



**VIIth European Mountain Convention**  
"European Mountain Regions- A spirit of Innovation"  
15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> September 2010, Lillehammer, Norway



**Proceedings of the  
7th European Mountain Convention**  
"European Mountain Regions – A spirit of Innovation"  
15th -17th September 2010  
Lillehammer, Norway



## FOREWORD

Every two years since 1998, Euromontana has gathered European, national, regional and local key stakeholders, scientists and entrepreneurs for a European Mountain Convention. In 2010, the VIIth European Mountain Convention was held in Lillehammer, Norway from 15th to 17th September. Entitled “**European mountain regions: a spirit of innovation**” the conference put its focus on the topic *innovation*. More than **350 participants from 23 countries** throughout Europe and from the USA participated in our event and contributed to its success.

Together, we could prove that **mountain areas have a great innovation potential, showcasing amongst others how the mountain population can contribute to make Europe more innovative** and thus more competitive on a global scale. Our support to one of the major EU objectives - the generation of the innovation union by 2020 was thus proved.

The conference also provided an opportunity for participants to confirm their ambitions for **populated mountains, mountains that create value and can be laboratories for the creation of a new model of sustainable development**, in concordance with the EU 2020 strategy. Innovation has been confirmed as a broad concept, embracing any transformation of an existing idea into a new product, service, or organizational model that might answer tomorrow’s challenges. The great level of participation, the quality of exchanges and speeches have proved that the innovation potential of Europe’s mountains is huge and deserves to be better recognized.

At the end of this Convention the Euromontana network approved and adopted the **Lillehammer Declaration**, communicating both its own commitments and recommendations to better foster innovation in mountain areas at different levels of governance (see page 29).

This Mountain Convention would not have been possible without the substantial support of many partners. In particular, we would like to thank the Norwegian Mountain Network and Oppland County Council for the quality of the organization and all financial and human resources they mobilized. We further address our thanks to the Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and to the Buskerud, Hedmark, Sogn og Fjordane and Telemark county councils whose committed cooperation and financial support was of immense help.

Last but not least, we would like to especially thank all the participants who came from around the world and contributed with their knowledge and experience to the success of the event. We hope that we could meet their expectations and that they will find their way to our next, the VIIIth Mountain Convention that will be held in 2012. We would be glad to then have the opportunity to take stock on the implementation of our orientations on which we agreed together in Lillehammer.

All conference presentations can be downloaded on the conference website at: [www.euromontana.org](http://www.euromontana.org)

## STUDY TRIPS

For this Convention, Norwegian organisers offered the participants the opportunity to participate in 3 different study trips, 2 longer and one shorter (compatible with the organisation of the Euromontana General Assembly). Through these field trips, Norwegians mountain dwellers shared with Europeans their local know-how and their creativity in several fields.

### Study visit 1. Innovation in the sector of agriculture and tourism, cultural discovery

Many participants chose this field trip as they were also attending the Euromontana General Assembly. Through a 200 km long circuit they discovered the region of **Gausdal** and **Midt-Gudbrandsdalen**. A beautiful autumn sunshine followed participants through the mountain sites they visited.



Participants had the opportunity to discover the station of winter sports in **Skei in Gausdal**, where the director presented their strategy of development and marketing, mainly based attracting Norwegian and Swedish people, but also internationals from all around the Europe. The station offers accommodation on a very beautiful and wild mountain, both in traditional houses and in modern complexes. At the beginning mainly a winter sports station, they innovated by offering accommodation and activities all along the year and attract thus more people and through a longer period in the year.

From this, the bus run along “**The Peer Gynt road**”, where participants could see how Norwegian farmers have cultivated the landscape high up in the mountains. Participants arrived at the lake Gålå where a special performance of an opera singer was waiting for them in the outdoor amphitheatre, with the lake as a background. This amphitheatre is hosting during August the festival “Peer Gynt”, playing the most famous of the Henrik Ibsen plays. A presentation of the “Peer Gynt” company permitted participants to learn about how the Norwegians took stock of the fame and world rename of ancient Nobel of the literature to promote this region where the real Per Gynt lived. This example shows that mountain and culture is not incompatible, that both people and great artists can meet up in the mountains and that the impact of the play on the spectator is even bigger. For some plays the “décor” is already settled (the beautiful lake Gålå and the mountains along). The festival they are organising is attracting several thousands of people each year, being a very

good opportunity to bring dynamism to the region where several hotels and restaurants have been created and to market the region outside (as they are also playing spectacles outside the region).



From Gålå, participants crossed the valley Gudbrandsdalen, to get at the **farm Rudi**. An old Norwegian mountain farm has been transformed by his owner into an agro-touristic unit where they organise spectacles and typical farmers' meals for tourists. The owner, Øystein Rudi, a well-known fiddler, played folk music for the participants. He explained how he and his wife has developed the farm using his cultural knowledge, and they now have several large arrangements each year with concerts, shows etc.

## **Study visit 2. Innovation in food production and energy, agricultural research in mountain areas**

The first stop of this visit was at **Svatsum Electricity Plant**, a small, private water power station in the municipality of Gausdal. Here *Mr Harald Ove Foss* gave the participants thorough and detailed information about the station history and ownership, the production of energy and replied to their diverse questions.



**Ruten Mountain Lodge, Espedalen**



The bus continued the journey to **Ruten Mountain Lodge** (approximately 1000 m high) further up the valley of Espedalen. The owners warmly welcomed the participants with fresh coffee and delicious coffee bread by the outdoor fire place. They shared the lodge's 70's year old history and present activities. Nowadays they focus on serving tourists local food as much as possible. That is how Ruten became renowned for its great homemade food from quality local raw materials, served to Norwegian and European tourists all year round.

Strong of their success, the owners even started a small home brewery now, where they produce different sorts of stout with local ingredients (like black berry and birch sap), and some not that local, like coffee stout. More information can be found on <http://www.ruten.no/>

From Ruten participants went west through **Jotunheimen**, one of the most spectacular and mythical Norwegian mountain areas. They enjoyed beautiful scenery and observed grouse hunters and local farmers collecting the last sheep and cattle before winter set in.



At **Haugseter**, the mayor of Øystre Slidre municipality, *Mrs Gro Lundby*, entered the bus. She guided participants through the area where a number of people still run summer farms, producing milk. Here the milk is either collected by a dairy van either made processed into sour cream, butter and cheese for sale. The belief of mayor and inhabitants here is that a living and lively landscape, strong by the presence of modern farms means also a lot of people visiting the area. Lately the county administration even introduced a school bus service so that the whole family can stay in the area even after the school term starts in August. So that if nice weather, people stay sometimes until the middle of September in their pasture places.

Further the participants went to **Beitostølen**, a major tourist destination in the valley of Valdres, that became over the past 50 years to become a large town (in Norwegian terms). More than 1800 beds for short term are available for tourists, in addition to a large number of cabins ([www.beitostolen.com/](http://www.beitostolen.com/))



The next stop was at **Beitostølen Healthsports Center**, a pioneer institution within physical rehabilitation. The objectives of the center are to help persons with physical disabilities to be active and participate in daily life. Main focus is on provision of a wide spectrum of activities, in spite of a disability, more than because of a disability - «focus on the potential». The activities offered are to some extent reflecting the Norwegian activity culture, with great emphasis on outdoor activities. <http://www.bhss.no/information-in-english.aspx>

The last stop of the bus was **Bioforsk Løken**, one of several Norwegian national research stations within the agricultural sector. Bioforsk conducts applied and specifically targeted research linked to multifunctional agriculture and rural development, plant sciences, environmental protection and natural resource management.



A great lunch from local food produce was offered to participants, accompanied by interesting talks with the scientists employed at Løken. There was a vivid and very interesting discussion amongst the participants, and as always, time flew.

### Study visit 3. Innovation in public sector and forestry, visit of an initiative of tourism development

This study visit went to the tourist destination **Sjusjøen** before the bus crossed over the mountain to the **valley Østerdalen**. After visiting the little community Solli, the participants returned to the valley Gudbrandsdalen crossing the mountain in another place, called Venabygdsfjellet.



The first stop was at **Rustad Fjellstue** at Sjusjøen; an old little hotel with timber walls and wooden furniture. The participants were told about the organisation of Birkebeineren events: races for cross country skiing, biking and running. The Birkebeineren races are based on an old Norwegian history about a little baby king having been saved by two skiers (“Birkebeinere”), who brought him away from his enemies. Several thousands people join the races each year and that gets more and more popular over the time. This is a good way for the mountain communities in the area to get more income and tourists.



In **Østerdalen** the leader of a “traffic project” joined the bus. She told the participants how they use the moose presents in the area in an artistic and funny ways to wake up the drivers, to make them stop for a rest, and to give them new experiences.

The next stop was at **Sollia**, a little community with only 100 inhabitants. The valley is an outskirt of the municipality Stor-Elvdal, close to the well-known Norwegian massif Rondane. At the farm belonging to Jo Øvergaard the participants heard about the challenges of today's mountain forestry. As the timber from local forests often gets a lower price when sold for traditional use, local entrepreneurs decided to make an alternative processing. They use the materials both in old and new ways, like for example the business Materialbanken AS, presented in workshop 7 during the conference. Some of the participants were impressed by the fact that the local pine grows only 1 mm a year in Norway whereas Southern in Europe it can grow of some 1 cm/year.

The next stop in Sollia was at Atnasjø kafé, where a lunch with Norwegian dishes was served. The mayor of Stor-Elvdal shared with the participants the challenges of a large mountain municipality populated by to few inhabitants. He also stressed on the positive effects of the mountains in developing specific industries (tourism, wood). The Norwegian Merkur project for example, a program for maintaining the small stores and giving the inhabitants in small societies diversified quality services was presented. Sollia is a partner of this project. They will use their local store and modern technologies to give better services to the inhabitants and the tourists.

Sollia is also home for one of the most famous Norwegian paintings; "Winter Night in Rondane" by Harald Sohlberg, Moreover, the national project "Tourist Routes" has chosen the road from the painting as one of their national routes. The participants could walk a bit on this famous road (from the kafé to the place) and got a nice view of the Rondane. Traditional songs were singed by a local singer and the story of this national tourist route was told. Participants learned that Sollia and the other communities along this road got a stronger visibility, more tourists and traffic since the project was developed.



The last stop on the trip was at **Venabygdsfjellet**, where the theme of the discussion was the wild reindeer living in the mountains of Rondane. The secretary for the local administration of the wild reindeer and the owner of a local hotel explained the participants how it was important to give the reindeer enough room and safety to feel good and to live in harmony with people.



## 16<sup>th</sup> September: DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPTS OF INNOVATION AND PROMOTION OF BROADER PERSPECTIVES

The objective of the introductory section was to present and explain in the plenary of the conference the concepts of innovation, adjusting them to the challenges and opportunities of mountain areas. Key-note and high-level representatives from Norway, greater Europe and the USA were invited to communicate their views and perspectives on innovation in mountain areas. The session was chaired by **Svein Borkus - President of Fjellregionsamarbeidet** (The Norwegian Mountain Network) and vice-president of Euromontana.

### Contributions to the debate

**Audun Tron - President of Oppland County Council**, former state Secretary of Norway and Mayor of Lillehammer during the Olympic Games in 1994 gave an overview of future challenges that Oppland is facing. He presented the county as being an important and attractive region, 80% covered by mountains. However, being very sparsely populated (around 8 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) **one of the major challenges of the County Council is to raise the attractiveness of mountain areas as dynamic places to live in for young, highly skilled professionals**, and to offer them interesting job opportunities. Mountain areas in Oppland have qualities that are much appreciated by people (e.g. landscape, attractive prices for accommodation, wide range of different sport opportunities and other activities, etc) but in terms of housing, people prefer lower areas. **He expressed his confidence that through the use of new information and communication tools, the internet and other technologies it will be possible to innovate in mountain areas, thus increasing the opportunities for young people** to find more easily a highly qualified job and settle down in mountain areas. He highlighted that all this only can be made reality if the regions play an active role, including their own promotion.

**André Marcon - President of Euromontana pointed out** that innovation is a sensitive topic for European mountain areas. **The many constraints mountain areas have to face (geography, climate, energy, demography) are at the same time the engines for innovation.** Thus, the solidarity between **people living in mountain areas is grounded on their common geography and past events.** They are used to **work in small networks to solve their problems**, being a great **reservoir of collective intelligence.** He confirmed the interest of the Euromontana network to transform the challenges mountain dwellers face into opportunities, through innovative actions and the transfer of knowledge and best practices between the mountain areas of Europe .

**Synnøve Brenden - Mayor of Lillehammer** since 1999, explained to the audience **Lillehammer's "way to excellence"**, showing how the city developed rapidly in the past years. While in the early 20th century, wood transformation was the main activity, in the past decades the city and its region became very dynamic as regards trade, industry and tourism, being today a reference for winter sport activities. Although all necessary conditions were naturally present in the area, it was only thanks to **great people, creative and hard work** that the region could develop positively.

After the brief introductory speeches of the 3 orators, the **Norwegian Minister in charge of Local Government and Regional Development, Ms Liv Signe Navarsete**, joined the conference in order to show her ministry's commitment to mountain areas issues. The Minister expressed her interest in the creation of values and related economic activities in mountain areas, which cover some 91% of Norway. Therefore she insisted on the fact that **innovation is an important factor when it comes to value creation** and that **Norwegian mountain dwellers are dynamic and creative and able to contribute to this process. Mountain stakeholders must then pass the message on and communicate about their areas' capacity to innovate**, demonstrating that **innovation happens in mountain, rural and sparsely populated areas** and that this is not a privilege of urban agglomerations. **The Norwegian mountain policy is strong and adapted to the regional needs.** Several legislative initiatives (the last is the White Paper for mountain policy) promote freedom of action at regional level, aiming to develop the local industry while, at the same time, conserving traditional values. **Different financial tools and lower taxes for mountain businesses, access to broadband are some policy examples that aim at the overall development of different Norwegian areas.** The positive impact of this kind of supportive policies can be seen in different success stories of diverse mountain enterprises at national and international level. The Minister cited two of them: the association of farmers *Rakfisk fra Valdres* producing and processing high-quality fish products that are well-known throughout Norway for their taste, authenticity and guaranteed qualities. Another good example is the company *Sweet protection* which is a world leader in the production of technical clothes for mountain sports. Both enterprises show that it is not the remote location of their business that matters but **the ambition and the exploitation of know-how**: *Sweet protection* is based in a small Norwegian village but thanks to the internet and new communication marketing techniques they sell their high quality products to consumers world-wide.

The Vice-President of the European Commission, Antonio Tajani, was represented by **Peter Dröll**, Head of Unit *Policy Development for Industrial Innovation* at the European Commission. Mr Dröll centred his speech on **innovation in a broad sense and on development opportunities for mountain areas through innovative actions.** He started by characterising innovation as being a **big, broad and global** phenomenon:

- **Big** as a powerful tool creating economic and social value, accounting for a good share of labour productivity growth. Today, firms around the world invest as much in intangible assets related to innovation such as software, skills, organisational know-how as they invest in traditional capital (machinery, equipment and buildings).
- **Broad** as a huge diversity of business models exist today. 50% of innovation is not research-generated, and many kinds of innovation just appear by bringing existing knowledge together and using it in a new way.
- **Global** as it happens (differently) all around the world from India to the USA and Mexico and to the European Union and vice versa.

Europe can be characterized as a very strong innovation actor, but what is lacking so far is an internal market for innovation products, said Mr Dröll. The new EU innovation strategy <sup>1</sup> will adopt a **broad approach and free up the process of passing an idea to the market**, for companies as much as for citizens. In order to boost product creation, **the mobility of researchers, design and creativity on the market** is being encouraged by the European Union. He stressed the fact that, within the next financial period, **venture capital and state aid** will be directly targeted and **will favour the access to finance for innovative businesses**.

Mr Dröll further stressed that innovation happens in ALL regions and that the idea of innovation happening in rich, high-tech areas only, is outdated. At the same time, he highlighted that **innovation is not automatic** (inside the same country, some regions are more innovative than others) and **depends on people, skills, organisation of know-how, entrepreneurship**, etc. However, innovation remains challenge-driven and thus likely to happen in mountain areas where challenges are numerous. Mr Dröll recommended that mountain actors should **particularly focus on education and training of local inhabitants** and **foster entrepreneurship** (through public funding). Then he stressed the importance of mobility of entrepreneurs and local actors, to get new experiences in other countries and he mentioned the creation of an ERASMUS programme for entrepreneurs in the very close future.

**Jose Pacheco** from the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Entrepreneurship Center** in the USA presented his broader view of innovation as being a **global process**. He **underlined** the **human skills** needed in order to realize innovation processes, **entrepreneurship** skills particularly. He highlighted that **entrepreneurship is a solution to energise mountain economies and to complement the public sector, which has reached the limit of its ability to provide fulfilling employment opportunities**. He defined the entrepreneur as being someone who wishes to deal with something without having sufficient resources, being in that sense a problem solver. All mountain dwellers could be seen as such problem solvers, without even being aware of their role, added Pacheco.

The MIT Entrepreneurship Center defines innovation as having **2 elements: the invention** of a product, which is not necessarily technological, **and its commercialization**. Both processes have the same importance and one cannot happen without the other. The innovation process includes **four steps to innovation** (see figure 1). It depends on education of actors involved in the process (1), their nurture (2), the networking (3) and celebration of projects (communication/marketing) (4).

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/geoghegan-quinn/headlines/documents/com-2010-546-final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/geoghegan-quinn/headlines/documents/com-2010-546-final_en.pdf)

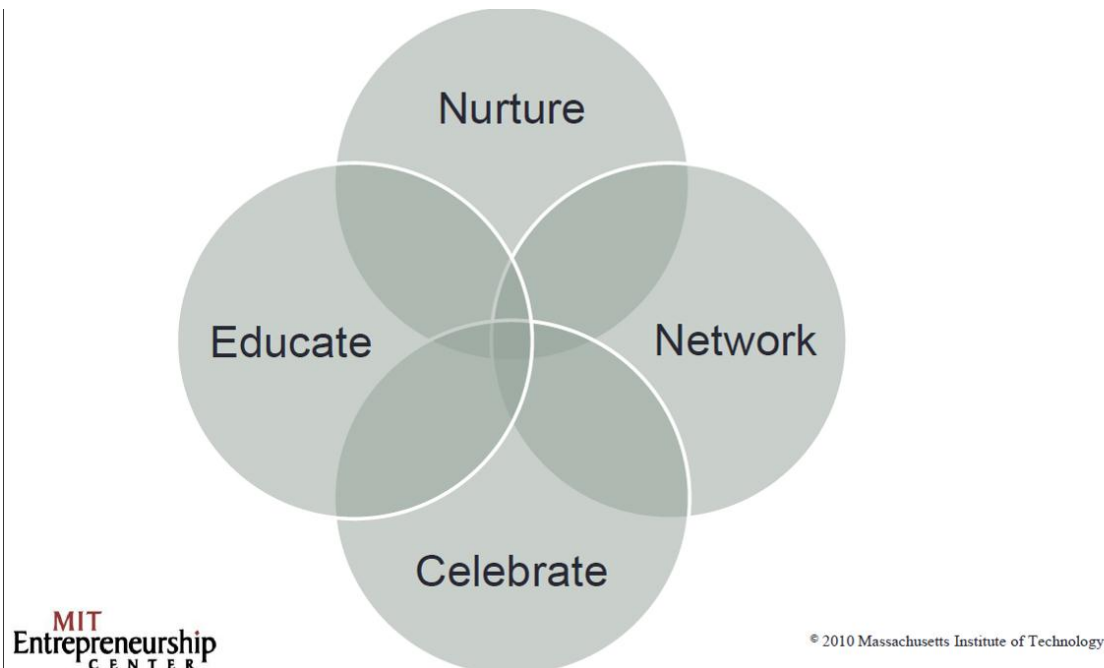


Figure 1: innovation process, Jose Pacheco

The participation of public authorities in the whole process is needed, more in the first 3 steps, but with a moderate intervention, said Pacheco.

A period of 2 years spent in incubators, by entrepreneurs, is too long in his opinion as the entrepreneur's success can even be endangered. In addition, the costs for the authorities are not justified under these conditions. He gave the example of MIT Entrepreneurship Center where the incubator does not exist; yet MIT graduates have created some 25,800 enterprises (since the foundation of MIT) around the world. In that sense, education and training, together with venture capital for firms, being one solution existing in the USA could be valuable for Europe also.

**Pacheco recommended** mountain representatives to:

1. **Cultivate people** - in the frame of demographic problems that characterize mountain areas around the world. **Investments in diaspora** through links between the local/regional communities and people that left the region is important. This can be easily achieved through the use of social networks e.g. that exist online. He highlighted that diaspora often include mentors, talented people and know-how that an area can hope for if these people would come back. Not many regions have diaspora-based networks and this should be strengthened in the following years. Some states in Latin America have done it already, Pacheco says, and the results rapidly became obvious.
2. **Cultivate invention and commercialization**, by stressing entrepreneurship skills.
3. **Maintain clear visions and strong, sustained leadership** within one region. Encourage networking and interactions between actors as it can be difficult to unite

the many existing initiatives which have their own constituencies, momentum and inertia.

4. **Take advantage of opportunities that exist in each region:** focused but diversified clusters, clean energy production, local specialties – “Unique Flavor to Mass Customization”, design, infrastructure development/ IT/ Logistics, services for nearby markets, robotics, increased productivity, etc.

**Ronan Uhel**, head of the programme *Natural Systems and Vulnerability* at the **European Environment Agency (EEA)** launched the EEA report “**Europe’s ecological backbone: recognising the true value of our mountains**”<sup>2</sup>. This study characterises some 36% of the European area (Turkey included) as mountainous (29% of the EU surface)<sup>3</sup>, being home for some 118 million people. The report also shows that mountains are rich in biodiversity (being the exclusive house of some 16% of Habitats Directive species and main habitat for 11% of species). It is highlighted that mountain areas have, on average, better environmental quality than non-mountain areas<sup>4</sup>, provide essential environmental services for society as a whole and are a significant resource of water and renewable energy for all of Europe.

However, mountain ecosystems face important threats, highlighted Mr Uhel: on the one hand, the intensification of use (agriculture, forestry, urbanisation, transport - habitat loss, fragmentation<sup>5</sup>); and on the other hand, land abandonment (loss of species and ecosystems requiring management). Climate change implies faster change than adaptation capacities have yet developed to face.

In this regard, Mr Uhel **stressed the need for change and new, innovative, governance solutions** to environmental issues and people’s expectations. New policies needed to face the systemic multiple crises that European society faces (finance crisis, energy/climate, ecosystem/biodiversity, social, trust crisis: exposure of concealed debts - including ecological debt which is not recorded in accounting books and crises of governance).

He expressed his hopes as regards the **EU 2020 strategy that puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities to sustainable development:**

- **Smart growth:** developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- **Sustainable growth:** promoting a more resource-efficient, greener and competitive economy
- **Inclusive growth:** fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

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<sup>2</sup> Available on-line at <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/europes-ecological-backbone>

<sup>3</sup> Based on topography and attitude criteria, based on data from digital elevation models

<sup>4</sup> Based on economic density and accessibility, HNV farmland, proximity to natural areas, air quality and degree of soil sealing

<sup>5</sup> Up to 10 % of mountain areas is affected by TEN-T corridors and approx. half of mountain populations live within 5 km from those corridors

Mr. Uhel also informed about the 2011 work programme of the European Commission as communicated by the President of the European Commission Mr. Barroso to the European Parliament, early September 2010. Mr. Uhel expected some concrete actions in the following months:

- **Charting a low-carbon economy** to 2050, and setting out the scenarios within which the EU can revolutionise energy and transport in the decades ahead
- Proposals to **mainstream climate change in EU policies**
- Proposals for the modernisation and **reform of the Common Agricultural Policy**
- **An energy efficiency strategy mapping out** how to reach the target of 20% for 2020, for example in the building, utility and transport sectors
- Putting in place **the right regulatory framework** to pave the way for energy infrastructure, and prioritising smart grids in particular
- **A new approach to Europe's strategic transport infrastructure.**



## Theories and methods of innovation

This session aimed to provide a **mutual understanding of innovation through the presentation of theories and examples**, addressing special theories and methods for use in mountain areas. It started with a plenary intervention by Michel Godet, economist and main author of the report “**Creativity and innovation in France’s territories**”.

*This study mainly highlights the fact that we do have cheap and easy methods to implement solutions to our generation’s problems (older society, big energy needs, climate change, economic and finance changes, etc) in France and other developed countries. It stresses that the key solution can be based on innovation, and that innovation rests on creativity (the capacity to come up with new ideas, structured in an original way).*

**Michel Godet’s speech addressed innovation from a territorial point of view.** Rather than «high tech» innovation, he expressed his belief in «low tech» innovation as a source of growth which, when proper attention is paid, can be found in all regions and especially in mountain areas. **‘Low tech’ innovation** notably includes all new, high-performance ways of using the internet, tools linked to new technologies which boost tourism, soft services, the modernisation of local government services, etc.

He further stated that the handicaps of our mountain areas can make a **positive difference** to cultivate innovation and in that sense proposed interesting approaches to innovative development as:

- in the remoteness and low density of population encountered in mountain areas he saw **the continuing quality of life, attractive** to retired people but also young workers and
- in climate change he saw **the opportunity to adapt and develop “summer” tourism**, for example.

But in order to realise the transformation of a challenge in an innovative solution, he stressed the need for people to be creative, to come up with new ideas and, above all, to structure them in an original way. Creativity calls for mountain dwellers’ ‘agile’ minds to imagine, reconcile and combine ideas that are sometimes very different, and to structure existing concepts in a new way. At a territorial level several aspects need to be fulfilled to allow creativity to emerge and flourish:

- creativity is closely linked to art and general culture, even when it comes to technical and economic issues. All forms of art are springboards for creativity;
- creativity means tolerance, as much within society as within its different institutions. Transgression is a kind of creativity;
- culture, sociability, exchange and emulation bear more weight than indigenous traditions and natural amenities even if they are also needed;

- creativity within a territory depends on its capacity necessary to attract talent which, together with an atmosphere of freedom and tolerance, means being able to offer a cultural backdrop and opportunities for exchange;
- ensuring that creativity can flourish requires financing through ‘business angels’ from the private or third sectors or access to public resources such as universities and research centres.

For Michel Godet, a creative territory is not just a region where creative people are concentrated (as the European Commission stressed on the **6th Progress Report on economic and social cohesion**<sup>6</sup>), it is a set of places where creative people are well-trained and are placed under the right conditions for innovation. Public authorities do not produce creativity themselves, but they can create favourable conditions for its realisation.

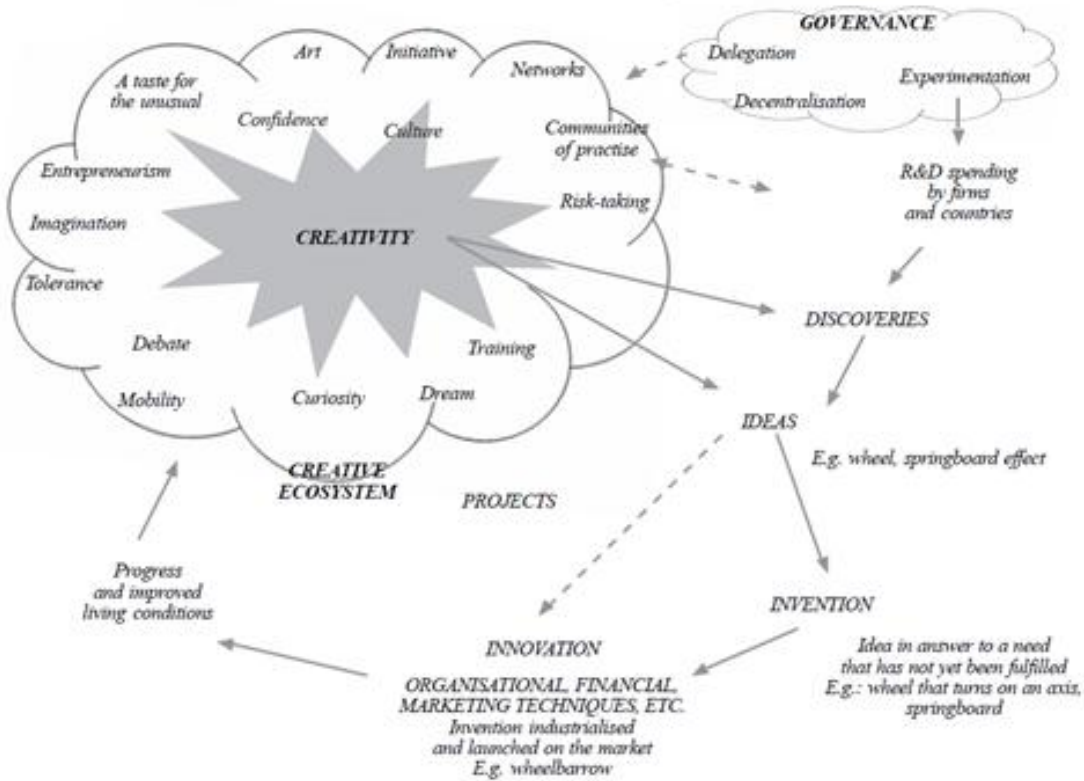


Figure 2: the spiral of innovation, Michel Godet

<sup>6</sup> COM(2009) 295 final Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, 25 June 2009 [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/interim6/com\\_2009\\_295\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/reports/interim6/com_2009_295_en.pdf)



The speech was followed by a session of 4 parallel workshops that addressed the differences between innovation processes in mountain regions and innovation in general. All participants were asked to contribute to answering the question “**how to innovate in mountain areas?** “

The results of these first four workshop discussions were presented in the plenary and discussed, in a spontaneous way, with innovation experts (Jose Pacheco and Michel Godet) and the public, at the end of the day.

## Workshop 1: Relationships between businesses, universities and the public sector in the development of new ideas

**Moderator:** Maud Skäringer, thematic coordination and innovation unit, DG Regio, European Commission

### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- Are mountain areas innovative? What kind of innovation can occur in these areas?
- How can the triple-helix concept be implemented in mountain areas?
- What kind of opportunities does this concept bring to mountain, remote and rural areas in 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- What kind of policy tools can be adapted in order to stimulate the development of innovative ideas in mountain areas?
- How is research undertaken in mountain areas – is the triple-helix approach adaptable?

### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

The workshop highlighted the importance of developing relationships between businesses, universities and the public sector in developing new ideas and innovation in mountain areas.

**Presentation 1: Xabier Maidagan – Innobasque „Establishing a new Basque society through public-private collaboration“**- described the journey of the Basque region over the last 30-40 years from a weak economic position to a highly successful region. Based on a very strategic approach, the innovation agency in the Basque Country defines, develops implements and monitors a Road Map for Innovation in the Basque Country.

Euskadi (Basque Country) is nowadays an advanced region in Spain with a high level of self-government. The Basque Country started, in the early 19th century, to be included in the industrial revolution process, being the first region in Spain to do so. Since then, the industrial base of the Basque Country economy has adapted to successive “crises” and innovated successfully, thus keeping its industry as the major economic engine.

**Presentation 2: Joe Irvine – UHI “Progress through innovation – Creating business opportunities in the Highlands and Islands”** described how a project developed by the University of Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) provides an interface between businesses with a certain challenge and researchers who can help them solve these challenges.

The project facilitates knowledge transfer and:

- Helps overcome challenges when looking for university research and development expertise and capabilities (what is available where and who should be contacted).
- Introduces academic experts with relevant expertise to businesses matching their needs

- Focus on business needs, “market needs” / “business pull”
- Sustains and supports collaborations between academia and industry.

**Presentation 3: Hans Olav Bråtå – Eastern Norway Research Institute “VRI Programme – Promoting knowledge development, innovation and value creation through regional collaboration”** described their “competence brokerage” (mediation of competence between a firm and a researcher) project – similar in some respects to the Scottish project - helping firms achieve the best research and development skills they need to help them innovate. The primary objective of the programme is to promote innovation, knowledge development and value creation through regional collaboration and a strengthened research and development effort within the region. Research and development organizations should be made aware of the challenges of small and medium enterprises.

### **OUTCOMES:**

#### ***Policy recommendations:***

- *International collaboration should be strengthened with the aim of exchanging ideas*
- *The public sector needs to be “joined up” i.e. collaboration within the public sector. Different departments within the public sector should work closer together and go in one direction instead of each following its own way.*
- *Need to create “rural” programmes for innovation and innovation support as “one size doesn’t always fit all”*
- *Need for universities and academics to be more responsive to business demands and to be less academic and more practical, commercial and entrepreneurial oriented*
- *On a strategic level there is a need to ensure that businesses are more involved in the development of policy*

#### **Additional questions to deepen in the future**

- The linkage of research and innovation and whether we need to use locally-based expertise to tackle local problems

One speaker stated that if local expertise is best it should be used, but if not it should be brought from elsewhere. This was cited to be a possibility to stimulate the development of capacity creation at the local level.



## Workshop 2: Education and training possibilities to stimulate development in mountain areas

**Moderator:** Jose Pacheco, Program Manager, MIT Entrepreneurship Center, USA

### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- What are the major constraints for the development of education and training in mountain areas and how can they be overcome?
- How can we improve training and education in mountain areas?
- How can we improve the connection between :
  - Businesses and the education system, so that the latter answers the needs of the former
  - Businesses and future workers, so that young people are attracted and trained to stay or to come back once they have been trained elsewhere
- How can we develop partnerships between universities and businesses in mountain areas so that innovation can be created by contact between students and companies or highly skilled professors and businesses?

### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

Presentation 1: Kay Bjerke, Buskerud County, ***“First results of an exchange of best practices in the field of training and education between seven European mountain areas”*** presented the first results of the PADIMA project (Interreg IVC) which aims at improving the development and efficiency of regional policies against depopulation in mountain areas.

He shared the first results of a study carried in 5 European countries, showing that:

- The level of education of people in mountain areas is lower than in lowland areas. It is also lower than national averages
- Young people in the mountains have higher education than older people, but still below the national average
- Distance to upper secondary schools/universities seems to have a small influence on the education level.

Presentation 2: Janice Wallace, Highlands and Islands Enterprise ***“Connecting young people to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) based industries in mountain areas”*** presented the STEM ambassador programme which recruits volunteers who can inspire the scientists and engineers of tomorrow. These initiatives aim at establishing links between pupils of all ages and companies that exist in the region with the double objective of providing companies with trained workers and giving young people the opportunity to discover the diversity of local companies, thus providing them with an incentive to remain in their region.

Presentation 3: Lindsey Moodie and Gillian Galloway, Centre for Health Science, Highlands and Islands, ***“Addressing the deficit of education, training and research activities in mountain areas, with a focus on health science”*** provided an example of how to successfully address the deficit of education, training and research activities in mountain areas. The Centre for Health Science benefited from regional support and the European Regional Development Fund and is now one of the United-Kingdom’s high-level research centers. Clinicians, scientists, patients and students work collaboratively in this project, showing that is possible both to reach excellence in mountain areas and to bring dynamic to the region.

Presentation 4: **Philippe Beylier**, Coordinator of high schools network, France ***« Dual-training to mountain jobs in Rhône-Alps region – a meeting between young people and businesses »*** gave an example of how young people and businesses can interact through dual training in upper secondary education. This double qualification offered at the “Lycée des métiers de la montagne” in the Rhône-Alps region makes it easier for students to live and work in the mountain region. The programme helps young people to get a short-cycle training adapted to the mountain environment that addresses the challenge of seasonality by providing training in several areas of expertise.

## **OUTCOMES:**

### ***Policy recommendations:***

*The workshop resulted in the identification of four recommendations, with a central idea: the need for integrated strategies between education and training actors, socio-professional actors and institutional bodies within one region.*

*2 recommendations are stakeholder-oriented:*

- *Both companies and education institutes should try to work/interact more within the same region*
- *There is a need to diversify local/regional educational and training offers that must be adapted to the needs of the local economy*

*2 recommendations concern public-support and governance principles*

- *Develop the availability of universities and higher education centres in mountain areas*
- *Promote the entrepreneurial ecosystems – structures that permit actors from the research and the business environment to interact and work together.*



### Workshop 3: **Involving mountain actors in clusters: how to foster innovation in a bottom-up approach?**

**Moderator:** Marc Richetin, Professor, Clermont-Ferrand University, Regional delegate for research and technology, France

#### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- How can we use cluster development to drive innovation activities / product development / service delivery?
- What are particular challenges related to cluster building in mountain areas? Scale, distance, capacity, aspiration? How can we meet these challenges?
- How can we adapt good practices in cluster development elsewhere to fit the particular mountain environment?
- What are the key policy interventions necessary to create world-class clusters in mountain areas?

#### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

**Presentation 1:** “**Innovative mountain Tourism – Actors joining forces within the triple helix**”, Kjell-Gunnar Dahle, Innovative Fjellturisme AS (Norway) showed that within the ARENA project, the development of common activities such as study visits created:

- a common understanding of challenges among stakeholders
- more proximity/links between researchers and public administration

Those two points were crucial to creating added-value locally.

**Presentation 2:** “**Added value of sustainable farming systems in mountain areas – from food production to economic diversification**”, Pedro Ruiz Aviles and Samir Sayadi, Andalusian Institute for Agricultural Research and Training, Fisheries, Food and Ecological Production (IFAPA) (Spain): as the Andalucía includes one of the poorest mountain regions in Spain, it was essential that local authorities take action. Several initiatives resulted in the creation of a cluster of enterprises transforming products based on olives and olive trees. In order to create added-value for sustainable farming systems in Andalucía, it is essential to create:

- links between universities, research and development institutions (particularly private-public partnership)
- a culture of pro-active cooperation of the population

**Presentation 3:** “**Building a life science cluster in the Highlands & Islands of Scotland**”, Steven Dodsworth, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (Scotland): within Scotland, in the 1990’s, although there was an active company working on life sciences, there was no particular investment from the research and university side on life sciences. This theme was identified as a strategic axis and the government agency, Highland and Islands Enterprise, supported the building of a life science cluster by developing infrastructures

and the links between actors. The intervention highlighted a conclusion which is very important for mountain areas in general: the importance to build a community through identifying common aims that are relevant and focus on strategic themes - “adversity and opportunities build communities”

Presentation 4: “*Passing of the gift new concept in Carpathians green development*”, Carmen Catuna, FAMD (Romania) introduced the concept of “green development” which is rather new in the Romanian Carpathians. Several projects have started to improve agricultural production in the first stage, and marketing opportunities in the second stage. Traditional products are therefore given added-value and “passed” to new generation and other families. The new idea raised (as compared to the three previous generations) here is the important idea that “people solve themselves their own difficulties”.

### **OUTCOMES:**

#### ***Policy recommendations:***

*The workshop resulted in the identification of four recommendations, with a central idea: creation of added-value and cluster developing around “filières territorialisées”, that is to say supply-chains territorially embedded.*

*2 recommendations are stakeholder-oriented:*

- *create synergies through pro-active cooperation between all involved stakeholders (particularly public-private)*
- *create trust and common understanding of challenges by stakeholders (using external experiences)*

*2 recommendations concern the public-support and governance principles*

- *clustering for innovation needs support from all territorial scales (national, regional local, and maybe also European). Consequently: there is a need for multi-level governance to implement regional well-functioning clusters*
- *systems and cross-sectorial policy support are required, but must be adapted to the specific situations*

#### ***Additional questions to deepen in the future***

The presentations and discussion in the workshop raise a question towards Euromontana as regards further opportunities: how to help project holders with “cluster engineering”?



## Workshop 4: **Developing innovation through transnational cooperation**

**Moderator:** Thomas Egger, Director, Swiss Association for Mountain Regions (SAB),

### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

1. What are the factors of success/failure for multinational cooperation in innovation?
2. How can the results of the different multinational cooperation schemes be better disseminated across Europe and reach the target groups, especially stakeholders in the mountains also outside the respective cooperation perimeters? (transfer of knowledge not only within a cooperation scheme but also between cooperation schemes)
3. How can we organize multinational cooperation successfully?
4. Is the innovation process in mountain areas different from lowland areas? Who are the key players in the innovation process?

### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

**Presentation 1: Fostering innovation in the Alpine Space area: the experience of the Alpine Space Programme – spotlight on the project AlpsBioCluster: e-Care and environmental services for human health;** Thomas Fleury, JTS and Valérie Ayache Alps BioCluster: the Alpine Space Programme is a funding framework aiming to promote innovation through an integrated approach, bringing together different types of actors in the Alpine region. The programme brings together five EU Member States and two non-EU Member States, 34 (NUTS II) regions with around 70 million inhabitants. The total budget is € 130 million and so far the programme has approved 26 projects, with a cofunding rate of 76 %. The programme's approach can be described as integrating the objective of enhancing endogenous potentials while involving relevant actors and promoting political commitment and, at the same time, capitalizing on experiences and results and coordinating with other programmes. The Alps Bio Cluster project is a cooperation on e-health, taking as a starting point the growing demands for care due to an ageing population, budget pressures, lack of health care professionals, accessibility and increasing tourist population. The project has the objective to promote the development of new diagnostic therapies and more autonomy in health care, for example by making health services more accessible through the use of ICT.

**Presentation 2: Experiences of the Norwegian Cooperation programme for economic growth and sustainable development in Bulgaria and Romania. Opportunities offered for supporting projects in the new EU-countries through the EEA Financial Mechanisms in the period 2009-2014;** Tore Lasse By, Innovation Norway: the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area (EEA) will contribute with a total of almost € 1.79 billion to reduce social and economic disparities in the European Economic Area and to strengthen the relations between the donor and beneficiary states in the five-year period 2009-2014. Out of these funds, €305.95 million will be provided for Romania, and €126.6 million for Bulgaria. Innovation Norway manages the funds for Romania and Bulgaria. Green Industry Innovation is one of the priority sectors for the Financial Mechanism in the five-year period. During 2011, the financial mechanisms will be launched and invitations to



apply will be published. Private and public actors as well as NGOs in the beneficiary states can apply.

**Presentation 3: Regional Natural parks in Rhône-Alpes: a network open to innovation, sharing experiences and experimentation in local development;** Eliane Giraud, Regional adviser to regional natural Parks, Rhône-Alpes: the regional natural parks in Rhône-Alpes are an ambitious development project aiming at the creation of added value for the region, while respecting the need for conservation of natural and cultural resources. The task is to protect and develop the resources; contribute to regional development; and promote economic, social and cultural development as well as the quality of life, education and research. The concept forms a common framework for a regional network of parks. Six parks have already been established, one is underdevelopment, and two are in a preparatory phase. The need to disseminate experiences was highlighted, as many obstacles in similar regions are the same. The network of parks is a framework to share experiences, and provide assistance when needed. The concept in Rhône Alpes has raised interest also in other countries.

### **OUTCOMES:**

#### ***Policy recommendations:***

- *Getting the right people involved is key*
- *Make more efforts to disseminate results and experiences between programme areas*
  - o *Euromontana can play a role in this respect*
- *Facilitate the access to programmes for SMEs*
- *Funding for capacity building is important*



## 17<sup>th</sup> September

The second day of the conference started with a session of four parallel workshops dedicated to sectors in which mountain areas have proved to be particularly innovative.

Participants were able to exchange numerous ideas and transferable practices to improve interventions in the sectors of energy, management of protected areas, forestry and public services in mountain areas.

### **Workshop 5: Innovative processes in energy saving and renewable energies in mountain areas**

**Moderator: Giovanni Scudo**, Professor, University of Milan, Italy

The workshop looked at how mountain areas can respond and contribute to the EU 20-20-20 objectives – a 20% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, a 20% reduction in energy consumption, and a 20% increase in renewable energy generation, all by 2020. The focus was therefore on both energy efficiency and energy generation / distribution.

#### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- How can we innovate in the production / distribution chain of the energy sector so as to reduce energy consumption and to become more energy-efficient?
- When should local grids be developed and what solutions are appropriate to develop them?
- How can we ensure a fair remuneration for energy produced and a fair distribution of the income generated between mountain communities and energy business companies?
- How can mountain areas play a more important role in reducing energy consumption? Do local knowledge and techniques have advantages? How can they be better used and spread?
- How can local people and entrepreneurs be encouraged to minimise their energy consumption and to learn new technologies? How do we transfer the knowledge?

#### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

**Presentation 1: Design of heat pump heating and air conditioning systems with heat accumulators for residential buildings and appliances in mountain areas; training for promoting renewable energy at CEFIDEC Vatra Dornei**, Danut Gătan, Director: looked at how to develop energy autonomy in dwellings in the Carpathian mountains the

establishment of energy efficient heating and hot water systems and through the use of renewable energy sources. This example highlighted the importance of:

- Establishing an energy plan for each dwelling to identify and install energy capacity, using heat storage / recovery technology and a range of renewable sources, typically biomass, ground source and small-scale wind turbines.
- Establishing an efficient energy management system which allows control and optimisation of energy use, taking into account demand, climate and energy source
- Working with partners to deliver training to local individuals and businesses in the development and use of renewable energy systems.
- Disseminating best practices within the region to encourage the use of the technology and to build local capacity

**Presentation 2: Creating the Bologna Apennine sustainable energy district, Sergio Palmieri**, examined how CISA (Centre of Innovation and Environmental Sustainability) has worked to build a sustainable energy district involving local partners. The work included a number of phases including:

- Construction of experimental facilities e.g. woodchip plants, micro hydro facilities and small wind turbines
- Working with municipalities to integrate technology into public buildings e.g. new civic centre,
- Establishing, together with municipalities, sustainable transport solutions such as electric cars and cycles, powered through solar electricity
- A programme of research
- Dissemination of good practice to businesses, citizens and politicians through one-to-one meetings, publications and websites, conferences and the establishment of a “demo” town.

The project generated increased awareness of issues and opportunities within all target groups, modifications to the school curriculum and increased awareness and participation from local businesses.

Key success factors included the establishment of a wide partnership at early stages of the project and, at the same time, having a strong and well-resourced lead partner to drive activity. Business involvement at an early stage was crucial as well as the availability of public support (in this case 50%).

This project is now being followed up with a new project focusing on how the region can contribute to the 20-20-20 targets.

**Presentation 3: Renewable energy sources and stimulation of the rational use of energy in mountainous agricultural communities to support their sustainable**

**development**, Alexandra Papadopoulou, National Technical University of Athens detailed a project to evaluate differing types of renewable energy production across mountain/rural areas of France, Austria, Greece and Estonia. The project sought to evaluate projects on economic, environmental, social and sustainability criteria and used a range of around 20 indicators such as cost, job creation and noise impacts.

Projects evaluated included wind, solar, biomass, ground source and small-scale hydro. The project concluded that mountain areas have a great capacity to develop sustainable energy solutions; these will be multiple and different depending on local conditions. They have a significant potential to generate economic benefits; and the development of an energy action plan involving a wide range of local actors is a critical success factor.

## **OUTCOMES:**

### **Policy recommendations**

*Key recommendations included:*

- *The importance of planning and involvement of partners (public, private and academia) at an early stage*
- *Dissemination of both benefits and opportunities to encourage take-up of new technologies and capacity building to support locally-based planning, installation and management of sustainable energy systems*

### **Further questions**

Questions asked included:

- How can the systems described be simplified in order to increase their effectiveness and economic value and thus encourage increased adoption?
- Can the evaluation of different projects across Europe be simplified?
- Are there alternative ways to disseminate good practices, particularly to engage local actors more effectively?
- How can local projects become part of a more strategic focus on meeting the EU 20-20-20 targets?

## Workshop 6: **Innovating the governance of protected areas and their relationship with sustainable tourism**

**Moderator:** Martin Price, Director, Centre for Mountain Studies, Perth College, UHI Millennium Institute, Scotland, Euromontana Vice-president

### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- Relationships between sustainable tourism and the management of protected areas – what are the challenges and opportunities?
- How to involve local people, businesses and protected area staff in local governance processes for protected areas?
- How to involve local stakeholders in protected area management?
- How to overcome the conflict between business development vs. protection of certain areas?
- How can tourism be integrated in management strategies for protected areas?
- How can protected areas support local tourism strategies?
- In what innovative ways can stakeholders be organized to maximize the opportunities of integrated strategies for protected areas and sustainable tourism?

### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

**Presentation 1:** *“Business development, tourism and conservation of nature – a paradox? NO”* Zoltan Kun, Director, PAN Parks: PAN Parks is a network of protected areas around Europe which deals with sustainable development and wilderness conservation through a long-term strategy of bringing benefits to local businesses in order to compensate restrictions on activities.

The presentation stressed the interest of local residents in the economic development of protected areas. The main idea is that it is possible to achieve sustainable tourism development for strengthening wilderness conservation through innovative ways of management, governance, social and economic development.

**Presentation 2:** *“Innovative tourism development bringing added value to a protected area”*, Ruth Moser, Park Manager Biosphereparc Grosses Walsertal (Austria) stressed the role that communities can have in bringing added value to a protected area when rules for protection are well understood and accepted by inhabitants. The motto of the Biosphereparc Grosses Walsertal is *“Benefiting from nature without harming it”*. With this credo and wide community involvement, they implemented “gentle tourism” on large protected areas within the biosphereparc. In addition to tourism, actions related to local

food production and marketing have been carried out in order to strengthen local businesses.

Presentation 3: “Using the nature and the culture heritage as a yield creator”, Thor Flognfeldt, Associate Professor in Tourism Planning, Lillehammer University College: noted the difficulty of running commercial activities in the national parks in Norway and stressed the importance of overcoming restrictions, focusing on education and systematic knowledge and learning from other European regions. The need to build infrastructure and allow the access to nature to a large number of people was stressed thus is not the case so far in Norway.

### **OUTCOMES:**

The three presentations opened a strong debate with the audience, who expressed two main opinions: to defend the conservation and protect the wilderness or to support economic development, at the same time as nature protection. The debate was particularly hot for Norwegian participants.

### ***Policy recommendations:***

*This workshop’s recommendations are:*

- *Need to exchange good practices in the governance of protected areas for a better understanding of the links between sustainable development and wilderness conservation*
- *Better training of park authorities to understand the benefits coming from sustainable economic/tourism activities in protected areas*
- *Need to change or adapt the governance of the protected areas in order to allow the involvement of the local population in appropriate economic and touristic activities*
- *Utilise zoning in the protection of wilderness areas (identify the areas where conservation is essential and the others in which sustainable economic activities can be developed).*
- *Involve inhabitants and local enterprises in the governance of protected*
- *Organise training and concrete support to sustainable enterprises acting in protected areas*

### ***Additional questions to deepen in the future***

- *How can the protection of wilderness and economic activities in the protected areas be best combined?*

## Workshop 7: **Forestry and wood-based products from mountain areas**

**Moderator:** Roland Beck, Unit “Bioenergy, Biomass, Forestry and Climate change”, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

The workshop’s aim was to show that the innovation and forest sectors are closely related, evaluating the new opportunities of exploitation and use of forests.

### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- What are the success factors for the development of new industries in mountain areas?
- How to better value the creation of wood-based goods?
- What models of forest management are adapted today both to demand and biodiversity needs?

### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS:**

**Presentation 1:** *“Innovative forest management - developing new and innovative approaches for sustainable forest development”*, Dragan Matijašić, Slovenian Forest Service presented the latest methods of forest management planning in Slovenia. He explained how certain management tools can be used for concrete actions. Several factors are needed in order to develop some innovative approaches to sustainable forest development:

- New approaches and international exchange of experiences can improve forest management in mountain regions
- The ongoing, long-term connections between the National Strategic Approach, planned guidelines (Forest Management Plans) and concrete measures (e.g. spruce stands conversion) are of extreme importance
- Cooperation between foresters and services responsible for nature conservation (and also all other stakeholders) is needed for sustainable and multipurpose development of forest areas in mountain regions

**Presentation 2:** *“Innovating in the production of wood-based goods”*, Jakob Trøan,

Materialbanken AS (Norway): Materialbanken is a specific example of the utilization of forest raw materials in an innovative way and business development in small villages. They combine traditional skills in new and innovative ways with utilisation of high-performing machines. Thus they can produce some high quality products and can pay more forest owners for the timber they sell.

The main results coming from the presentation were:

- Wood is the most important multi-purpose material in rural areas of Norway.

- Since the primary production is mostly wood based, increasing the added value should be a constant concern.

**Presentation 3: "Adapting forest and water management to climate change impacts"**, Josef Herkendell, European Environment Agency (EEA) reported on findings from a recent EEA study showing how we can assess the eco-system using mountainous water catchments. Sustainable forest management in catchments will become a topic of further discussion in Europe (especially on how to optimize regional and local services)

Some of the main findings of the study are that:

- A high percentage of forest land cover in catchments seems to have a positive effect on ground water production for all major bio-geographical regions in Europe
- The forest land use seem to have a positive impact on different discharge properties

**Presentation 4: "Innovating forest management in the Carpathians for keeping in use the last steam train for industrial and tourism purposes"**, Bucur Costel, Maramures Park Manager, (Romania) highlighted both the traditional and forward-looking aspects of Romanian forest inter-connections. The outcomes of the presentation are that:

- Accessibility in mountain areas is an even bigger challenge in protected areas;
- The historical/cultural aspects can and must dictate the economic value of infrastructure investments. This is a must in a landscape protected area (IUCN Category V) and is a real need for effective support and lobby in this respect from the nature conservation bodies (park administrations, NGO's etc.)
- The use of low quality wood is an effective way of increasing incomes, but the concern of producing high-quality timber must be the priority.

## **OUTCOMES:**

### ***Policy recommendations:***

- *Gathering information on the perceptions of the environment at a relevant scale is needed*
- *Entrepreneurship needs to be encouraged and fostered in order to help value creation*
- *Investment is needed both from public and private sectors in order to foster creation of new goods and businesses*
- *Good practices in sustainable forest management need to be exchanged more between European actors*



## Workshop 8: **Innovative municipalities and the link between public and private sector**

**Moderator:** Peter De Souza, Associate professor at Hedmark University College

### **KEY QUESTIONS of the workshop were:**

- Do mountain regions have a stronger innovation potential than others?
- Why are some municipalities more innovative than others?
- Why do some municipality's strategy focus on innovation and others not?
- Do we have interesting good practices?
- How to convert good practices into policy?

### **SYNTHESIS OF THE PRESENTATIONS :**

Presentation 1: **“Peak innovation – A four-helix innovation system for growth”**, Jan Andersen, Åre municipality (Sweden) presented the strategy of innovation of Åre municipality, home for some 10.000 inhabitants. They have developed a four-helix innovation system with public, private, academy and sport bodies together with the users. The innovation is to involve the users of the innovative products in addition to the three usual partners of the triple-helix system. They have as objective to make Åre an attractive destination all-year long and to use innovation to develop the municipality from a tourist destination to a more knowledge based society. The city has developed its tourism hosting capacity from 1200 to 33 000 beds, invested in infrastructures. Their vision include 4 elements: respecting the environment, organizing a warm welcoming of people, developing the community as an attractive one and sharing responsibilities among actors. The innovation process involves 100 companies, mostly SMEs. They will launch an enterprise center where businesses will be able to set up and interact. They have developed a research center on materials and techniques in relation with ski which is getting a lot of interest at international level. Special housing prices are being made available for students and public services are made available in libraries, pharmacies, post office.

Presentation 2: **“New models of use in ICT to strengthen local businesses and public services in mountain areas”** Janne Mellum, Head of service and culture, Stor-Elvdal municipality,(Norway), Norway presented two projects: the first was **National Tourist Routes** in Sollia, a municipality with some 130 inhabitants and the second **Heartland Scandinavia** an Interreg project exploiting the use of ICT in local shops. This project was weakly implemented in order to solve the “under-communication problems”.

Both initiatives were identified as local success-stories with an interesting potential to be transferred.

Presentation 3: “Business development through the use of natural resources and cultural identity” Simen Bjørgen, mayor of Lom municipality (2500 inhabitants) (Norway) made an analogy with the flower called “issoleie” (Norwegian mountain flower). He emphasized the importance of water as a mountain natural resource that could be better exploited by local communities. He focused on the need to involve youth and schools in development strategies, and cited the youth councils as a successful initiative. They also mentioned their actions regarding asylum seekers.

### **OUTCOMES:**

#### **Policy recommendations:**

- *There is a need of a strategic thinking at the municipality and regional level to mobilize around a strategy, engage youth and all local actors, etc.*
- *The knowledge should make a systematic use of both positive and negative experiences*
- *For mountain municipalities there is a need to tackle the depopulation issues at the policy level and to have a vision that outlines how to stop the population decline and encourage youth migration inside these regions*
- *There is a need to exploit better the international experience, cooperation and exchange of good practices*

#### **Additional questions to deepen in the future**

- *The role of the different actors in local development and innovation*
- *How to develop more strategic thinking based on a vision? How to involve more the academia?*

## FINAL ROUND TABLE

The conference concluded with a round table discussion with key stakeholders from local, national and European levels that focused on “**Building an action plan for the development of innovative initiatives in mountain areas**” chaired by Sylvain Marmier, Euromontana board member and farmers’ representative, from France. The panelists were **Caroll Buxton**, Director for regional competitiveness at Highlands and Island Enterprise; **Betty-Ann Bryce**, officer in the regional development division of the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development** (OECD); **Maud Skäringer** policy officer in the direction of regional policy (DG Regio) at the European Commission; **Elisabeth Mellbye**, Director of Brennabu, Norway; **Henri Malosse**, President of the Employers’ group in the European Economic and social committee; and **Enrico Borghi**, president of **UNCCEM** (the National Union of Mountain Municipalities, Communities and Authorities) in Italy.

Different points discussed during the conference were raised again by the round table participants who generally approved what resulted from the workshops.

In her introduction, Caroll Buxton highlighted 4 key themes that are, for her, central to the innovation process: **supporting partnerships**, providing **distance-neutral information technologies**, encouraging **knowledge transfer** and **supporting individuals**, with the overarching aim to **sustain a high quality of life** for mountain people. She quoted several examples in various sectors.

Maud Skaringer highlighted that the conference confirmed **the Commission was right to work on a broad approach to innovation**. She put the focus on two key opportunities: mountain **people**, which capital must be enhanced through education, and the opportunities related to the **agro-food** sector. She stressed that the regions will have to play a key role in the implementation of the new EU2020 strategy. Many funds will be available for this. She referred to the Barca report as regards insights to reflect on guidance for improving regional policy in order to achieve smart specialization.

Elisabeth Melbye insisted on the importance of **connections to achieve innovation**. Recalling the problems of depopulation and ageing of mountain populations, she emphasized the need for greater connectivity and especially as regards the **transfer of research results** to practitioners, which requires the establishment of a community of shared knowledge.

Henri Malosse chose to cast light on the problem of implementation: Europeans, he said, have many good and new ideas but **the challenge is to transform these ideas into new concrete realisations**. The issue of the **EU patent is crucial in that respect**: patenting is still very low in Europe. In order to achieve this, we must ease collaboration between SMEs and bigger companies, with help of universities. He mentioned that only 6% of R&D is currently shared: this is not taking enough advantage of the common market. For Henri

Malosse, the convention **demonstrated that territories are full of ideas**: this must encourage the EU to awake the innovation potential of Europe, starting with mountains.

Enrico Borghi brought additional elements on the **green economy and the particular potential it represents in mountain areas**: mountains host the resources for the economy of the future. Mountains have an opportunity to conceive **new models of development**, and Europe has an opportunity to organise **new relationship between spaces**, taking into account what mountains deliver. He encouraged participants to reflect on the importance of local governance and **innovation in the organisation of local democracy**.

Finally, Betty-Ann Bryce highlighted what the convention's discussions had contributed in terms of assessment of opportunities for rural areas after the recession. She detailed 3 dimensions of innovation: governance, services and strategy. She presented innovation as a new way of conceiving governance, **shifting from command and control to facilitation and support**. Innovation requires flexible and adaptable policies and instruments. Regarding public services, she emphasized services targeting human capital, skilling and reskilling as well as business support services. She concluded on the need for innovation strategies that would **empower people** to innovate and create applied knowledge. This requires to target interventions towards **smart place-based development**.

As a conclusion, panelists considered useful to regard **rural innovation as an important way of transforming constraints into drivers for smart development** in mountain areas. The central aspect stressed was the **human factor** and its development through skills acquirement and networking – which are particularly important in mountain areas where people have already left but might be interested to come back to their home regions and bring thus diversity and dynamism back to their region. Further, the need for a common policy at EU level was very much underlined in order to reply successfully to all common problems together with a stronger local democracy and involvement of local authorities in the definition of policy and implementation methods.

Panelists all stressed the fact that challenges encountered within mountain regions around Europe are common and that there is a need to tackle them together in an integrated way, by **learning from each other**. Euromontana conferences were mentioned as a useful tool to achieve this and the network was confirmed in its role as a discussion and exchange platform and encouraged to develop further actions.

André Marcon answered this demand by presenting the policy recommendations and the action plan contained in the Lillehammer Declaration prepared by Euromontana members on the basis of the Convention's debate.



## Declaration of Lillehammer

### Taking full advantage of European mountains' innovation potential

*Innovation is the art of turning an idea into a concrete realisation that answers the needs of population and businesses. Innovation can be scientific or technological but also incremental, organisational or social. It must promote a sustainable development, whether economic, social or environmental. Innovation does not have a territorial dimension, but the specificities of mountain territories, which represent around 36% of the Europe's area and 17% of its population<sup>7</sup>, are assets for the implementation of innovations that are relevant for their development.*

#### 1) Preamble: Innovation is key to mountain sustainable development

We, political and socio-economic representatives from Europe's mountains, assembled here in Lillehammer on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2010, at a time of intense global crisis and policy revision, **call for recognition of the innovation potential that exists in mountain areas** and of the central role innovation can play in their sustainable development.

Innovation must be considered as being:

1. **a tool to address the structural challenges of the European society:** improve the competitiveness of companies, find effective solutions to face problems related to both ageing and mobile populations, answer the need for sustainable development, etc.;
2. **a tool to strengthen the regions and increase their attractiveness;**
3. **a strategy to increase resilience in the economic crisis and create a new growth and economic model** of development.

Hence, we consider that mountain people and businesses are particularly well placed to develop innovative solutions and new ideas because they are faced with specific challenges that require specific solutions such as:

- demographic changes,
- climate change,
- increasing international competition in both economies and access to markets,
- growing digital divide.

**We contend that these challenges are a great stimulus to creativity and that fostering innovation is the most promising way forward to address these challenges, thus**

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<sup>7</sup> „Europe's ecological backbone : recognising the true value of our mountains”, EEA report n°6/2010

**contributing to economic diversification and to increasing competitiveness and attractiveness in sustainable ways.**

We believe that innovations developed in mountains can be a source of inspiration and solutions for the rest of Europe.

## **2) Innovation is already vibrant in European mountain areas**

Instances of innovation taking place in mountain areas are varied and numerous. We have presented and studied some of these during this convention. We can quote as examples: creation of opportunities for financing, establishment of business incubators, clusters between businesses, universities, public authorities and funders, the partnerships with cities situated in valleys or other regions to develop sales systems and remote distribution.

In one region, for example, a small cogeneration plant using woodchips has been built using a system for gasification of wood combined with an external combustion engine. This served as a catalyst to the creation of a partnership between different European countries.

Throughout mountain regions, the production of quality food products is now closely related to their place of origin. Producers and territories work together for their common communication and promotion. Thanks to well-known chefs, the value of local products has been recognized and they have been developed and distributed, thus generating substantial spin-offs in the local economy.

An increasing number of mountain producers have explored the opportunities of using information and communication technologies (ICT) to access larger numbers of distant consumers, often in large cities.

Innovation examples in public services are also numerous throughout Europe's mountains. From the innovative use of the ICT to the organisation of "multi-service stations" or "services buses", mountain people have shown that they can find clever and efficient solutions to constraints they encounter.

## **3) Mountain innovation still needs to be strengthened**

The innovation process is not necessarily specific in mountains. However creating the conditions required for innovation may be more difficult. We emphasized during this Convention the importance of people and entrepreneurs. In mountain areas, as in other rural or remote areas, the density of businesses and population is lower than in cities, the number of high education facilities is smaller, access to infrastructure and services is more difficult and distances between companies, potential customers, research institutes and appropriate fund providers are often large. These factors result in challenges in organizing meetings and cooperation between actors and in achieving a smooth and intense circulation of ideas.

**To allow innovation to reach its full potential in mountain regions, we call upon:**

**The European Union:**

- **to continue supporting a broad approach to innovation in all its forms** and to promote this approach towards Member States and all organisations active in facilitating innovation;
- **to take into account the specificities of the mountainous, rural and sparsely populated areas** in the definition of policies that support innovation;
- **to continuously seek to simplify access to EU support programs**, and strengthen all instruments that can provide support in the form of project engineering, so that small businesses can benefit from existing policies;
- to integrate into all EU policies with a strong impact on mountains the elements needed to develop innovative approaches, especially:
  - through the Cohesion Policy:
    - **encourage cooperation between mountain actors** through long-term networking or short term projects,
    - **support the modernization of infrastructures** aimed at improving the accessibility and quality of life in the mountains;
  - in the context of the Common Agricultural and Rural Development Policy:
    - **strengthen research and development** regarding the efficiency of extensive grassland systems and traditional breeds,
    - **strengthen support to new forms of supply chain** (especially regional supply chains, multi-actors initiatives for valuing local products) **and new forms of product promotion and distribution** that increase the added value secured by mountain actors;
    - **Support the development, dissemination and implementation of innovation** through experimentation devices, training and appropriate advice and extension systems;
  - **steady and long-term support to** strong networks linking mountain inhabitants and facilitating human and professional interactions.
- to **measure the potential of innovation in mountain areas** through a series of indicators on the conditions and the success of the innovation process, adapted to these areas and at an appropriate scale.

**National and regional authorities** to foster the conditions required for the development of innovation in mountains and in particular:

- Education and training: **facilitate the creation of specific university branches and specialized training institutes in mountain areas**, with sufficient autonomy in definition of programmes and capacities to develop partnerships with businesses and population.
- ICT: **deliver to mountain actors guaranteed access, everywhere and in the same time frame, to the highest-speed broadband** required for interaction between people, companies, networks of actors, and the global community. Access to ICT should be included in the services of general interest.
- Services to population: **continue investing in the delivery and improvement of public services** in mountain areas to enable these regions to maintain their quality of life and remain attractive to young professionals and entrepreneurs interested to settle in mountain areas.
- Transport: **improve continually the capacity, the quality and density of transport network** in mountain areas so that movements and networking are facilitated both between mountain people and with their lowland and valleys counterparts.
- Energy: **support initiatives aimed at increasing energy efficiency as well as production and energy transport capacities** of these areas, thus fostering the development of specific solutions both adapted to mountain areas and transferable to other regions.
- Entrepreneurship: **provide greater support to mountain entrepreneurs** in their efforts to create a critical mass of 'providers' and 'customers', to enable them to better articulate their demand and supply and to meet the delivery and supply service needs; provide adequate business support systems.
- Procurement: **privilege innovative products and services in public procurement.**

**Research and education institutions** to:

- **increase their engagement** in the issue of innovation in mountain areas;
- **maintain an on-going dialogue with mountain stakeholders** regarding their needs and ideas;
- **undertake research studies** that respond to the needs of mountain actors;
- **establish partnerships with mountain actors** to ensure an effective transfer of know-how and technology;
- develop knowledge and collective intelligence regarding mountain areas.

**Mountain actors in general to:**

- **develop and encourage entrepreneurship;**



- **seize the opportunities offered by the financial support systems available** for developing innovation; take advantage of the European mobility opportunities offered to students and entrepreneurs;
- make use of opportunities offered by various networks, including social and professional networks, as well as the Euromontana network, to exchange experiences and engage in a process of mutual learning.

**In order to encourage a spirit of innovation among mountain actors, Euromontana commits itself to implement an action plan contributing *inter alia* to:**

- develop together with other partners a **resource centre** for the **dissemination of good practices of innovation**;
- encourage all international cooperation projects to disseminate the most relevant innovations;
- facilitate the access of mountain stakeholders to procedures and funding programmes that might help to foster the development of innovation in mountain areas.

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