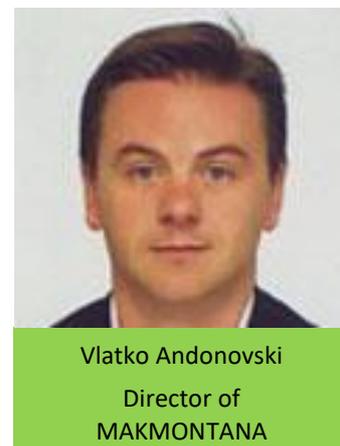


MEETING WITH VLATKO ANDONOVSKI, FROM MAKMONTANA (NORTH MACEDONIA)

The Republic of North Macedonia is a mountainous country, with mountains and semi-mountains comprising more than 65% of the national territory. In North Macedonia 30% of the population live in mountain areas. To promote good quality of life and sustainable development in these territories was created in 2000 the non-governmental organisation MAKMONTANA. To better understand how the association is raising public awareness on mountain areas and dealing with sustainable and cross border development issues, we met with Vlatko Andonovski, Executive Director of MAKMONTANA.



***Euromontana:* Can you briefly introduce the specificities and missions of MAKMONTANA?**

Vlatko Andonovski: “MAKMONTANA recognises the specific features of mountain areas and supports the development of approaches which duly consider the natural, social and cultural values of mountain areas, while also recognising these territories as providers of essential goods and services to the national economy.

For this reason, the main objective of our association is to promote the sustainable mountain development for mountain people in the Republic of North Macedonia. MAKMONTANA cooperates with universities, professional associations and other organisations in Macedonia and abroad dealing with issues linked to the development and protection of mountain regions”

What kind of challenges is your territory facing?

“Mountain areas in North Macedonia are facing numerous socio-economic challenges. A problem of depopulation of mountain and rural areas which is also present in the rest of Europe is one of them. To respond to these challenges a participatory and integrated approaches that address all aspects of sustainability are required.

The resources of the mountain areas in North Macedonia, such as rich biodiversity, ecosystem services, renewable energy sources, high tourist attractiveness and unique cultural heritage, create great opportunity for joint actions toward more dynamic and sustainable socioeconomic development. These development potentials which when properly used may be translated into its sustainable and dynamic development.”

Could you give examples of projects contributing to the sustainable development of mountains?

“MAKMONTANA is implementing different projects related to biodiversity conservation, climate change, sustainable agriculture and forestry and rural development.

Currently, together with the Balkan Foundation for Sustainable Development-BFSD we are implementing the

project “Sustainable Development of Mountain Areas in North Macedonia”. The project objective is to promote sustainable development of local economies in the mountain areas of North Macedonia through three main axes: sustainable agriculture, sustainable landscape management and sustainable forest land use and creating local action groups - LAGs.”

“The greatest challenge for mountain regions in North Macedonia is related to the EU integration. Tackling this issue calls for strengthening regional cooperation between mountain organisations and regions.”

When did MAKMONTANA join Euromontana?

“MAKMONTANA joined Euromontana in 2000, not long after our creation. That was a period of transition for Macedonia after the breakout of former Yugoslavia and mountain areas where not a specific focus at national level. Our interest to join Euromontana was to integrate a European network in order to do some networking by connecting with other mountain organisations.”

What is the added value of our network for you?

“Euromontana helped us to connect with other organisations and institutions throughout Europe and to build our capacities in order to become a leading association for sustainable mountain development in our country.

The greatest challenge for the sustainable development of mountain regions in North Macedonia and the Balkan countries is related to the EU integration. Tackling this issue calls for strengthening regional cooperation between mountain organisations and regions.”