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Governance in mountain areas: what has changed in the last years?

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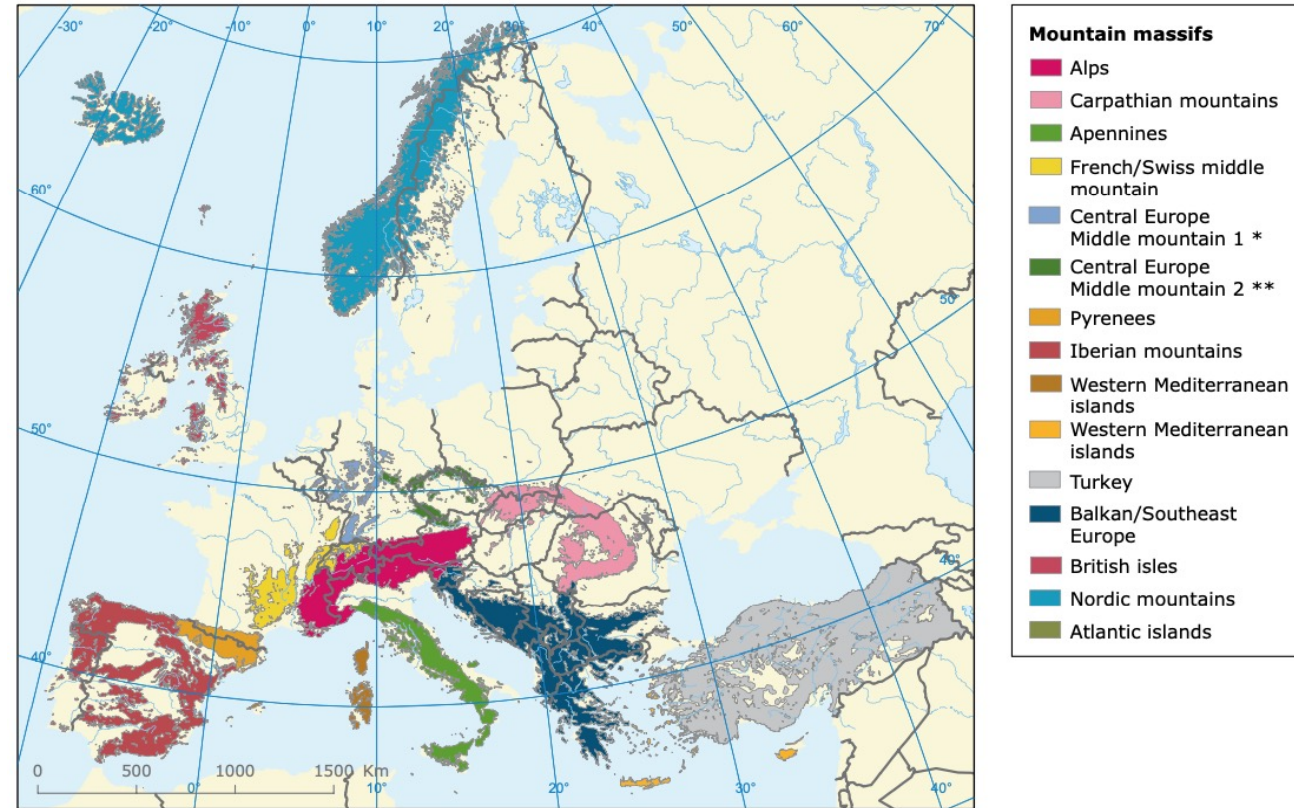
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Mountain Areas in Europe

According to a study conducted by the European Environment Agency, mountain areas cover almost **29% of the EU Member States** and are home to **13% of its population**.

These areas, often located in border areas, are Europe's water reservoir as well as the ecological backbone of the continent and provide an enormous reserve of natural resources.

The main challenge for Europe's mountain territories is to find the right balance between the needs for socio-economic development and the protection of fragile environments rich in biodiversity and natural resources. In addition, mountain territories are nowadays the most affected by the effects of climate change with consequences that often have negative impacts on the urban neighbourhood.



Note: * = Belgium and Germany; ** = the Czech Republic, Austria and Germany.

Figure 1. Mountain Ranges in Europe (EEA 2010)

Mountain Areas in Europe

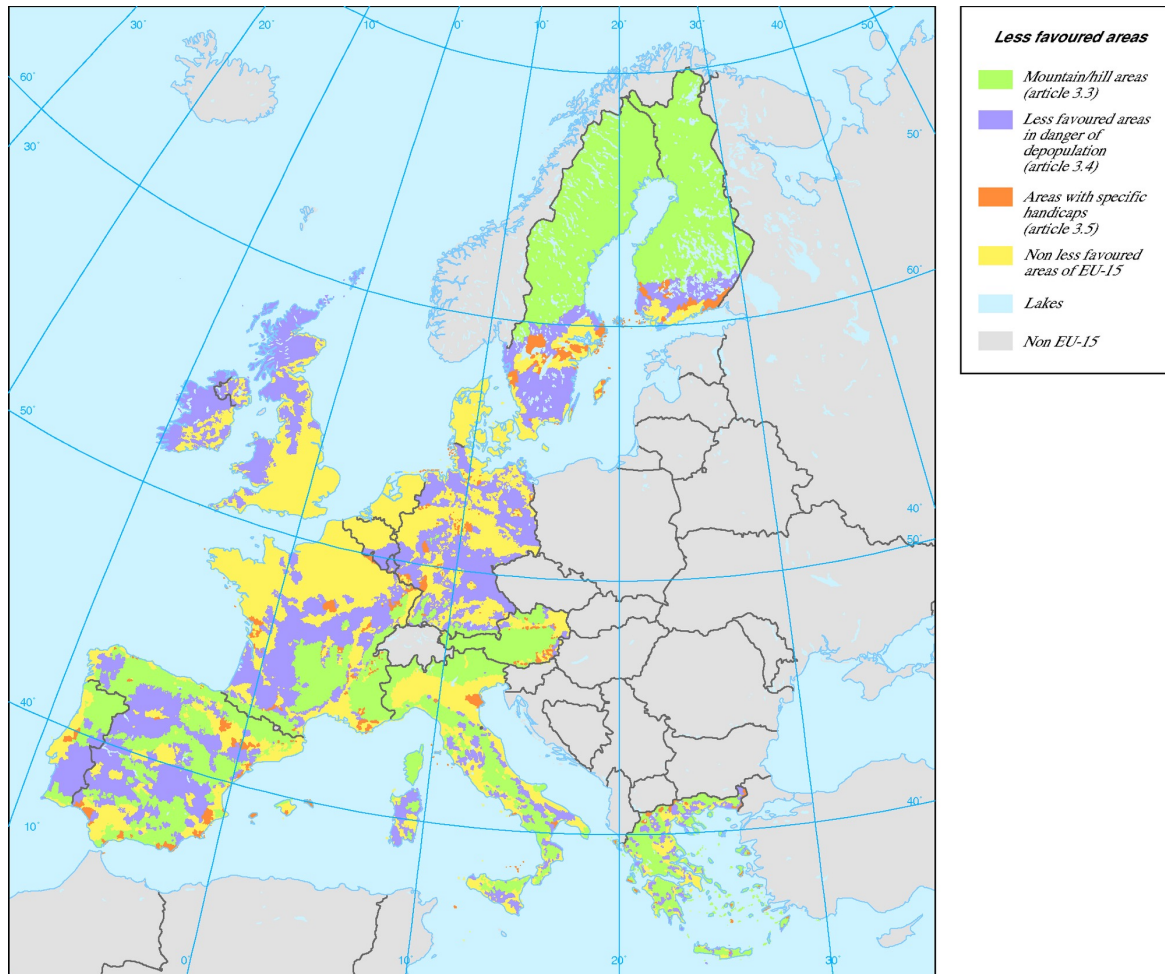


Figure 2. Map of Less Favoured Areas (EEA 2020)

The European Commission has been focusing on these areas since the 1970s, highlighting the role of agriculture in protecting the land and as the main economic activity in mountain areas (Council Directive 75/268/EEC).

Subsequently, at European level, the so-called "**Disadvantaged Areas**" were defined within the framework of the **Common Agricultural Policy** for rural development (CAP).

The "**Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion**" drawn up following a consultation by the European Commission in 2008 highlighted the fact that, to date, **there are no integrated measures capable of improving the attractiveness and competitiveness of mountain regions.**

Mountain Areas in Europe

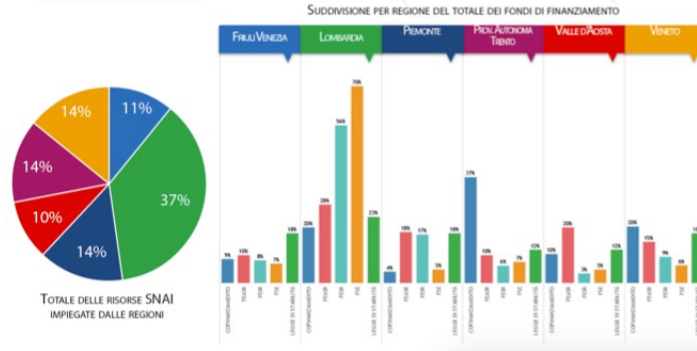
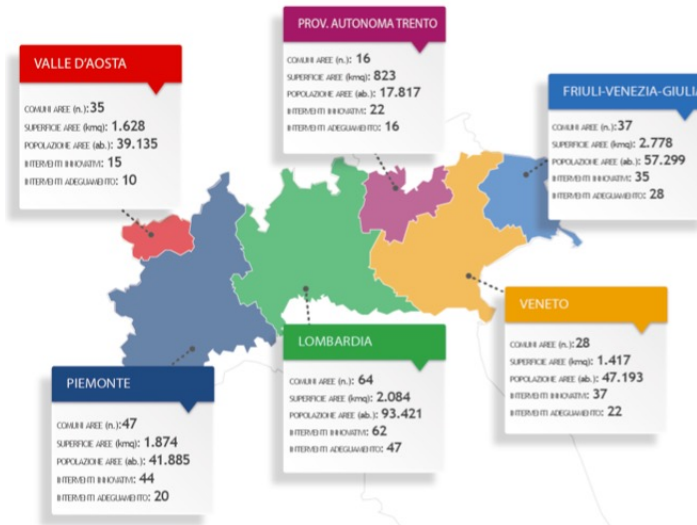
THE VALORISATION OF MOUNTAIN TERRITORIES
 ANALYSIS OF POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND GOOD PRACTICES AT REGIONAL, NATIONAL, EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

June 2021



Implementation agreement between CrC Ge.S.Di.Mont. - Research Centre for the Development of Mountain Areas - Unimont Edolo Centre of the University of Milan and the Lombardy Region "Valorisation of Mountain"

ANALISI STRATEGIA NAZIONALE AREE INTERNE

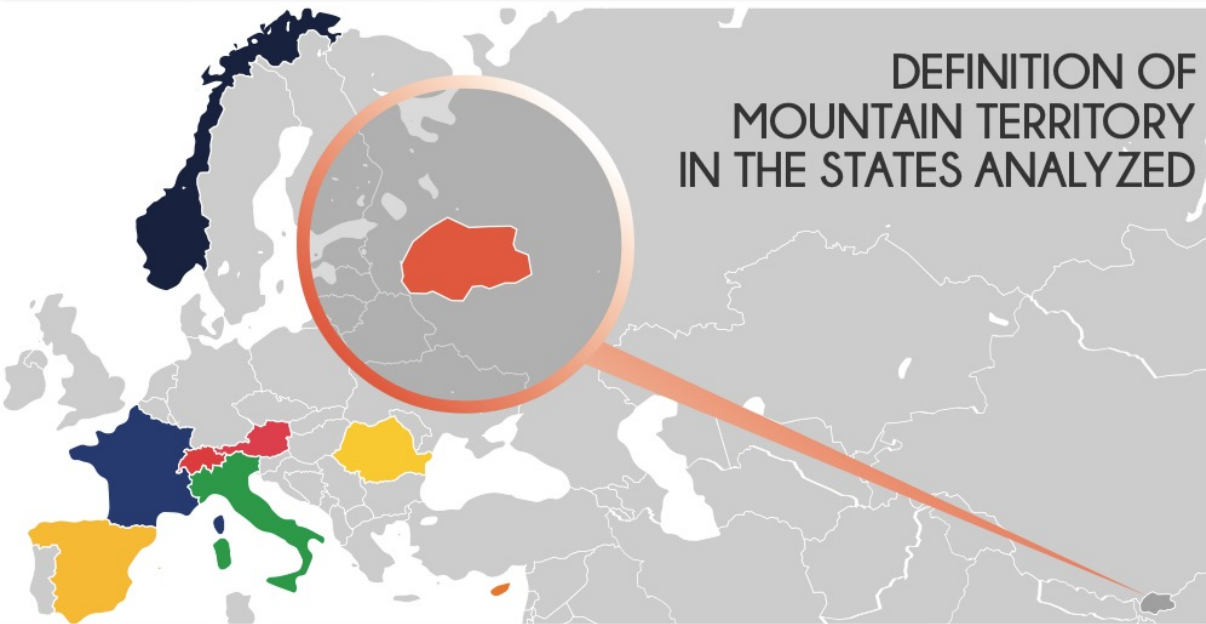


CrC Ge.S.Di.Mont. - UNIMONT, University of Milan carried out a study with Lombardy Region completed in June 2021:

“The valorisation of mountain territories: Analysis of policies, strategies and good practices at regional, national, European and international levels: challenges and opportunities”

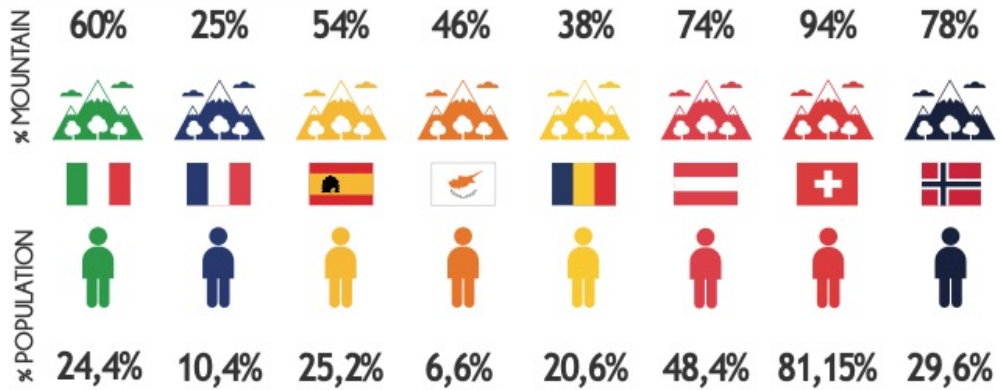
This analysis was carried out in order to make a useful contribution to encourage efficient and effective discussion on issues of territorial development, with particular reference to mountain areas which are generally dealt with in categories such as rural and/or inner areas that lose sight of their specificities, and hence to identify and experiment with methods and strategies specifically for enhancing and promoting sustainable development.

Definition of Mountain Territory... National level



DEFINITION OF MOUNTAIN TERRITORY IN THE STATES ANALYZED

SPAIN DEFINITION 1 MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE a) altitude > 1,000 meters above sea level; b) slope > 20% or difference in altitude 400m for lower altitudes.	CYPRUS DEFINITIONS 0 No official definition. Definition being developed in the integrated strategy for mountain areas (University of Thessaly, 2019).	SWITZERLAND DEFINITION 1 FEDERAL STATISTICS OFFICE a) average altitude > 800 meters a.s.l.; b) differential per hectare > 225 m for lower altitudes.
FRANCE DEFINITION 1 LOI MONTAGNE L. 85-30/1985 a) limited usability of the soil; b) altitude > 700 meters a.s.l. (general), 600 meters a.s.l. (Vosgi chain) 800 meters a.s.l. (Mediterranean), slope > 20% on 80% of the surface area; c) a + b.	ROMANIA DEFINITION 1 L. 197/2018 a) altitude > 600 meters a.s.l.; b) slope > 20% for lower altitudes; c) a + b.	NORWAY DEFINITION 0 No official definition. Rural development policies include actions in favor of mountain areas.
ITALY DEFINITIONS 3 L. 991/1952 (FINANCIAL SUPPORT ACTIONS) L. 1102/1971 (MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES) L.R. 19/2008 (MOUNTAIN COMMUNITIES OF THE LOMBARDY REGION) Consolidated definition L. 991/1952: a) 880% surface > 600 meters a.s.l. b) differential > 600m and cadastral income < 2.400 lire	AUSTRIA DEFINITIONS 0 No official definition. Actions in favor of mountain areas adopt the definition adapted from EU Regulation 1305/2013.	BHUTAN DEFINITIONS 0 No official definition. 95% of the territory is located at an altitude of > 600 meters a.s.l..



LOMBARDY
An exemplary case

MOUNTAIN CLASSIFICATION	Population	Area (km ²)
By degree of mountaininess	1.539.362	10.449
By altitude range	1.041.890	9.650
Based on the Municipalities included in the Mountain Communities	1.254.276	10.163

Mountains in Italy have variable borders.

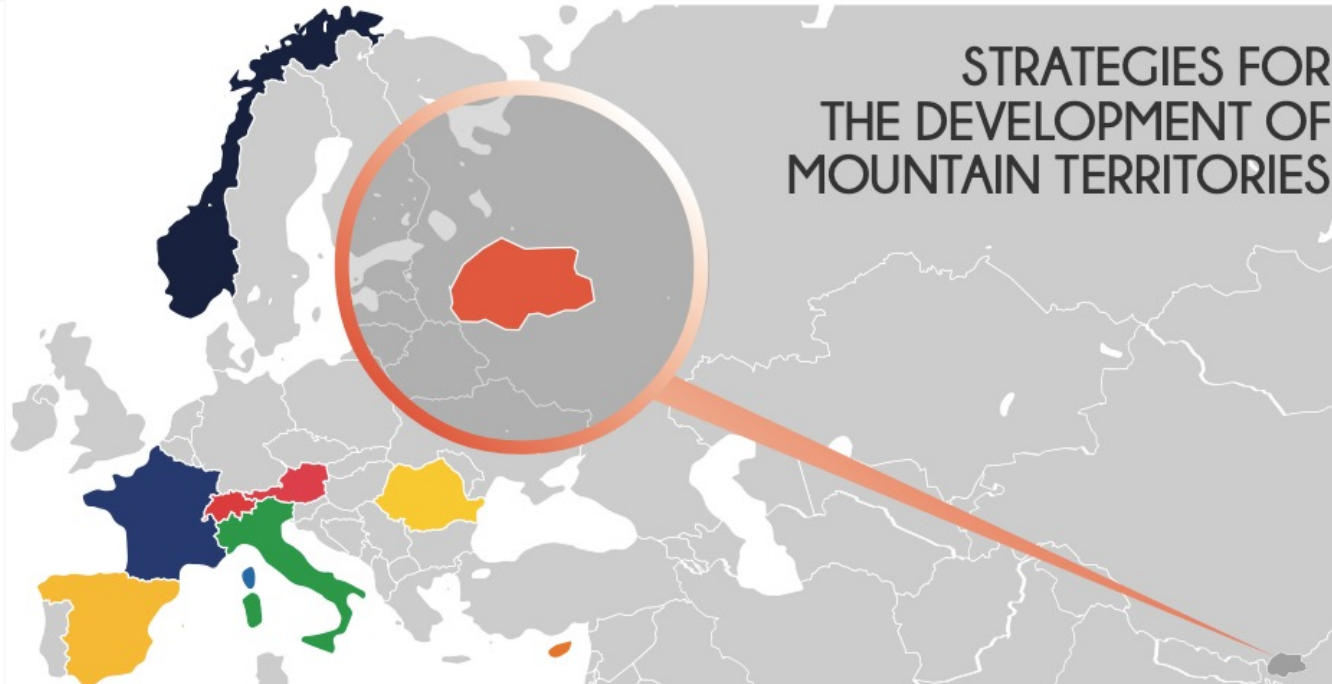
The table shows the data (n. Municipalities, resident population and area) related to mountain areas in the Lombardy region according to the classification of municipalities by "degree of mountaininess", "altitude range" and belonging to the "Mountain Communities".

* This definition is in addition to the one that Implements Article 174 TFEU for the distribution of EAFRD funds (Regulation 1305/2013).

Source: Carret, M., Zilio, E., Giorgi, A. (2019). Il problema della definizione delle zone montane nel diritto. *Journal AmbienteDiritto*, 4/2019, 11-12.

National Strategies for the Development of Mountain Territories

STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN TERRITORIES



The comparative analysis, carried out as part of a study conducted by CrC Ge.S.Di.Mont. in collaboration with the Lombardy Region, shows that few countries have integrated strategies dedicated to the development of mountain territories.

At EU Level two studies produced a comprehensive map of European Mountain territories:

- **Nordregio - 2004**
Study commissioned by the DG Regio to evaluate the impact of European Policies on the mountains.
- **European Environment Agency - 2010**
The study aims to understand and measure the ecological importance of mountain areas in Europe.

<p>No specific strategy. The only national program involving the mountains: National Strategy for Inner Areas (2015).</p>	<p>National Strategy for the Development of the Mountain Community (2019).</p>	<p>Strategy for the Development of Rural and Mountain Areas (P-LPRB) (2015).</p>
<p>Mountain Law II (2016).</p>	<p>Law 197/2018 for the development of mountain areas.</p>	<p>Mountain policies at the level of the Autonomous Communities. Strategy for business development in mountain areas to be defined (2021).</p>
<p>No specific strategy. The mountains are part of various strategies of policies for the development of rural areas.</p>	<p>No specific strategy. Coordination of European funds to promote development initiatives at a regional level.</p>	<p>All the country's strategies and policies necessarily include mountain areas, but no policy specifically mentions the mountains.</p>

National Strategies for the Development of Mountain Territories

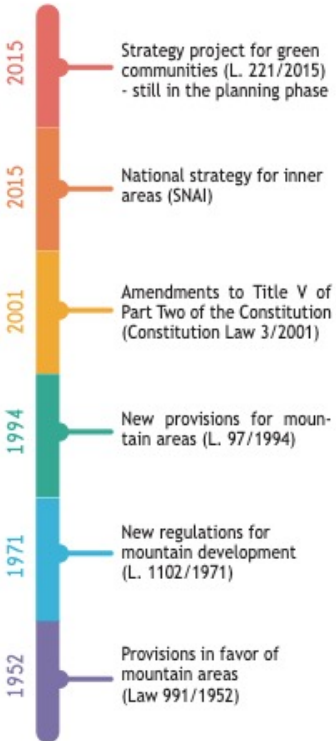


THEMES	ITALY	FRANCE	SPAIN	CYPRUS	ROMANIA	AUSTRIA	SWITZERLAND	NORVEGIA	BHUTAN
Environment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agriculture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tourism	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tax exemption		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Economic progress	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Training		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓
Digitization		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
R&I		✓			✓		✓	✓	
Community led projects	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
APPROACH									
Top Down ↓	↑↓	↓	↑↓	↑↓	↑↓	↑	↑↓	↓	↓
Bottom Up ↑									

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Italy



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



Quantitatively, 60% of the Italian territory is considered mountainous, with 24.4% of the total population. According to ISTAT data, however, the country is characterized by a varied territory, mainly hilly (41.6% of the total area), with mountain areas reaching 35.2%, and only 23.2% in the plain.

Art. 44, co. 2 ° of the Constitution of the Italian Republic states: "the law provides for provisions in favour of mountain areas". These measures first materialized with Law 991/1952 which identifies mountain areas with municipalities that had certain combined characteristics of altitude (greater than 600 meters above sea level for 80% of the territory) or height difference (differential of 600 m between minimum and maximum altitude of the Municipality) and low cadastral income.

Law 1102/1971 established Mountain Communities - bodies governed by public law specifically aimed at the government of mountain areas, placed at an intermediate level between Municipalities and Provinces. These bodies were then devolved to the legislative competence of the Regions, which abolished them or transformed them into unions of Municipalities.

National intervention was established with Law 56/2014, which, in reorganizing the local authorities of a large area, established the mountain border provinces (Verbano-Cusio-Ossola, Sondrio, Belluno), with a law on small municipalities (Law 158/2017) and through the **National Strategy for Inner Areas (SNAI)**. Since inner areas are characterized by being distant from large cities and related services, there is no close correspondence between them and mountain areas. The Green communities strategy (L. 221/2015), which would involve mountain areas, is still at a planning stage.

The planning and programming approach as regards methods and welfarism as regards contents has gradually been replaced by less rigid management models with a lower emphasis on welfare. The flexibility of the "strategies", however, has led to a certain irrelevance of mountain areas and the inclusion of such areas in other categories (e.g. marginal, disadvantaged, economically depressed areas, etc.).

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: France

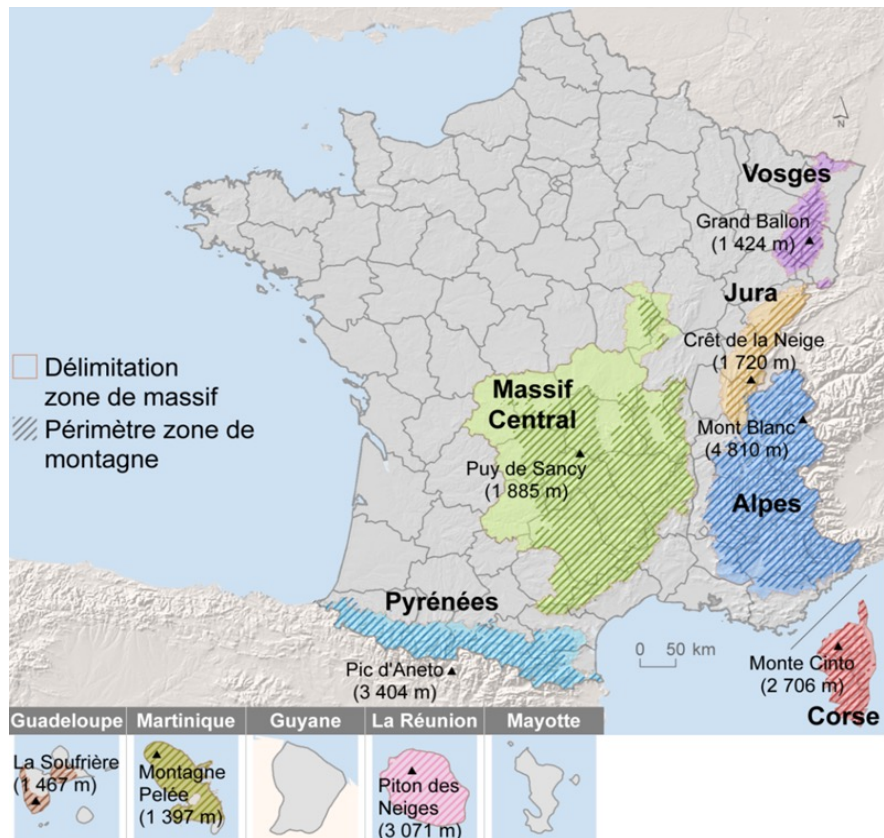


Figure 3. Geographical representation of mountain and massif areas in France. (Source: *Les espaces montagnards - L'environnement en France - developpement-durable.gouv.fr*)

The formulation of a system of “mountain areas” (“**zone de montagne**”) in France dates back to 1961, specified in 1975 by a directive of the European Economic Community. According to the **definition** of the Mountain Law I (taken from Mountain Law II), **mountain areas** are made up of municipalities or municipal portions distinguished by (Art. 3 of Law 85-30).

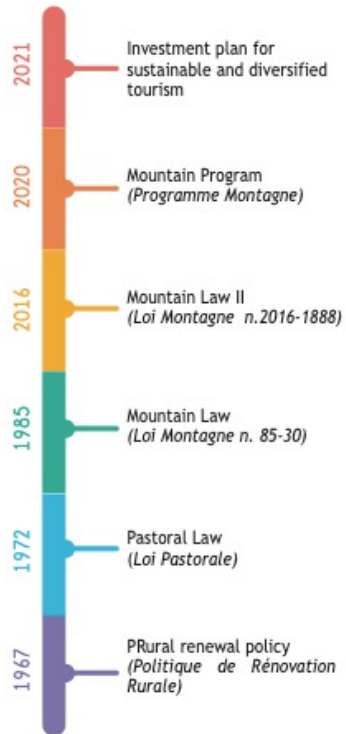
To date, the current legislative framework for the development of mountain areas (Mountain Law II) recognizes the existence of **six mountain massifs** in mainland France (Vosges, Jura, Alps, Central Massif, Pyrenees and Corsica), over **an area equivalent to 30% of the national metropolitan area**. Each mountain area is part of a **massif** (Decree 2004-69), a term used to indicate a territory consisting of one (or more) mountain areas and neighbouring territories - foothills, plains - thus forming a single geographical, economic and social entity.

The perimeter of the massifs does not coincide with the perimeter of the strictly mountainous areas and therefore only the mountain areas are to be taken into consideration for some implementation measures, such as urban planning provisions, of Mountain Law II.

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: France



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



The 1985 Loi Montagne is the first legislative act in Europe that recognizes mountain areas as "objectives of national interest" due to their economic, social, environmental, landscape, health and cultural role, and therefore proposes a holistic and multi-sectoral management.

This law legitimizes the decentralization of mountain policies based on the fact that mountains constitute separate territorial units, not only due to their specific needs but also because of their unique geographical and socio-economic characteristics. It introduces some essential rights for the mountains: **expression, solidarity and differentiation.**

Thirty years later, the need to renew the "Pact between nation and mountains" to keep pace with social, technological and legislative changes, and to set up a development model, led to the formulation of Loi Montagne II.

The new law aims to: a) modernize the mechanisms and institutions underlying mountain governance, b) adapt the way in which public policies integrate the mountains and c) respond to the needs of mountain inhabitants, enterprises and users.

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Spain



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



Spain has a varied and diversified territory. According to a study by the European Environment Agency, about **54% of the Spanish territory** is mountainous. The Spanish territory, in fact, includes several mountain ranges and massifs where **25.2% of the total population** lives (EEA, 2010). The Kingdom of Spain shares with the Republic two important elements in relation to the juridical discipline of the mountains, namely the regionalist approach and the almost identical formulation of the constitutional provision of reference.

Article 130 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution states that *"The public authorities will see to the modernization and development of all economic sectors and, in particular, agriculture, livestock breeding, fishing and crafts, in order to to balance the standard of living of all Spaniards"* and adds: *"For the same purpose, special treatment will be dispensed to mountain areas"*.

That said, there is, to date, no univocal approach to favour the development of Spanish mountain territories nor a definition of mountain that goes beyond the agricultural sphere.

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Catalonia

Catalan High Mountain Law (L. 2/1983) and the new Mountain Law

Catalan Law 2/1983, of 9 March, is the only law to give a definition of mountains. This definition is found in **Article 3**, which identifies as mountain areas those territories formed by one or more municipal districts that are not part of a mountain county but meet at least one of the defined conditions.

The Catalan Executive Council is responsible for drawing up a list of mountain municipalities and can receive requests from municipalities that wish to be considered mountainous. **The ultimate objective of this law is to limit depopulation in high mountain areas, while guaranteeing adequate living conditions, in order to achieve Catalonia's internal balance.** The main instrument for implementing mountain policy is a "county mountain plan" and its "action programme".

In 2011, with the establishment of a **working group in the Department of Territory and Sustainability, work began on writing a new mountain law.** From this moment on, a very long process was set in motion, the key stages of which consisted of the involvement of all actors, from public institutions to the private sector, with two moments of citizen participation (in 2015 and 2018), passing through the creation, in 2016, of the **General Directorate for Mountain Policies of Catalonia.** In 2017, the General Mountain Council is convened and approves the Preliminary Memorandum of the draft law. Finally, in 2019 the actual drafting of the law begins with the intervention of legal experts. To date, the new Mountain Law has not yet been promulgated.



Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Cyprus



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



On the island of Cyprus, the mountainous territory coincides with the **Troodos Mountain range**, located in the southwestern part of the country and located within the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, and the Pentadaktylos mountains in the north of the island. The mountain areas of the country, according to a European Environment Agency - EEA study, represent **46% of the surface area (4,259 km²)** and **6.6% of the total population of the country**.

Over the last century, the territorial policy of the Republic of Cyprus has largely focused on the development of coastal areas and the separation between protected natural areas and areas for human use. With the exception of the compensation devolved to mountain farmers through the Common Agricultural Policy since 1990 (year of entry into the European Union), no national policy dealt with the specificities of mountain areas until 2019. However, from a cultural point of view, for the inhabitants of the island of Cyprus, mountains are essential for producing vital resources and providing ecosystem services and do not have the marginal characteristics typical of other mountainous areas in Europe.

In 2019, the Republic launched its first **National Strategy for the Development of Mountain Communities** aimed at leveraging endogenous resources and the active role of mountain communities through

- the creation of a new mountain economy,
- investments in **social infrastructures and services of general interest**,
- resolution of the **demographic problem**,
- and support for a **new multilevel structure of mountain governance** (University of Thessaly, 2019).

The 2019 Strategy involves 250 actions, for a portfolio of €250 million, to be completed by 2030.

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Romania



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



In Romania, according to a European Environment Agency - EEA study, mountains occupy 38% of the national territory with about 20.6% of the total population (4.5 million inhabitants) (EEA, 2010), in turn divided into 658 administrative units which include 3520 municipalities (Dax, 2018). The updated list of mountain territories is defined in an annex to Law 189/2018 identifying **9 groups of mountain massifs: 3 in the Eastern Carpathians, 4 in the Southern Carpathians and 2 in the Western Carpathians.**

In 1990 the **Commission of the Mountain Areas of Romania** was established subordinated to the Ministry of Agriculture (Rey, 2008), followed by a series of measures, structures and partnerships to improve provisions in favour of mountain areas. In **2004, Romania formalized a “Strategy for the sustainable development of the mountain territory”,** the delimitation of mountain areas and the Romanian Parliament adopted the first law on the mountains (no. 347/2004), revised a few years later (Official Gazette no. 448/2009). With a strong focus on mountain agriculture, Law 347/2004 has not had a concrete impact on the territory as it has not been followed by relevant policies for its implementation.

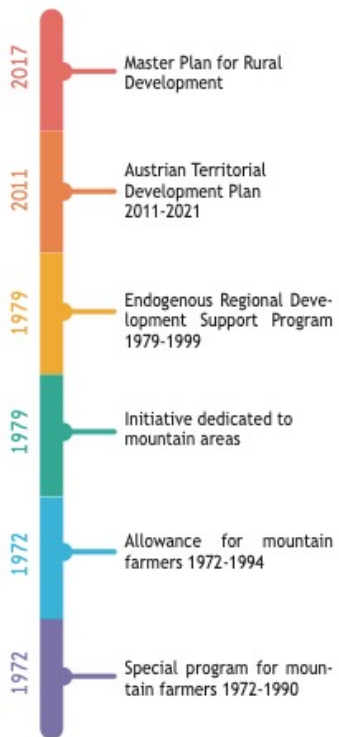
In 2018, the **Legea Muntelui (197/2018)** was promulgated replacing Law 347/2004. This law defines the mountain as a "territory of particular national, strategic, economic, social and environmental interest" and represents a significant step forward in recognizing the socio-economic needs of mountain areas. **While paying particular attention to agriculture, the law encourages a sustainable, multisectoral and integrated development of the mountains that also enhances "non-agricultural activities".**

The Romanian Parliament allocated **€1 billion** to finance the measures planned by **Legea Muntelui** over a period of **10 years.**

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Austria



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



Austrian mountain areas are part of two of the European mountain ranges: the Alps and the Bohemian Massif. According to the definition of LFAs (Less Favored Areas) of the European Commission, 81% of the Austrian territory is made up of LFAs. According to the European Environment Agency - EEA study, **48.4% of the Austrian population lives in this territory, mainly distributed in municipalities with less than 10,000 inhabitants (EEA, 2010)**. Despite this, there is still no unambiguous definition of mountain territory.

Austria has implemented governance models that dealt with correlations between urban and mountain areas since the 1970s, immediately addressing the need for integrated strategies with a bottom-up approach. Austrian mountain areas **were an example for the structuring of place-based regional policies**, with a multi-level governance approach, based on the concept that "peripheral" and mountain areas could not be managed by regional governments alone but had to receive a specific attention from the Austrian federal government.

Previous experiences at federal and local levels helped Austria to **channel and integrate rural and mountain development upon the country's entry into the European Union in 1995**. Nowadays, the use of structural funds is interconnected with the application of regional development policies, seen as an important tool for coordinating local, regional and national policies in order to ensure effective use of the funds. In this perspective, cooperation groups, consultancy agencies as well as regional development agencies play a fundamental role.

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Switzerland



LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY

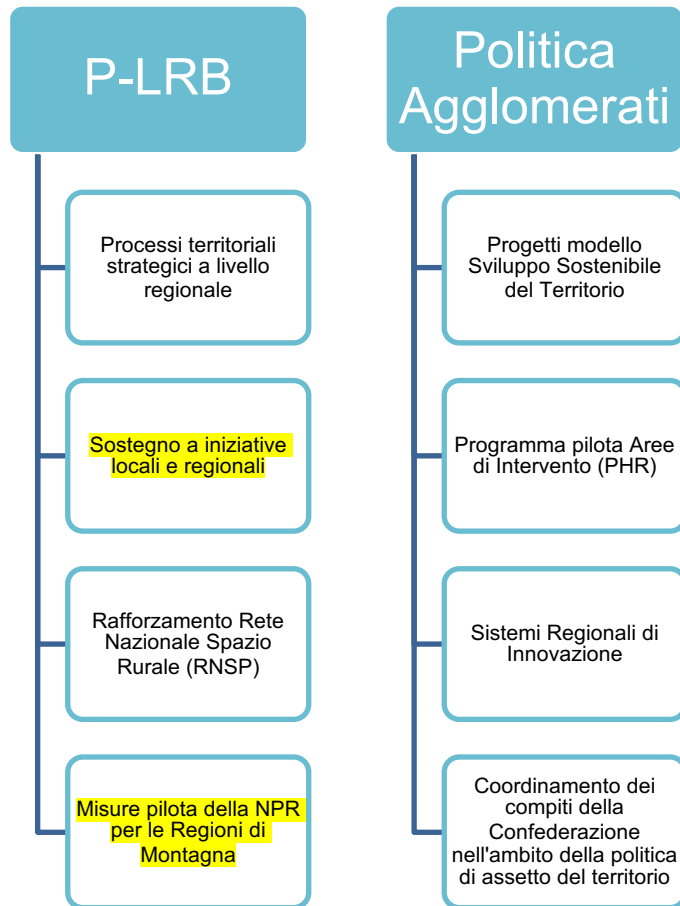


Switzerland is a country with a very high degree of “mountainness”, and according to a study by the European Environment Agency - EEA, **94%** of the territory is made up of mountain areas in which **81%** of the total population lives; mountain regions cover an area of 38,806 km². Together with Austria, Switzerland was one of the first countries to pay specific attention to mountain areas through the **Swiss Law for Investment in Mountain Areas issued by the Swiss Federal Council in 1974**. It has also coined a general definition of a Mountain Region used for statistical purposes.

Until 2015 there was no specific integrated policy for rural and mountain areas. The **Swiss Government Policy for Rural Areas and Mountain Regions (P-LRB)** joins the Confederation's Agglomeration Policy 2016+ and therefore integrates the Territorial Strategy for Alpine Areas in Switzerland and the Swiss Territorial Project. The Swiss government's P-LRB is based on identifying the main challenges that Swiss rural and mountain areas are facing. The P-LRB is intended to be a transversal and complementary policy to the agglomeration policy. These coordination efforts must, to date, still be accompanied by ad-hoc funding. A first effort was made with the establishment of specific funds within the New Regional Policies (NPR). A new motion (No. 19.3731) was adopted by the Federal Parliament in March 2021, asking the Federal Council to develop a realistic and cross-sectoral action plan for the implementation of the P-LRB.

Homogeneous territorial development is also promoted in Switzerland through other measures, not specific to mountain areas, such as: **the Federal Law concerning financial equalization and compensation of charges established in 2020**; and the **universal service** which ensures that basic public services are available throughout the territory with a guaranteed minimum quality level (DETEC, 2016).

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Switzerland



The governance model of the policy for rural areas and mountain regions is multi-level, with an interaction of bottom-up and top-down approaches, and multi-sectoral with the aim of promoting the harmonisation of state interventions at all levels of impact (horizontal and vertical). For this reason, three main levels have been defined:

- ❖ Federal level: with the aim of strengthening the National Rural Space Network (RNSP);
- ❖ Regional level: involvement of partners at regional level (municipalities, civil society) motivating the development of their own initiatives;
- ❖ Tripartite body: includes all state actors from rural areas and mountain regions. This body coordinates and steers projects at the vertical level.

The policy does not define any new instruments or measures, referring to existing sectoral policies for rural areas and mountain regions in Switzerland.

However, within the framework of policy development, new needs for action to improve the coordination of sectoral policies have been identified and are only partly applied within the framework of the Policy for Rural Areas and Mountain Regions, others in common with the Agglomeration Policy

Examples of National Strategies and Policies: Norway



Norway has a vast territorial area - 334,852.06 km² - compared to its population of approximately 5.3 million inhabitants. According to the study conducted by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in 2010, **78% of the territory of Norway is considered mountainous, and 29.6% of the total population lives there.** In Norwegian culture, the definition of mountains refers to areas where the altitude prevents the growth of vegetation.

LAWS AND STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MOUNTAIN TERRITORY



Since 1961, Norway has financed rural development through what was originally known as the **Rural Development Fund**, which was incorporated into Innovation Norway in 2003. It manages most of the development schemes for large and small businesses in the Norwegian districts. **Innovation Norway partly finances investments in both agriculture and other industries.** A more important part of district policy in Norway is differential taxation measures, where employee taxes are gradually lower, the more remote the area is. Despite these and other tools, there has been centralization in Norway, with the population moving to larger cities, and a greater concentration of services in urban areas. This development has accelerated over the past decade, due to political decisions and mobility trends. But there now seems to be a greater shift in political focus regarding districts than in the past decade.

The Ministry of Local Authorities and Modernization in 2019 underlined the **need to promote coordinated sustainable development and territorial planning** capable of promoting socio-economic development while preserving existing territorial and cultural resources. The new focus on rural and mountain areas was reaffirmed through the drafting of two reports in 2020 focusing on local development and is taking shape through the drafting of the **Strategy for the development of businesses in mountain and inner areas.** The strategy aims to stimulate the development of enterprises in the municipalities of mountain and inner districts, promoting innovation, digitization and the use of new technologies for the creation of new opportunities for local communities.



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Thanks for the attention!

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