



VI. European mountain Convention:

How to generate added value from Europe's mountains

8-10 October 2008

Switzerland, Canton of Valais, city of Brig

(all this and additional and updated information is available at www.euromontana.org)

STATUS 01.10.2008

Mountain areas represent 40% of the greater European landmass and 20% of the population. European mountain areas offer and provide numerous amenities and opportunities. Nevertheless, the economic development of mountain areas faces certain challenges. Just to cite some examples: globalization, accessibility, climate change, demographic change. How can mountain areas react to these challenges? How can the strengths of mountain areas better be recognised and promoted? The VI European Mountain Convention will explore different approaches and try to identify ways forward. It will present concrete ideas for actors in the field generated by their counterparts. At the same time it will promote discussion on the necessary framework conditions, particularly in related policy fields.

The conference offers a forum of exchange between multisectoral actors in mountain areas, including national, regional and local authorities, regional development organisations, environmental and forestry actors, agriculture and research and training institutions throughout Europe.

Euromontana, the European Association of Mountain Areas, in cooperation with the Swiss Centre for Mountain Regions (SAB) is organising this VI European Mountain Convention in the city of Brig (CH). In the year 2008, Brig is the Alpine city of the year, which provides an ideal background for the Mountain Convention. The Convention is combined with another international event in Brig, organised by the Fondation pour le développement durable des régions de montagne, held on October 6 to 7 (see www.fddm.ch), which creates one big international week of the mountains. The field trips are therefore combined between the two events. The Mountain Convention is made possible by support from the Swiss Federal Office for Agriculture, the Canton of Valais and the city of Brig as well as numerous other sponsors.

DRAFT AGENDA

Wednesday 8 October 2008

Registration of participants from 16.00 onwards

Study tours

1. Visit to the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site "Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn"
2. Visit to the Ecomuseum Simplon
3. Visit to the regional park Binntal

Starting point: 13h30 in front of the Congress centre in Brig

Thursday 9 October 2008

Arrival of participants and registration from 08.00 onwards

(Euromontana General Assembly 09.30-12.00)

12.00 Lunch

13.00 Plenary session

13.00 Opening and introduction to the conference

- Frank Gaskell, Past-President of Euromontana
- Viola Amherd, mayor of the City of Brig and member of the Federal Parliament

13.15 Keynote Speech: Mountain areas in the new European policies – a closer look at the Territorial Cohesion and the Common Agricultural Policy

- Mariann Fischer Boel, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

13.45 Keynote speech: Setting the right political framework for mountains on their way to innovation and competitiveness

- Michel Barnier, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, France

14.15 Moderated round table: Challenges and responses in generating added value within the European mountain areas

- Ivo Hlaváč, Deputy Minister for agriculture of the Czech Republic
- Janne Sjelmo Nordås, Deputy Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Norway
- Branka Tome, State Secretary for Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia
- Mihai Constantinescu, General Directorate for rural development, Romania
- Gérald Dayer, Head of the Office for agriculture, Valais
- Thomas Dax, Bundesanstalt für Bergbauernfragen, Austria

Facilitator: Priscilla Imboden, Swiss Radio DRS

15.30 Coffee

16.00-18.00 Parallel Working Groups

1) Building and fostering systems of added value

Facilitator: Christoph Böhnner, Vice director of the Federal office for agriculture

Many ideas and projects are developed in mountain areas. But sadly, many of those ideas are not successful. All too often, those products and services are not market-orientated or are not integrated in chains of added value. So how can we build chains of added value? Or how can we strengthen existing chains? What are factors for success or failure?

- Experience of the Woodcluster Salzburg: Waltraud Winkler-Rieder, Austria
- The Glacier Express – a successful example of integrated offers in tourism: Christoph Anderegg, Matterhorn Gotthard Bahn, Switzerland
- EuroMARC project: analysis of the different elements of the agricultural value chain: Marie Guitton, Euromontana

2) Transformation of the industrial sector in mountain areas

Facilitator: Frédéric Bonhoure, Mission montagne of Région Rhône-Alpes, France

Industry is often a very important factor for the economic development of mountain areas. Traditionally, heavy industry was developed on the basis of a cheap labour-force and available energy. In some countries, heavy industry was decentralised for political reasons. New forms of production and new market requirements have fundamentally changed the requirements of those industries. The restructuring process was and still is difficult for most regions, as alternative job opportunities are not available. It is therefore interesting to analyse some successful examples of transformation.

- Transforming the metal forging industry in Austria into new economic activities: Arnulf Hasler, Regional management of Obersteiermark West, Austria
- Transformation of the industrial sector in the Spanish Basque country: Iñaki Dorronsoro, Mondragon International, Spain

3) Towards a knowledge based mountain economy

Facilitator: Flavio Ruffini, European Academy Bolzano (EURAC), Italy

Knowledge is becoming an increasingly important factor for economic success. This holds particularly true for mountain regions which have to struggle with increased transport distances, more difficult access to markets etc. An intelligent combination of science, research and enterprises can generate an added value in those mountain regions. There are several interesting examples in that respect:

- Centre for Health and Science CfHS in Inverness: Alasdair Munro, Chair of CfHS and Gillian Galloway, Project Director of CfHS, Scotland
- University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland: Martin Price, director of the Centre for Mountain Studies, Scotland
- The approach of the autonomous province of Bolzano: Flavio Ruffini, EURAC

4) Adaptation approaches to climate change

Facilitator: Viktoria Lofner-Meir, Ministry of agriculture and forestry of Bayern, Germany

The climate is changing. We must take this as a fact. Many studies have been carried out to prove this and to show the possible impacts of this climate change. The European Commission published a Green Paper on climate change in 2007.

Mountain areas will be particularly affected by the impacts of climate change. They therefore need for adaptation approaches to climate change. How can winter tourism react to decreasing snow-coverage? Are there other opportunities e.g. in summer tourism? How can territorial entities react to increasing natural hazards? Do we need new rules for spatial planning? What are likely impacts on mountain farming? Do we need new production methods?

- Climate change, impacts and adaptation strategies in the Alpine Space - Lessons to be learned from the Interreg IIIB project ClimChAlp: : Peter Greminger, BAFU, Switzerland
- Diversification of tourism on the background of climate change – the case of Monte Tamaro in Ticino: Rocco Cattaneo, President of Monte Tamaro
- Does climate change offer new potentials for agriculture? Federico Bigaran, Provincia de Torino and Gianbattista Toller, San Michele Institute, Italy

20.00 Common dinner of the conference participants

Sponsored by Coop Pro Montagna

Friday 10 October 2008

09.00 Round table: Lessons to be learned from the previous day

Moderated round table with the moderators of the workshops

Facilitator: Priscilla Imboden, Swiss Radio DRS

09.30 Parallel Working Groups

5) Valorisation of mountain amenities – externalities?

Facilitator: Gérard Viatte, former Director of Agriculture, OECD

Mountain areas provide various amenities such as the landscape, the pure air, high-quality farming products, water, rich biodiversity, etc. But how can these amenities better be valorised? How can we make sure that the provision and use of those amenities are properly paid for and that the positive externalities from mountain areas receive an appropriate compensation?

- Paying the right price for water: Sven Erik Stinessen, National community of waterpower Lvk, Norway
- Payments for environmental services, Jakob Skoet, FAO, Italy
- Landscape – just nice to look at or an economic value? Peter Bebi, WSL, Switzerland

6) Developing and supporting entrepreneurship in mountain areas

Facilitator: Juanan Gutierrez, IKT, Spain

Mountain areas face the handicap of longer distances and therefore more difficult access to markets. In such situations, enterprises in mountain areas must be particularly efficient in developing new business schemes. They must innovate and launch new, user-orientated products and services. They must also be ready to take some risks. In short: they need entrepreneurship. How can this be encouraged? What are the factors for success?

- Creating new revenues with agrotourism: Laurent Remillieux, Chamber of agriculture of the Region Rhône-Alpes, France
- Creating new opportunities with IT-services: Franck Burdeyron, e-Conception.Net, France
- Possibilities and limits to activate entrepreneurship – Experiences from a project in Graubünden: Birgit Kopainsky, Switzerland

7) New approaches in territorial governance

Facilitator: Drew MacFarlane-Slack, Scottish Rural Property & Business Association Limited, Scotland

Promoting integrated rural development poses numerous policy and governance challenges: it requires coordination across sectors, across levels of government and between public and private actors. What is the best level for coordination? How can actors be brought together? How to steer and conduct a bottom-up-process at local / regional level?

e.g.

- National parks as a tool for territorial governance – the experience of the national parks in Macedonia: in Vlatko Andonowski, Balkan Foundation, Macedonia
- Project MAREMA Interreg IIIC: Martina Kanzian, Regionalmanagement Kärnten Dienstleistung GmbH, Austria
- Landmanagement contracts in the Highlands: Becky Shaw, Land Use Programme Manager, Scottish Crofting Foundation. Scotland

8) Demographic change as a challenge and a chance

Facilitator: Gabi Tröger-Weiss, TU Kaiserslautern, Germany

Demographic change with both ageing populations and the loss of younger people leaving is a huge challenge for numerous mountain regions. How can the services of general interest be maintained under those circumstances? Can this demographic change also be a chance for mountain regions? Could some regions specialize, for example, on the care for elderly people? What are the consequences of demographic change on the role of women in society and economy?

- Innovative approaches for maintaining services of general interest on the background of the demographic change. Gabi Tröger-Weiss
- Care for elderly persons as an asset for mountain territories? A case from Torino: Giovanni Borgarello, Italy
- The role of women in up-keeping the social network in regions particularly affected by demographic change: female farmers from Romania

11.00 Coffee break

11.30 Plenary session and round table discussion: Policy approaches supporting innovation in Europe's mountains – Towards a new rural paradigm

Rural policy has for a long time been a sectoral policy. But in most rural and mountain regions, farming is no longer the predominant economic factor. Rural regions depend on a wide range of economic engines for growth. A new approach towards rural regions is needed. Should we seek a new rural paradigm? Its main characteristics would be a focus on places rather than sectors and an emphasis on investments rather than subsidies.

- Theo Maissen, President of SAB and member of the Federal Parliament, Switzerland
- Sergio Reolon, President of the Province of Belluno, Italy
- Peter Wostner, Deputy Director, Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy, the Republic of Slovenia
- Nicolas Evrard, secretary general of AEM
- Jean-Didier Hache, CPMR

13.00 Closing and conclusions

- Reports from the working groups (Moderated round table with the moderators of the workshops, *Facilitator: Priscilla Imboden, Swiss Radio DRS*)
- New President of Euromontana

13.30 Lunch

Lunch with local PDO-products in the Stockalperschloss.

Saturday 11 October 2008

We suggest you might take the opportunity to stay for the weekend in this very interesting touristic region. On Saturday, a festival of alpine choirs will take place in Brig. Further information can be found at: www.alpenstadt-2008.ch, www.valaistourism.ch and www.brig-belalp.ch

A special touristic package has been developed for participants and their relatives of the Mountain Convention. Please visit www.sab.ch for further details.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

The conference will take place in the Congress centre "Simplonhalle", city of Brig, Canton Wallis, Switzerland.

Registration and further information:

Please send your registration by 31 August 2008 at the latest by Email to info@sab.ch or by fax at +41 31 382 10 16.

You can also use the online form at www.sab.ch

For further information, you can either contact our office in Brussels at

T: +32 2 280 4283

F: +32 2 280 4285

conference@euromontana.org

or the local organiser, the Swiss Center for mountain regions SAB in Bern at

T +41 31 382 10 10 / info@sab.ch

Languages: English, French, Italian, German and Slovenian

Costs: A participation fee of 100 Euros for members of Euromontana resp. 120 Euros for non-members is required.

How to get there

Brig is located in the middle of the Alps. It is very accessible by train. There are direct connections from Geneva and Zurich international airports. Travelling time is ca. 2 hours.

For the train timetables, you can visit www.sbb.ch

Venue: Simplonhalle (Congress centre)
Rhonesandstrasse, Brig (CH)

Insert map

Accommodation

A number of hotel rooms are specially reserved for the Convention and are guaranteed until 31 August 2008. Reservations can be made directly via the annexed form, which has to be sent to Brig-Belalp-Tourismus or via the online form at <http://www.brig-belalp.ch/events/kongresse/reservation6.berggebietstagung.php>. If you want to register later, we can not guarantee that there are enough rooms in the city of Brig. Please contact directly Brig-Belalp-Tourismus (www.brig-belalp.ch). Each participant must pay for his/her accommodation directly to the hotel.