



# **European policies regarding sustainable mountain tourism**

Study  
1st Version

*Euromontana thanks its members and all respondents  
for their contributions.*

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# 1. Introduction

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Tourism is an important sector for the whole Europe and represents a considerable factor of development and prosperity in mountain areas. There are no doubts that tourism sector, generating many direct or indirect positive impacts, is a very important driver of economy. On the other hand, in order to protect the natural environment and to ensure the maximal tourism profit, the negative and precarious effects of tourism promotion have to be tackled down also. The issues is sensitive especially in fragile territories such as the protected areas, national parks, etc where a sustainable approach is essential.

Therefore, the promotion of a sustainable policy framework, which will guarantee mountain tourism management in a sustainable way, is absolutely necessary. So far the competencies of European Union in tourism sector are limited (art 195 of the Treaty for the European Union foresees that the EU complement Member States policies) and **the promotion of the value of sustainability is in the hands of national and regional governments.**

In order to achieve a sustainable mountain tourism policy, crucial tasks are to understand main policy options in this regard through analysis of current mountain tourism policies across the Europe. Only after this exploration, the options for improvement and further action could be assessed.

Therefore, the aim of this study is **to outline how some European national and regional policies are successfully dealing with the tourism issue in mountain areas.** We hope that this study will contribute to the dissemination of the good policies to other regions or states which do not have such tools.

This study is covering various mountain areas in Europe (Romanian part of the Carpathians, Pyrenees, Alps, Central Massif in France, Balkans and Norwegian Mountains). Nevertheless, it is not exhausting in terms of European country's policies. The data used for this study are gathered from respondents representing 10 European countries, namely Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Macedonia, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland.

Data on mountain tourism policies were collected in two ways: firstly, through a survey of Euromontana members to which 12 organisations replied. The survey had closed and semi-open questions and was addressed online late November - early December 2010. In addition to the information available from Euromontana members, the study is based on the data gathered through contact with tourism-related governmental authorities in Austria, Germany, Slovakia and Macedonia. These countries were selected in order to cover a maximum of European mountainous states.

## 2. European tourism policies regarding mountain areas

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### 2.1 General overview

Within the European Union, tourism policy is one of the fields where the national authorities have entire competency, in respect of the principle of the multi-level governance and subsidiarity principle. Supranational interventions at the level of the European Union are restricted only to support, coordination and complement of some of the Member States' actions<sup>1</sup>. General Direction of the Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR) is dealing with legislative proposals and communication from EU perspective. In addition to that, other EU policies which directly or indirectly affect tourism issue at the EU level are: regional development, internal market, transport, environmental issues, social issues, agricultural and rural development, etc<sup>2</sup>.

At the national level, the implementation of mountain policies is consequential of other policies and is often not dealt with explicitly as "mountain issue". The tourism related policies are mainly sectorial, with specific adaptations<sup>3</sup>. National interventions are dominant for economic and social issues, but also "the sub-national level (regional and local authorities) emerges as increasingly relevant"<sup>4</sup>.

In addition to supranational, national and sub-national tourism policies in Europe, various transnational policies and instruments (such as Alpine and Carpathian Conventions) are shaping the development of tourism sector in the mountain areas<sup>5</sup>.

Considering the share of mountain areas on the total area of a certain country, mountain policies in Europe could be classified in the following four groups<sup>6</sup>:

- a. **Countries where no mountain policies can be identified:** *No mountain policies occurred either in countries with no mountains (Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands), with only "hilly" landscape (Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg) or with majority of mountainous area (Norway, Greece, Slovenia)*
- b. **Countries where mountain policies/measures are sectorial:** *In this group could be classified the majority of countries with middle mountains. Mountain development is addressed in sectors as agriculture, environment, rural development as well as tourism etc.*
- c. **Countries where mountain policies are addressed to multi-sectoral development:** *The sectoral policies regarding mountain development have strong transversal character as for example in Germany, Austria or Spain.*
- d. **Countries where mountain policies are addressed to overall development:** *This group is characterized by "consolidation of sectoral rules and the approval of specific tools such as*

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<sup>1</sup> TFEU, 2007, Part One, Title I, Articles 6(d) et 195

<sup>2</sup> CoR, 2006

<sup>3</sup> NORDREGIO, 2004

<sup>4</sup> CoR, 2006, p.132

<sup>5</sup> NORREGIO, 2004

<sup>6</sup> NORDREGIO, 2004, p.147

mountain funds<sup>7</sup>). However, in reality it is multi-sectoral and territorial coordination. Three countries could be mentioned according to the NORDREGIO's study as an example: France (Creation of Massif Commissariats, 1973; Mountain Law with delimitation of massifs, 1985), Italy (General principle of special policy for mountain areas, 1948; mountain communities, 1971; Mountain Law, 1994) and Switzerland (Law on Investment in Mountain Regions, 1974). In addition, Romania and Bulgaria have started to deal with mountain policy in integrated manner.

Starting from the classifications above, policies and legislations in mountain areas as regards tourism are mostly sectoral and under the national competences. However, it "seems that policies initiated by public authorities to develop tourism [in mountains] are weak, and that few initiatives are specifically oriented towards mountain tourism<sup>8</sup>."

Considering the cross-cutting and multi-faceted character of tourism policies, effective policy development demands "an integrated approach to policy development across many governments' department"<sup>9</sup>. This finding is the basis of "whole of government approach", which is emphasizing "design and application of policies between all levels of government<sup>10</sup>" and was outlined in the Riva del Garda Action Statement for Enhancing Competitiveness and Sustainability in Tourism<sup>11</sup> at High level meeting of OECD Tourism Committee in October 2008.

Since tourism is an activity mainly based locally, **regional and local tourism actors should not be excluded from the mountain tourism policy**. Good governance in tourism sector and its transformation into a sustainable strategy therefore need to involve all stakeholders from tourism sector by respecting principles such as integration, multi-sectoral vision, transparency, involvement, accountability and efficiency<sup>12</sup>.

## 2.2 Tourism policies at national level

In order to get a picture of mountain tourism policies at national level, two following issues have been researched in the interest of this study: **existence of a national tourism strategy and its reference about mountain tourism**. Considering, that it identifies a direction and sets priorities for the tourism sector, the national tourism strategy appears as an ideal source of information about the national government orientation towards the mountain tourism.

As can be seen from the Table 1, all the researched countries have developed a **national tourism strategy**. This is a very positive finding, because as stated in Riva del Garda Action Statement<sup>13</sup>, one of the policy tasks in order to take full advantage of the tourism potential is to establish a comprehensive policy framework.

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<sup>7</sup> NORDREGIO, 2004

<sup>8</sup> NORREGIO, 2004, p.159

<sup>9</sup> OECD, 2010, p. 51

<sup>10</sup> OECD, 2010, p. 51

<sup>11</sup> OECD, 2008

<sup>12</sup> CoR, 2006

<sup>13</sup> OECD, 2008

On the other hand, **apart from two exceptions, evident lack of specific mountain tourism policies at national level can be observed among the results.** One of the causes can be the possible competition between mountain and coastal tourism development in some countries along seashore (France, Italy), which can result in the lack of consideration for mountain areas. *“For example, the 2000-2006 ‘Integral Plan for Quality Spanish Tourism’ refers only very marginally to tourism in mountain areas. Likewise, in Portugal, the tourism development strategy focuses on coastal projects<sup>14</sup>.”*

**Table 1:** Tourism policies at national level of researched countries

Country	Existence of tourism strategy at national level	Reference to mountain tourism	Current National tourism strategy, Year of publication
Austria	yes	yes	“Die neue österreichische Tourismusstrategie” (New Austrian Tourism strategy), February 2010
France	yes	yes/no*	"Direction générale de la Compétitivité, de l'Industrie et des Service" DGCIS (Plan for French tourism - Bilan 2009 and Objectives 2010)
Germany	yes	no	"Tourismuspolitische Leitlinien der Bundesregierung" (German Federal Gouvernement Policy Guidelines on Tourism), March 2009
Italy	yes	yes/no*	“National Strategy to enhance the development of tourism in Italy”, May 2008 (IT, 2008)
Norway	yes	yes	The government's tourism strategy "Valuable Experiences", December 2007
Republic of Macedonia	yes	no	"National Tourism development strategy 2009-2013", Jun 2009
Romania	yes	yes/no*	"National Tourism Development Master Plan 2007 - 2026"
Slovak republic	yes	no	"New Tourism Development Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2013", August 2005
Slovenia	yes	no	"Development Plan and Policies of Slovene Tourism 2007-2011", November 2006
Switzerland	yes	no	"Stratégie de croissance pour la place touristique suisse" (National Tourism strategy ), June 2010
*survey responses differ			

<sup>14</sup> NORREGIO, 2004, p.159

Although the vast majority of the researched countries have not identified mountain tourism as one of their tourism strategy priorities, many of them are dealing with various types of tourism linked to mountain areas. This approach is justifiable, because in mountain areas through Europe one can find all types of tourism: mass tourism, special interest tourism (spas, religious, heritage monuments, hiking, hunting), rural tourism (summer stays, circuits, nature tourism, kayaking, rafting), resort tourism (riding, walking, week-end tourism, restaurants)<sup>15</sup> etc.

As stated in the survey responses, tourism products defined by **Republic of Macedonia** are: spas, natural heritage, cultural heritage, performing arts, museums and galleries, activity tourism, rural tourism and wine tourism. Likewise Macedonia, tourism types referring to mountain tourism in **Romania** are following: tourism in national parks and nature reserves, winter sports tourism, spa tourism, cultural tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism and agro-tourism, hunting tourism and active tourism. In **Slovenia**, the basic areas of tourism are as follows: active holidays (winter and summer sports), cities and culture, tourism in the countryside and ecotourism, nature, food and beverages, health and well-being, MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions), entertainment and gambling, offers for more demanding tourists and finally offers for young people.

Based on the analysis of National tourism strategy of **Germany**, the federal government is not stressing mountain tourism as an separate issue, but “tourism in nature” or “cycling tourism” are mentioned between defined types of the tourism the along with e.g. “Urban and cultural tourism”. According to the National tourism strategy of **Slovakia**, high potential of mountains areas for tourism development is recognized: *„Nearly 62% of the country’s area could be classified as mountainous, which gives very good preconditions for development of the winter tourism. This is one of the few competitive advantages that Slovakia possesses in comparison with the neighboring countries (except Austria).<sup>16</sup>”* However, mountain tourism is not mentioned explicitly, because the tourism activities are classified in five main types of tourism: 1. summer tourism and stays by water, 2. spa and health tourism, 3. winter tourism and winter sports, 4. urban and cultural tourism and 5. rural areas tourism and agro-tourism.

Exceptional examples of pro-mountain tourism promotions are the national strategies of Austria and Norway. In the case of **Austria**, National Tourism Strategy defines four key elements of the policy focus: Alps, Danube + lakes, cities and culture. In this strategy, the Alps are mentioned explicitly. They are considered as *“worthy of cultural and natural heritage protection”*, but at the same time the strategy mention that this *“should not serve only as a background scenery, but have to deliberately become the content of the tourism experience by green tourism, national parks or the functioning alpine infrastructure.”<sup>17</sup>*

National tourism strategy of **Norway** entitled “Valuable Experiences” could be also considered as representative example regarding mountain tourism support. Among the destinations identified in the strategy, “Mountains and the interior” are considered as separated category with an own definition and

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<sup>15</sup> NORREGIO, 2004

<sup>16</sup> "New Tourism Development Strategy of the Slovak Republic until 2013", August 2005, available in English at: <http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00002751/>

<sup>17</sup> “Die neue österreichische Tourismusstrategie”



vision for future development. *“Tourism in the mountains and interior is often based on activities such as hunting, lake fishing, farm tourism, hiking, cycling and winter sports. There are challenges related to great seasonal variation<sup>18</sup>.”* Besides the green tourism based on the farm and the rural communities’ resources, focus areas are product development, competence development, marketing and cooperation/alliance building.

## 2.3 Tourism policies at regional level

As it has been recognized by all institutions and stated by the Committee of Regions, *“tourism is a global phenomenon that is shaped locally”<sup>19</sup>*. Hence, regional governments play crucial role in the sustainability of tourism industry. It shapes identity of the region/city/territory; they determine internal strategy and successful implementation<sup>20</sup>. As a result, **design of tourism policies at regional level is essential for the recognition of regions’ touristic specificities and quality improvements**. Following the recommendation of Riva del Garda Action Statement<sup>21</sup>, *“to take full advantage of the potential of tourism development, a strong public sector management and a multi-actor system of governance should support tourism.”*

In Europe, majority of states is somehow delegating competencies to the “lower level” authorities. However, *“the degree of regional autonomy varies considerably from one member state to another”<sup>22</sup>*. Germany, Austria and Spain have most powerful regional authorities, followed by Nordic countries and the United Kingdom. France and new EU member countries have indeed the administrative capabilities, but without the sufficient financial means<sup>23</sup>.

Based on the survey results (Table 2), most of the responses indicate the existence of regional tourism strategies. However although all the studied areas are situated in mountainous regions, they do not all reference to a mountain integrated tourism approach.

**Table 2:** Tourism policies at regional level of researched countries

Country – Region/County	Existence of tourism strategy at regional level	Reference to mountain tourism
Austria- Carinthia county	yes <sup>24</sup>	yes
France- Auvergne	yes	no
France - Midi Pyrenees	yes <sup>25</sup>	yes
Germany- Baden-Wuerttemberg	yes <sup>26</sup>	no
Germany- Bavaria	yes <sup>27</sup>	no

<sup>18</sup> The government's tourism strategy "Valuable Experiences"

<sup>19</sup> CoR, 2006, p.1

<sup>20</sup> CoR, 2006

<sup>21</sup> OECD, 2008, p.3

<sup>22</sup> CoR, 2006, p.139

<sup>23</sup> CoR, 2006

<sup>24</sup> "Weißbuch Tourismus Kärnten: Entwicklungsplan für Tourismus und Freizeit 2005-2015"

<sup>25</sup> Action plan for development of touristic cluster in Pyrenees "Pôles touristiques Pyrénéens"

<sup>26</sup> "Tourismuskonzeption für den ländlichen Raum"

<sup>27</sup> "Tourismuspolitisches Konzept der Bayerischen Staatsregierung"

Italy - Piedmont region	yes	no
Macedonia	NA	NA
Norway - Sogn og Fjordane county	yes <sup>28</sup>	yes
Norway- Buskerud county	yes	yes
Romania - North-eastern region	yes	yes
Slovak republic – county Žilinský kraj	yes <sup>29</sup>	no
Slovenia	no	no
Switzerland - mountainous cantons	yes	yes

At the regional level of **Austria**, most of the Federal States having a remarkable proportion of mountain areas, the issue of mountain tourism is actively integrated in many regional strategies. For an illustration, the Federal state of Carinthia is demarking in the “White book on Tourism in Carinthia”<sup>30</sup> (Tourism development plan for the time period 2005- 2015) the mountainous region separately, labeled as “natural area”. However there is no explicit reference to mountain tourism.

In **Germany**, federal states (Ländern) relevant for promotion of mountain tourism are notably Land Bayern and Land Baden-Württemberg. Both regions have identified mountain areas as destinations with high touristic potential. Bavarian government's tourism strategy<sup>31</sup> recognizes the importance of Bavarian Alps for tourism development as well as the strategy of Federal state Baden-Württemberg<sup>32</sup> which gives a high touristic potential to Swabian Alps and “Schwarzwald” (Black Forest). However, both federal states are not mentioning mountain tourism explicitly. As regards tourism in these mountainous areas, emphasis is given mainly to agro-tourism, ecotourism and related activities as e.g. hiking, cycling and skiing.

The national authority from **Republic of Macedonia** has not included a tourism strategy at regional level; moreover, few indications about the involvement of local actors have been provided. However, it has been underlined that the local governments, the non-governmental organizations and national parks are all involved in the organization and management of hiking and biking activities.

According to responses gathered from **Romania**, Nord-East region is explicitly dealing with mountain in its tourism strategy,<sup>33</sup> as one development and dynamism opportunity for the region.

In the case of **Slovakia**, competence to prepare regional tourism strategies belongs to eight administrative regions (“kraje”). All of them are to some extent devoted to support sustainable tourism in mountain areas, but only some have their own strategy. A good example is the region “Žilinský kraj“, which contains the High Tatra mountains. The different forms of tourism which can be realized in mountain areas like active tourism, hiking, skiing, etc are supported.

In **France**, within the mountain area of Central Massif, the region of Auvergne is largely concerned about the development of mountain areas but has not defined yet a policy strategy for mountain tourism.

<sup>28</sup> Tourism strategy of Region Sogn og fjordane for 2010-2025

<sup>29</sup> Regional tourism strategy of Žilinský kraj for 2007-2013

<sup>30</sup> “Weißbuch Tourismus Kärnten: Entwicklungsplan für Tourismus und Freizeit 2005-2015”

<sup>31</sup> “Tourismuspolitisches Konzept der Bayerischen Staatsregierung”

<sup>32</sup> “Tourismuskonzeption für den ländlichen Raum”

<sup>33</sup> “Regional Action Plan for Tourism 2008-2013 North East”

Moreover, Southern in France, we find a good practice in the Pyrénées where the region Midi-Pyrénées developed a touristic cluster in Pyrenees “Pôles touristiques Pyrénéens”<sup>34</sup>.

**Norwegian** region Sogn og Fjordane has outlined its vision for the development of tourism until 2025 in regional tourism strategy “Vision Sogn og Fjordane”<sup>35</sup>. The main objective of the region Sogn og Fjordane is the achievement of “World Class Sustainable Tourism” by delivering locally distinctive, high quality and sustainable world-class experiences in fjords, glaciers, mountains, waterfalls, coastlines and oceans.

According to the response form **Slovenia**, the tourism strategy at the regional level does not exist.

In **Switzerland**, most of the Swiss cantons have a tourism strategy and legislation. Tourism is mainly a domain of the cantons and not of the central government (Confederation). Cantonal tourism strategies/laws of the mountainous cantons are often mountain specific.

In conclusion, the mountainous regions are more favorable to include references to “mountain tourism” than the national authorities. However, tourism strategies and regions of the same country demonstrate a different degree of activism<sup>36</sup>. Consequently, policy recommendations to develop mountain tourism shall be addressed not only to national authorities, but also to responsible stakeholders at regional level.

## 2.4 Policy measures

The measures developed at national and regional policy level in order to support tourism in mountain areas include general tools such as the legal definition of mountain areas, mountain-specific legislation, research and training activities within these areas<sup>37</sup> as well as policy support directly targeted at mountain tourism industries. Some regional policy tools assist firms and tourist providers by ensuring business friendly environment, attractive services and market-oriented programmes<sup>38</sup>. *“Successful participation of firms and destinations in the global tourism market requires policy programmes and instruments which address a wide range of challenges, such as overcoming the disadvantages of the small size of tourism enterprises by cooperation and participation in global value chains, upgrading the standards and quality of tourism services, improving the attractiveness of the tourism labour market, reducing unnecessary obstacles to tourism development, developing coherent policy measures in support of sustainable tourism, notably for the use of natural and cultural resources, and strengthening institutional governance mechanisms that will allow tourism-related policies to maximize the economic and social potential of tourism”*<sup>39</sup>

As the Table 3 demonstrates, **most used policy measures in researched mountain areas are**

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<sup>34</sup> Action plan for development of touristic cluster in Pyrenees “Pôles touristiques Pyrénéens”, more information available in French at: <http://interventions.midipyrenees.fr/guide.asp?id=1570>

<sup>35</sup> Tourism strategy of Region Sogn og fjordane for 2010-2025 “Vision Sogn og fjordane”, October 2010, available in Norwegian at: [http://www.sfj.no/cmssff/cmsspublish.nsf/\\$all/9C1F7A100D232437C12577A5003B38AA](http://www.sfj.no/cmssff/cmsspublish.nsf/$all/9C1F7A100D232437C12577A5003B38AA)

<sup>36</sup> CoR, 2006, p.140

<sup>37</sup> NORREGIO, 2004, p.X

<sup>38</sup> OECD 2004, p.2

<sup>39</sup> OECD 2004, p.2

**regional funding schemes and mountain tourism packages, followed by training and requalification activities.** Worthy of notice is the weak utilization of measures such as tax reduction or knowledge sharing platforms, ICT tools and systems. In many cases other specific measures are available (see down) which could be possibly transferred in similar conditions. In general, policy measures provided by state are rather general, oriented at the tourism sector as a whole.

**Successful public-private partnerships** are being developed often by industries of tourism at a regional scale within the mountain regions. An example came from Austria where the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth appointed the Austrian Hotel and Tourism Bank, a private institution, to implement funding programmes for tourism SMEs. The objectives of these programmes are: **encouraging investments, improving the quality of services and increasing the size of tourism enterprises, upgrading the quality of software, the training of actors, enhancing co-operations, optimizing enterprises' financial resilience, encouraging new business start-ups, attracting new sources of finance for tourism enterprises.** This practice is anchored in Austrian Tourism Funding directive 2007.<sup>40</sup>

A large number of small and medium-sized enterprises are an essential feature of the tourism industry in mountain areas. In Germany, the Federal government has launched a whole serie of initiatives which significantly **improve conditions for SMEs operating in the tourism sector.** Key elements of the initiative are: **strengthening of innovative capacity, reduction of administrative procedures (red tape) and improvement of financing opportunities.** The access of mountain tourism SME's to the "KfW-StartGeld" micro-credit programme and the ERP programme has been facilitated by legislation.

**In France, financial support is provided mainly to the tourism SMEs operating in low and middle mountains,** as compensation to their loose of profit when comparing to tourism businesses from high mountains resort in Alps and Pyrénées.

According to the Norwegian national tourism strategy<sup>41</sup>, *“approximately 2,500 businesses are involved in rural tourism in Norway. Based on the agricultural negotiations... the agricultural industry has established a separate development program for green tourism based on the farm and the rural communities' resources. Focus areas are product development, competence development, marketing and cooperation/ alliance building”.*

Financing of the **tourism infrastructure, in particular project focused on snow making equipment and ski slopes maintenance, has been supported from national budget in Slovakia and in Austria.**

The potential for **synergy effects between local food producers and the tourism** industry is large and exploited in some mountain regions. In order to bring products based on local ingredients to the forefront, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food in Norway prepared in collaboration with the Norwegian Agricultural Quality System and Food Branding Foundation, Innovation Norway and Rica Hotels project *“Local food on the menu”.* *“Through the project 69 local suppliers to Rica Hotels have been found, and*

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<sup>40</sup> “Förderungsprogramme für die Tourismus- und Freizeitwirtschaft” (Austrian Tourism Funding directive 2007), 2007, available in German at:

<http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/Tourismus/Tourismusfoerderung/Seiten/Foerderungsprogramme2007-2013.aspx>

<sup>41</sup> The government's tourism strategy "Valuable Experiences", December 2007

local food is now on the menu for all meal types in the eight Rica hotels that are included in the project so far"<sup>42</sup>.

The **training and requalification of mountain tourism providers** is another initiative that has been identified within this survey. In Germany, with the project "Gastfreundschaft für Alle" (Hospitality for all) supported by the Federal government of Germany, a large range of tourism operators, i.e. hoteliers, restaurant owners, operators of cultural and leisure facilities, staff of tourist information offices and organisations, have been raised their attention to the importance of a quality service.

At the background of demographic trends in Germany, the objective of **social tourism** is also gaining on importance since the proportion of older and disabled persons is increasing with the rise in the average age. Achieving this objective is the centrepiece of the Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (BGG) (**Equality for Persons with Disabilities Act**), which entered into force at federal level in 2002. Mountain entrepreneurs within mountain areas

Measures focused on "**soft mobility**" are aimed at offering the tourists the possibility to arrive to their holiday destination without a car, to have easy access to public transportation on site, etc. In Austria, such measures were privileged by the federal and regional ministries since 1990<sup>43</sup>. These initiatives led to two important EU INTERREG-projects (2000-2006) supported by the Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth:

- 'Alps Mobility II': aiming at the development and implementation of the transnational 'Alpine Pearls'<sup>44</sup>, which stands for vacations with Soft Mobility in more than 20 Alpine destinations in Europe (Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Slovenia, and Switzerland).
- "Alpine Awareness": promote environmentally friendly travel (essentially public transport, but also travel by bicycle, by foot, etc). The outputs of these pilot projects are e.g. "mobility service centres" with a focus on tourism transport or establishment of the new public transport connections for tourism (e.g. by Austrian Federal railways (ÖBB).

**Other policy measures**, which are implemented in order to attract more tourists and secure the quality standards of tourism services, are also dealing with **tourism packages** or **local branding system**.

The project "Wanderbares Deutschland" (Hiking in Germany), launched in 2003 by Federal Government and German Hiking Association aim at promoting the hiking in mountains. This project coordinates **regional hiking networks** at national level and introduces innovative marketing tools on internet platform ([www.wanderbaresdeutschland.de](http://www.wanderbaresdeutschland.de)). Other outcomes of this project are the practical guide for hiking tourists or the setting of quality standards through **national certification brand** "Qualitätsgastgeber Wanderbares Deutschland", awarded to the accommodation or food services provider.

In Austria (national level), an initiative worthy of note is the establishment of an "Alpine trail information system" (Alpines Wegeinformationssysteme - AWIS), GPS-based **digitalising the hiking trail**

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<sup>42</sup> The government's tourism strategy "Valuable Experiences", December 2007

<sup>43</sup> Pilot projects are accessible at: <http://www.alpsmobility.net/>; <http://www.xeismobil.at/>;  
<http://www.eco-travel.at/>

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.alpine-pearls.com>

**network.** In Carinthia (Austria) exists an ambition to promote the innovative and unique concept of summer tourism in Alps by the introduction of **“Alpine adventure” tourism packages.**

In the Northern Europe, Norway directs many of efforts to fostering **innovation in the tourism industry** through different projects like “Innovative Mountain Tourism”, assessing the needs for green tourism development.

In Romania, a national scale project "Super skiing in the Carpathians area" is aimed at supporting **winter sport activities** in mountain areas.

**Table 3:** Measures implemented in order to support promotion of mountain tourism

Country/ respondent	Measures												
	Tax reduction for tourism actors	National funding scheme	Regional funding scheme	Social tourism measures in mountain areas	National/regional mountain tourism packages	Promotion of soft mobility	Restaurants, resorts, etc) at national/regional level	Support for network organization of tourism providers (accommodation, restaurants, resorts, etc) at national/regional level	System for mountain actors	National/regional/local branding or certification	Support of platforms for knowledge sharing	Promotion of EU initiatives	Training and requalification of mountain services providers
Austria*		X			X	X			X		X		X
France - Massif Central		X	X		X								
France - Midi Pyrenees			X			X	X						X
France - Auvergne	X	X	X								X	X	X
Germany*				X					X		X	X	X
Italy	X		X		X						X	X	X
Italy - Piedmont region			X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	
Macedonia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Norway - Sogn og Fjordane County		X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	
Norway -Buskerud county		X	X		X		X					X	
Romania													
Romania - Nord-Eastern region		X	X	X	X							X	
Slovak republic*		X	X	X	X							X	X
Slovenia					X		X						
Switzerland			X		X	X	X		X				
*measures were estimated on the ground of information provided by national authorities or online sources													

## 2.5 Aspect of sustainability

The sustainability of mountain tourism activities is a very important policy challenge. The involvement of all tourism stakeholders, under clear guidelines and incentives coming from a central public and disinterested body are essential requirements for the sustainable tourism development. *“Since sustainability has a long term horizon and is costly, it will never be obtained by market forces alone; there is a need for a vision and strategy, with persistence and political commitment. But it is also a typical area, where long term private and social return on investments coincides and thus the public sector and tourism stakeholders can and should share these costs.”*<sup>45</sup> Regional and local public-private partnerships can ensure the respect of these values. *“Better collaboration between the private sector (local SMEs) and the public authorities is necessary to create the conditions for a sustainable management of the [tourism] activity.”*<sup>46</sup>

When asked if the national tourism strategies deal in some extent with the sustainability issues in their country, the majority of respondents are positive and consider that specific measures are already foreseen. However, in order to promote sustainable mountain tourism, tourism policy must fulfil all aspects of sustainability so that it contributes to growth, environmental protection and further social progress simultaneously<sup>47</sup>. Within the scope of this study, it was not possible to access in detail the sustainability of indicated measures and the replies gathered here reflects the opinions of respondents.

**Table 4:** Sustainability issue in tourism policy according to the perception of respondents of this study

Country - region	Reference of tourism strategy to sustainability	Specific regulations to strenghten sustainability
Austria	yes	NA
France - Auvergne	yes	yes
France - Massif Central	yes	yes
France - Midi Pyrenees	yes	yes
Germany- Baden-Wuertenberg	yes	yes
Germany- Bavaria	yes	yes
Italy	no	no
Italy - Piedmont region	yes	yes
Macedonia	NA	NA
Norway - Sogn og Fjordane County	yes	yes
Norway - Buskerud county	yes	yes
Romania	no	no
Romania - Nord-Eastern region	yes	yes
Slovak republic	yes	NA
Slovenia	yes	yes
Switzerland	yes	no

<sup>45</sup> CoR, 2006, p.160

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