

CASE STUDY FR-3

MEDITERRANEAN AGRO-PASTORAL CULTURAL LANDSCAPE IN THE NATIONAL PARK OF CÉVENNES

BRIEF PROFILE OF THE CASE STUDY

- The French national park of the 'Cévennes' is the only one to be permanently inhabited (~ 30,000 – 60,000 people) in continental France.
- The population in the park has been renewed thanks to the attractiveness of the territory and several waves of neo-rural immigration since the 1970s.
- The park covers three types of landscape: the Causses, Cévennes and Mont Lozère areas. Those landscapes were shaped by agro-pastoral practices over centuries. A large part of the National Park has received the UNESCO World Heritage label.
- In this case study, the main environmental and social benefits provided are landscape character, rural vitality and water management (quality and quantity)



KEY FACTORS IMPACTING THE PROVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

- At global level, market drivers do not take account of the provision of environmental and social benefits and activities in the area responding to those drivers may threaten those inherited landscapes features despite of the UNESCO protection.
- At the EU level, the rules and tools supported under the Common Agricultural Policy are often not adapted to local agro-pastoral practices and can result in perverse effects. The distinction between agricultural productive area subsidies and environmental grants leads to a landscape homogenization and a loss of inherited features.
- At the national and regional level, the recognition of local specificities and agro-/sylvo-pastoral practices are positive factors for the maintenance of the typical landscape.
- At the local level, the region is characterized by high social capital and very dynamic associations which promote environmental awareness and landscape value within the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.

EMERGING FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS



- Importance of the National Park authority about stakeholder coordination and local governance.
- The focus is on the maintenance of a landscape inherited from past agro-pastoral practices rather than shaped by intensive agriculture practices.
- This Mediterranean agro-pastoral cultural landscape is threatened by global market factors driving agriculture and forestry activities in the area, despite of the UNESCO label and the National Park Policy.
- Some environmental and social benefits are provided by neo-rural farmers which tend to implement 'unconventional' and innovative practices (organic/biodynamic production, short supply chain, innovative transformation process, etc.).
- The touristic sector and local residents are the main beneficiaries of the environmental and social benefits linked to the territory attractiveness and its quality of life.

