

## *How to transform ancient alpine forts into tourism resources*

In the Alps, across the border between France and Italy, there are several ancient fortifications. Specially, these forts are located in Savoy, Hautes-Alpes, Alpes de Haute Provence and Alpes-Maritimes in the French side and in the Province of Cuneo, Province of Turin and Aosta Valley in the Italian side. These buildings are real treasures in terms of architecture, culture and history. However, as they were no longer used for military purposes, these constructions were abandoned and nearly ruined.

Thanks to the €1.800.000 received from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) over the period 2000-2006, the project “*Sentinels of the Alps, renovation and development of fortified heritage in the Franco-Italian Alps*” was developed. This project was part of a strategic plan that included a database of forts all over the region and a quality charter, based on the following criteria: offering to the public a multi-site ticket, designing bilingual communication tools, broadcasting all its documentation to the network, encouraging professionalism of the staff, participating in entertainment activities, among others.

As Muriel Faure, former project manager of *Sentinelles des Alpes*, stated: “*This project aimed to bring to the fort a common heritage: fortifications located in the border region of the Alps, and also to increase knowledge about fortified heritage and facilitate its restoration. More than 40 sites are now participating in the cross-border network and are together developing cultural and tourism projects.*”

Nowadays, the ancient forts are considered as monuments and attraction for tourists. Indeed, many networks and seminars on new ways of cultural tourism were held since this project started. For instance, the 1st International Forum on Alpine Fortifications took place in May 2009. Although the project is already finished, currently, the network continued and is now animated by the “[Grande Traversée des Alpes](#)” initiative, which enables the integration of the forts in a comprehensive offer of cross-border tourism addressed to discover the Alpine region on foot, by bike or car.

In addition to this, for cross-border cooperation between France and Italy, this is an important step forward at every level, which brings benefits for the whole region in terms of economy, territorial cohesion and development.

For further information about this project, please, click [here](#).

FB: Is it possible to preserve historic heritage and at the same time promote cultural tourism in the mountains? Do not miss the good practice of this week @Sentinelles des Alpes based on cross-border cooperation between France and Italy.