **www.jeunes-agriculteurs.fr** et **www.demainjeseraipaysan.com**
Italy **www.agia.it**
Portugal **www.ajap.pt**
Slovenia **www.zspm.si**
Spain **www.asajanet.com**

▶ 2. Grants for young entrepreneurs and the funds made available

Young people who want to become entrepreneurs can receive **grants to set up their business**. EU financial aid **for small and medium-sized enterprises** (SMEs) can be provided directly or indirectly. Indirect financing makes it easier for businesses to use traditional financing mechanisms (financial engineering for investments and working capital). Direct support mainly concerns project cofinancing (subsidies).

Indirect aids include **guarantee systems** and **equity financing**. The EU programmes for indirect aid are the **Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme** (CIP) and, more specifically, the **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme** (EIP). A complementary programme should be added in 2014: COSME is a programme for the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Other funds can be approached for financing, such as the European Structural Funds. For instance, SMEs in every EU Member State **can obtain financing at national, regional or local level** through the **JEREMIE initiative**. In this case, enterprises obtain financing through banks and the regions' venture capital funds.

Naturally these aids are limited by the budgets allocated to them and the complexity of the process, where there is significant room for improvement.

In 2006, the European Union issued a directive making it compulsory to **bring in a single-window system for setting up businesses in EU countries**. This way, entrepreneurs can complete all of the mandatory formalities (registration, taxation, VAT and social security) through a **single administrative point of contact** (office or online, if not both). This type of structure can **make the process of setting up a business easier for young entrepreneurs**. The "single-window system" is the outcome of the "services directive", which is an EU legislative act aimed at making life easier for businesses that want to provide services in the European Union, whether in their home country or another country. To apply this directive, each Member State has to set up "single-window systems": online administrative portals that help enterprises complete their administrative formalities.

🎯 Find out more:

- ▶ If you are a policy-maker, visit the European Small Business Portal ec.europa.eu/small-business
- ▶ If you are a young person interested in entrepreneurship, visit the Practical guide to doing business in Europe <http://europa.eu/youreurope/business>
- ▶ Young entrepreneurs can also visit the website of their national member of the EU's young entrepreneurs. Here are a few examples:
 - Romania www.ptir.ro
 - Italy www.confartigianato.it and www.giovanimpreditori.it
 - Greece www.youngleaders.gr
 - Spain <http://www.pimec.es>
 - France lanouvellepme.fr

Close-up on: CREAMED, a network of business incubators in the Pyrenees-Mediterranean Euroregion

The CREAMED project supports young entrepreneurs by giving them direct investment grants (for physical investments, for example). Partly financed by the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), CREAMED aims to create synergies between the business incubators of four regions: Catalonia, the Balearic Islands, Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi-Pyrénées.

The CREAMED project is a good example of an inter-regional project working to introduce aids for setting up businesses within the Euroregion. Perhaps similar initiatives already exist between different European mountain regions, but if they don't, it would be beneficial to take such an initiative. The more young entrepreneurs receive structured support at different levels (local, regional or transregional), the less likely they are to fail in their attempt to set up a business.

Sources: CREAMED project website www.eurocreamed.eu

► 3. Helping young workers get settled

A number of **platforms are designed to inform young workers directly** if they want to go and work in another EU country. EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal has a **"Living and Working in the EU"** category that described the distinctive features of living and working in the European Union and its different Member States (working conditions, living conditions, social security and insurance, freedom of movement, etc.).

The **"Your Europe"** portal gives citizens useful information about their rights and opportunities in the EU: finding work, driving licences in the EU, family welfare legislation (benefits), medical care, etc.

These tools are not directly concerned with mountain regions; they address the national context rather than the regional one. Lastly, as far as the legislation is concerned, the measure that makes it easier for young workers to settle in the European Union concerns workers' right to reside in the European Union. Workers are authorised to stay for longer than six months on grounds such as work (even if the citizens of some EU countries still have to apply for a residence permit). Workers can apply for a permanent right to reside once they have lived for five years in the host country. Family members are entitled to the same rights as workers. This makes it easier for young workers to settle in another EU country, since their spouses and/or children can accompany them without having to go through long and complicated administrative procedures.

However we are sorry to see that there are not more **specific support structures to help young people (whether in employment or not)** to settle in the European Union, and which would have special ties with local authorities. It might be a good idea to **set up local public-service information centres, where a young person settling in the mountains could find the information necessary for long-term residence** (housing benefits, day nurseries or child welfare services, job opportunities for the spouse, etc.). The reception policies brought in by regions such as Dalarna in Swede or Auvergne and Limousin in France make the formalities easier. It is not always easy for newcomers to adjust to the distinctive features of a region and feel they fit in. **A warm welcome will guarantee mountain regions of an energetic labour force, useful for the region's development.**

🎯 Find out more:

- If you are a young worker, visit the EURES European portal <http://ec.europa.eu/eures> and the "Your Europe" portal, which has useful advice for European citizens [europa.eu/youreurope/citizens](http://ec.europa.eu/youreurope/citizens)

What services are available for young couples in the mountains?

Before a young couple decides to settle in the mountains, they want to be sure of finding good quality of life and a job for both of them. But that is not enough. Young couples need services and school organisations to take care of their children.

The first thing to do is help the first spouse find work or set up his/her own business. Couples who move to the mountains often need to find two jobs. Helping the second spouse find work guarantees they will stay for the long term. In Sweden's Dalarna region, the Teknikdalen Foundation and a number of businesses have established a public-private partnership in the form of a recruitment consulting firm, charged with assisting the spouse of someone already working in the region in their search for a job. The company send the recruitment firm information about the spouse of their employee who is looking for work. After a face-to-face interview, the recruitment firm helps the job-seeker target the right businesses in the region, then contacts them, forwarding the job application with a referral.

After that, it is essential to provide the young workers' children with efficient care arrangements and school services. In the Italian province of Turin, several medium-sized farms situated in the mountains have set up **day nurseries for children up to the age of six living in the village and the neighbouring towns**. The farms' child-care staff had to take special training and the premises had to be fitted out so that the young children had suitable bedrooms. This type of farm is very popular with the parents. The farms are financed by private funds only (the farmers) and the cost of the facilities for parents is negligible by comparison with private day nurseries.

Source: final report of the PADIMA project (Policies Against Depopulation in Mountain Areas).
Download the report from www.euromontana.org/projets/bonnes-pratiques-padima.html
Section "Territorial Marketing"

IV. CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES

42% of the young people polled were dissatisfied with the cultural opportunities available to them in the mountains

For some young people:

- *there should be a wider range of free cultural opportunities in the mountains;*
- *it is important to take culture to the mountains and not leave it solely to the urban centres;*
- *it might be feasible to build contemporary art centres in the mountains...*

In the various European programmes, **culture is mainly seen from the angle of intercultural dialogue, non-formal learning and multilingualism.** The European Union promotes young people's mobility beyond their national borders and encourages exchanges of knowledge and skills. **The EU supports the dissemination of artistic and audiovisual media throughout Europe, but the programmes concerned are primarily aimed at professionals in artistic circles** (producers, artists, etc.). An organised group of young people (band, association, etc.) can receive assistance from certain EU programmes to develop a project, but the project is only feasible in very precisely-defined types of initiative.

► 1. The Youth in Action Programme: helping young people develop a cultural project involving several European countries

The Youth in Action Programme helps **form groups of young people from two or more countries: the young people can discuss a variety of topics and compare them, while learning more about their respective countries and cultures.** The programme has five general objectives, which are complementary to the EU's activities:

- Promote young people's active citizenship;
- Develop solidarity among young people;
- Foster mutual understanding between young people in different countries;
- Contribute to developing the quality of support systems for youth activities and the capabilities of civil society organisations in the youth field;
- Promote European cooperation in the youth field.

The principle behind the Youth in Action Programme is based on **carrying out projects or "actions" that draw on transnational partnerships.**

✚ For more detailed information about the Youth in Action Programme and the actions, see **Chapter 4, Part I "Education and training opportunities".**

One of the actions is the **"Youth for Europe"** action, where young people meet to discuss a common subject or topic. Examples of the topics covered include the benefits of sport for the body, or the culture and history of a European Union country. The sub-action **"Cooperation with the Neighbouring Countries of the European Union"** also comprises initiatives on European culture. For example, young Europeans discussed the origins and consequences of xenophobia and stereotypes with regard to foreign nations, based on the legend of Medea in Greek mythology (see the Salto Youth database).

For mountain regions, the Youth in Action Programme can support certain cultural initiatives with young people insofar as the initiatives are part of a drive to promote European citizenship. However, each project has to correspond to a type of action specified in the programme, which curbs the creative potential and the range of possibilities in the cultural field.

🎯 Find out more:

- ▶ Salto Youth database www.salto-youth.net

▶ 2. The Culture Programme: supporting large-scale cultural actions in the European Union

The Culture Programme includes three strands of action: **Support for cultural projects** (cultural cooperation between European operators, "European Capital of Culture" project, etc.); **Support for organisations active in the field of culture** (organisations with an EU-wide reach, or involving at least seven EU countries); **Support for cooperation projects between organisations involved in cultural policy analysis.** Another objective of the Culture Programme is to promote intercultural dialogue by facilitating the transnational mobility of professionals in the culture sector.

On the whole, **the Culture Programme funds cooperation projects between professional operators, or large-scale initiatives.** It does not finance projects by small groups or groups of young people, unlike the Youth in Action Programme, which mainly supports small-scale projects.

Even so, **these funds can be of use to mountain regions for cultural initiatives conducted with professional operators in the artistic field** (involving cooperation between at least six cultural operators from at least six countries participating in the programme). **An example might be** European mountain festivals involving several nationalities and organised on the theme of youth (festivals of photography, contemporary art, etc.).

🎯 Find out more:

- ▶ If you are a policy-maker, visit the Culture Programme's presentation on the European Commission's website eacea.ec.europa.eu/culture
- ▶ If you are a young person, visit the arts and culture policy portal www.cultureactioneurope.org

► 3. Creating arts centres in the mountains: cultural meeting points between creators and young contemporary art lovers

For mountain areas, **disseminating culture can also mean creating local arts centres** to act as **cultural meeting points for young residents**. The question of relocating culture to the mountains has already been raised and there are already a number of structures that house contemporary art in the mountains. One example is the Cittadella dei Giovani in the Valle d'Aosta, which regularly hosts work by young artists-in-residence (see best practice in the insert).

Other initiatives are designed around **direct participation by young artists living in the mountains, or who are interested in devoting themselves to the matter**. In the sentieri creativi project, for example, young Italian artists have produced works that evoke mountains and in particular the Bergamo mountains. Some of them have been exhibited along the hiking trails and in the mountain refuges.

🎯 Find out more:

- Website of the Cittadella dei Giovani www.cittadelladeigiovani.ao.it
- Blog of the sentieri creativi initiative www.giovani.bg.it

Close-up on: "artists-in-residence" initiatives

An artists-in-residence programme produced in a photo exhibition in 2010 at the Cittadella dei giovani in Bergamo, in the Valle d'Aosta, in September 2010. During the programme, the Breuil station in the Valle d'Aosta had hosted some young Italian artists.

The artists-in-residence programme is a way of meeting other young people, learning new methods and techniques, and finding out what it is like to share a house with other artists. It is also an opportunity to stay in a revitalising site in the open, and break with old habits. It is a time for thinking, for searching, and for producing art. It is not a new idea: several exhibitions have already been held, for example in the Rocky Mountains National Park in the United States. Receiving artists in the mountains is also an opportunity for rethinking the way we see tourism, since the actual place where we live becomes a pretext for encouraging creativeness. The artists-in-residence programme held at the Breuil station is interesting because it underscored the importance of the mountain and its meaning. It highlighted the importance of getting the young generations to take part in the debate on the mountain, seen as a place that is "heavy with meaning for our contemporary world", from a natural, social and cultural point of view.

Sources: Blog of the Mountain Photo Festival (mountain-photo-festival.blogspot.com). In Italian only.

► 4. Setting up cultural networks in the mountains: an opportunity for young people to give expression to their creativity

There are many artistic networks in Europe designed for cultural cooperation between the various European countries. LabforCulture.org is a platform for European cultural and artistic networks, linking up the different European artistic sectors.

There are already **European incubators for young artists.** These are non-governmental organisations based on networked participants, where young artists can gather in a place to give their creativity free rein.

For younger artists, a number of transnational cultural partnerships have already been set up, such as the EMYAN network of young EuroMed artists. This is a **euroregional network composed of young artists, institutions, associations and artistic operators who support the community of young artists.** It might be interesting to create a network of young artists in the mountains: it would enable young people from the regions to rub shoulders with cultural circles and acquire a more concrete experience of art.

🎯 Find out more:

- LabforCulture website **LabforCulture.org**
- Website of young artists-in-residence programmes in Europe **www.art4eu.net**, dealing with the question of incubators for young artists.

V. CONCLUSION

This overview of the results of the surveys of young people shows that the picture is mostly positive when it comes to the potential, but mixed when it comes to current reality. The desire to live and work in the mountains is there, but the actual possibilities are disappointing. And yet the possibilities are sometimes greater than young people think: it is absolutely essential to communicate more if we want to make mountain areas more attractive for young people. The PADIMA project's final report sets out the strategic actions that should be taken to improve the situation.

A survey of European policies shows that opportunities exist for financing and supporting young people's projects, mobility and recruitment. The most successful programme in this area is undoubtedly the Erasmus sub-programme. Mountain areas can take advantage of these policies to forge stronger ties between their schools, training centres, businesses and organisations and the rest of Europe, thereby improving the circulation of skills, ideas and cultures - which young people love. There is also potential for really taking full advantage of these mobility programmes and distance-learning tools to publicise mountain areas to young people who might want to go and live there.

With the exception of rural development policies, which are specifically aimed at young farmers so focused on rural areas, youth policies do not have any specific territorial dimension and treat all areas on exactly the same footing. It is up to mountain stakeholders to apply these policies fully in their respective areas.

Our examination should be extended to include the national and regional policies that contribute to the development of culture, the settlement of new population groups, entry into the workforce, etc. As we mentioned earlier, the European Union has only limited powers on these subjects, which are primarily the responsibility of the States and regions. The European Mountain Convention will be an opportunity for initial debate between mountain stakeholders, which should open the door to new ideas for projects for young people in the mountains.

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