

Mountains need Europe and Europe needs mountains

A Manifesto for Action and Change

We, as elected members of the **European Parliament** and the **Committee of the Regions**, representing diverse European mountainous regions, affirm our commitment to forging a European Alliance for Mountains with like-minded elected members of both institutions. This group, which should be resolutely diverse in its political and geographical representation, will focus on tackling the unique challenges faced by our mountainous territories and creating a platform for meaningful political debate and action within our institutions.

Territories of opportunities, facing specific constraints

Due to their often remote and rural nature, mountain communities face significant obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure and limited access to essential services. Additionally, mountain areas, including mountain-islands, across Europe, while diverse in their characteristics, share several environmental, societal, economic and migratory challenges impacting both mountain communities and mountain ecosystems. Flagship economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, handicraft and tourism, which continue to be the beating hearts of most mountain areas, often find themselves facing overlapping crisis.

Yet, with 30% of Europe's surface, 13% of its population, 18% of its farms (36% of geographical indications registered in the EU), and 43% of Natura 2000 sites, European mountains must play a key role in delivering on Europe's sustainability, resilience and prosperity goals. Mountains act cumulatively as continental water towers, suppliers of energy and raw materials, providers of high-quality food, reservoirs of biodiversity, carbon sinks, and hosts to a rich cultural and natural heritage. Mountains are also central to the prevention and management of natural hazards, including in lowland areas. For these reasons, they need adequate and differentiated support to continue to provide common goods for all European citizens and to play their part in the continent's civil protection.

Defending a "Right to Stay"

To ensure the sustainability and vitality of mountain areas, and thus the continued delivery of ecosystem services to the rest of Europe, we must uphold the principle of the "right to stay" in mountains. This means creating the conditions for communities to live, work, and thrive in these areas. The right to stay is about providing all mountain residents with access to opportunities and essential services while empowering them to shape their own futures without being forced to migrate elsewhere.

Forging a path towards attractive, resilient and sustainable mountains

In full alignment with the EU's Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, it is therefore crucial to work towards making mountains more attractive, while at the same time more resilient to the socio-economic and environmental challenges they are facing:

- European mountains must become resilient territories adapted to the impacts of climate change, that contribute to food & energy security and rely on a diversified future-oriented economy.
- European mountains must become attractive territories that can provide jobs, a good quality of life for inhabitants of all ages, including persons with disabilities, and better connectivity and accessibility for all.
- European mountains must be able to better manage and adequately value their natural resources and ecosystem services, particularly those provided by agriculture, while also ensuring the protection of its rich biodiversity and cultural landscapes.

To support these objectives, it is crucial for the European Union to be equipped with specific policies, strategies and programmes.

Delivering on the promises of art 174 TFUE

The need to pay special attention to territories with geographic or demographic constraints, such as mountainous areas, is explicitly recognised in the European treaties through Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE). Despite this, European policies still fail to consistently and convincingly deliver on this commitment. The establishment of this European Alliance for Mountain Areas is a crucial step toward addressing this gap and ensuring that mountain regions receive the focus and financial resources they need.

We call on other elected members of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions representing mountain territories to join this European Alliance for Mountain Areas and work together to translate this vision into concrete legislative outcomes in this new EU mandate. Together we can ensure that Europe's mountains are not only preserved, but transformed into resilient, competitive, sustainable and thriving territories that contribute to Europe's collective future.



Marie Antoinette Maupertuis

Member of the Committee of the Regions
President of the Assembly of Corsica



Herbert Dorfmann

Member of the European Parliament
Representative from South Tyrol



Laura Gascon Herrero

President of Euromontana