

“Tourism and Sustainability examples projects in the EU Alpine region”

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(Presented by ICCHT 2015 : XIIIth International Conference on Cultural Heritage and Tourism/January 23-24, Paris, France)

Abstract:

The fast development of tourism industries around the World, has largely contributed for many cities or countries economical and social progress. Past year Taiwan in particular was ranked among one of fastest raise growth country. To the prominent importance of this phenomenon; seasonal mobility or multipurpose trips have reached more than 1 billion tourists crossing International borders against more than 4 billion intramural travelers and nourished the economy and employment of this service sector in most attractive regions, representing approximatively one tenth of World GDP amount, including trade, research, cultural or journalistic purposes. Increased activities are giving pressure to the consumption of energy, water, resources, and Greenhouse Gas emissions. The further concentration of tourists in most beautiful sites of the World is challenging the preservation and protection of the original natural environment, including species and their ecosystems, ethnics, cultures and languages, “ habitat ” protection of inherited landscapes and monuments for the future generations to come. In this article will be reassessed some Alpine mountain projects, (7 countries including 5 EU Member States) methods and directions under the EU sustainable development scheme, activating investments for economical and social activities, preservation of rural areas and remote countryside as well as smarter cities development. EU ETS forecasting escalation demand for road and air transport, and will consider to rely on Biobased alternatives that may turn out new solutions against traffic emissions with the popularization of tourism development. This paper will give some Examples and try to define Stakeholders practices, Governments efforts, Consumers ’ attitude and evolutes toward new forms of tourism, with more responsible aspect such as: ecotourism, eco-certification, partnerships, investment in technologies and facilities, and contribute to greener perceptions or less impacting consequences on the longer term for local associations, organizations initiative and actions in the Alpine region

Keywords: *Tourism, Sustainability, protection, risks management, change in mountain area environment.*

CONTENTS:

I) Introduction

1. Definitions, Alpine Region Tourism

2. Some facts and figures for the Alps region

3. Sustainable Tourism origin in the World

4. Sustainable Tourism in the EU

II) Sustainable Tourism Experiences in Alpine Region

III) Analysis and comments on situations in Alpine Region

About Future

IV) Conclusion

References

I) Introduction:

With economic fast development our past decades, mobility been facilitated as well through Worldwide trade exchanges and globalization of our economies, has contributed to the discovery of new regions, countries and cities. Visitors abounding has promoted more Service businesses that include transportation, lodging, activities and visits, as well as all forms of consumption (restaurants and shopping, physical and spectacles). This become more and more popular with popularization of holidays, short vacations or weekends trips to split with stressing cities, urban life. Furthermore, International conferences and seminars alos provided opportunities to participants to travel shortly and come back with their friends or family to better discover or enjoy the foreign regions attractiveness. These evolutes to transform this young sector into a real industry.

Tourism is a quite complex sector, it involves many actors and is linked to many other fields that contributes to the longer term (such as Natural resources, Environment conservation, Climate change, Pollutions, Culture, local customs and Traditions promotion and protection, Accessibility and transportation, Energy sustainability and smaller carbon footprint, Tourists satisfaction, Local communities carrying capacities and Socio-economic growth, impact of tourism development on longer term),

The industries implicated relies on public-private partnerships, and their fast growth strongly impacts on landscape and aesthetic (new structures with traditional housing) transportation-access, management resources and benefit for host communities capacities building, and all intangible aspects. The Alpine region constitutes a Macro Region and have been the object of a great number of transnational projects and studies in the literature helping synergy and positive economic growth between travelers and Alps core or fringe regions localities originality under neighbors Partnership cohesion Programme for the sake this Unique Common Natural resources and skills or experiences sharing in

Europe during past two decades.

The fast growth of Tourism industry particularly Mountain Tourism has brought attention on the intensity of threats that may undermine indigenous landscape or resources. In 2002, the “International year of Ecotourism” and the “2002 Year of the Mountain “declared by the UN, did helped to raise awareness for tourism ethics and enhanced needs for the monitoring of proper infrastructures in remote regions. It also brought in needs for measures to minimize risks and impacts to preserve traditions and protect lands, resources and people caring at the adequation of external investments and benefits for local communities

1) Definitions :

Sustainability and Sustainable Development has been defined in 1986 in the Brundtland Commission by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) as "forms of progress that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs."

► The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has defined Sustainable Tourism and its development in 2004 “...for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resource to meet the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.” while “a local tourism destination is a physical space in which a tourist spends at least one overnight. It includes tourism products such as support services and attractions and tourist resources within one day’s return travel time (day trip). It has physical and administrative boundaries defining its management, and images and perceptions defining its market competitiveness. Local destinations incorporate various stakeholders “

For UNWTO, Sustainable Tourism can be expressed simply , and defined as the form of "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities". In this sense “Sustainable tourism” development guidelines and management practices are applicable to all forms of tourism in all types of destinations, including mass tourism and the various niche

tourism segments. Sustainability principles refer to the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance must be established between these three dimensions to guarantee its long-term sustainability.

Thus, sustainable tourism should:

a) Make optimal use of environmental resources that constitute a key element in tourism development, maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

b) Respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance.

c) Ensure viable, long-term economic operations, providing socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders that are fairly distributed, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities and social services to host communities, and contributing to poverty alleviation.

Sustainable tourism development requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, as well as strong political leadership to ensure wide participation and consensus building. Achieving sustainable tourism is a continuous process and it requires constant monitoring of impacts, introducing the necessary preventive and/or corrective measures whenever necessary.

Sustainable tourism should also maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction and ensure a meaningful experience to the tourists, raising their awareness about sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices amongst them.¹

¹ *Making Tourism More Sustainable - A Guide for Policy Makers*, UNEP and UNWTO, 2005, p.11-12
<http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>

While UNESCO for Education enhance that although considered presently as alternative forms of tourism “Responsible Tourism”, “Ecotourism”, “Agritourism”, “Cultural tourism”, “Voluntary Tourism”, “Greener Tourism”, “Geotourism”, etc... may become Mainstream tourism forms and contribute to the revitalization of local communities. It should provide to people (travelers and Local Communities people) reciprocal benefits, provide to visitors recreational, educational or physical activities, in the respect of the Cultural Heritage, the Environment and resources preservation. Tourists not specifically looking for holidays destinations, but could gather business travels, conference participants, short stay such as half day to one week end spare time.

2) Involved European Alpine countries: some Facts and Figures:

The Alpine region constitutes the largest and highest altitudes through European Continent, like a large Arch that crosses several countries from East to West. EU from early years has launched Trans-National cooperation,

Seven Countries are participating to the “Alpine Space Programme “:
from the EU:

- + Austria: whole country;
- + France: Rhône-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d’Azur, Franche-Comté, Alsace regions;
- + Germany: districts of Oberbayern and Schwaben (in Bayern), Tübingen and Freiburg (in Baden-Württemberg);
- + Italy: Lombardia, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige, Valle d’Aosta, Piemonte, Liguria;
- + Slovenia: whole country.

The EU Member States cooperate with the following Alpine non-EU Member States, as full partners:

- + Liechtenstein: whole country;
- + Switzerland: whole country.

They are covering a total surface of 450,000ha , 1200 km chain long from East to West and the highest mounts in European Continent with 4807meters (Mont Blanc in France) for almost 70 M.inhabitants and annual 120M. travelers

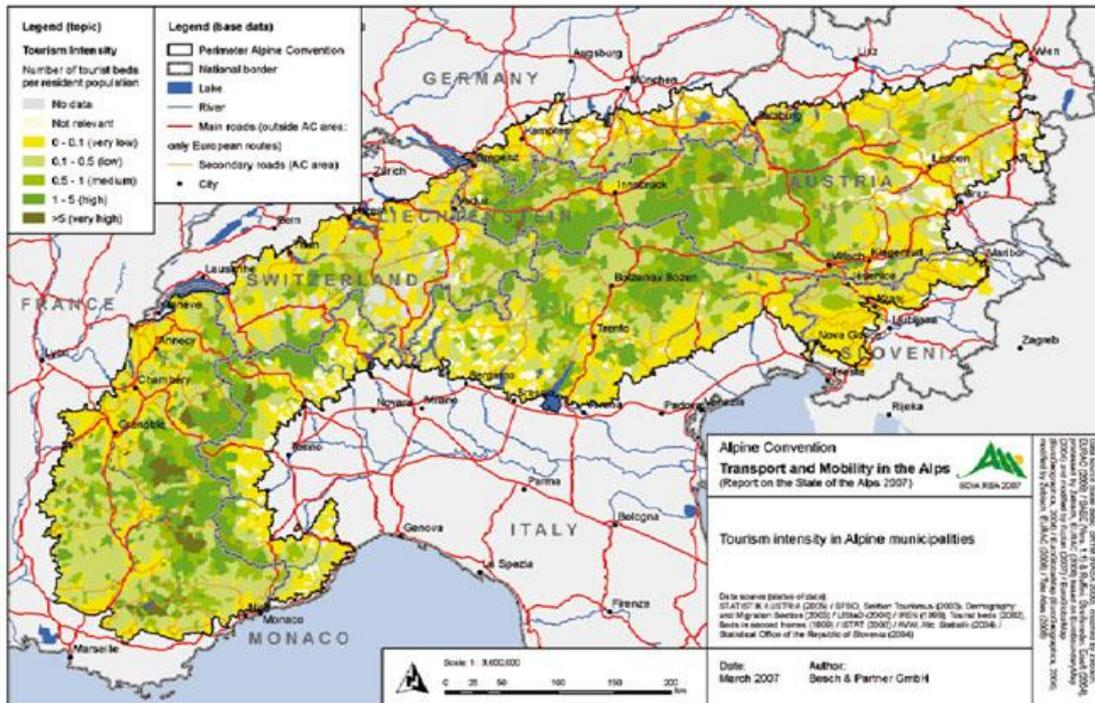


Fig 1 Alpine Regions and countries map

Source :

In 2013 there are large protected areas of over 100ha with 13 National parks, 87 Regional Nature Parks, 288 Nature reserves, 18 Biospheres reserves, 4 UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites and 3 geological reserves totalizing 400 protected areas. With 600 special protections listed landscape protections, such as landscape protection, quiet area, classified sites,...) overlapping existing protected areas.²

3) Sustainable Tourism origin and development in the World,

When nomadic people settled down they began to rely more on agricultural products, humanity began to enjoy common environment resources. During Romans period Swarbrooke³ observed the Romans can design cities in sustainable way and Latin words: “Res Nullius” and “Res Communis” which distinguish something that may belong to oneself or rather to the whole community.

The greening issues grow by 1960 years, when obvious risks or threats have been raised with tourism development in attractive destinations to promote Green tourism coupled to socio-geographical, rural exude and industrial and service sectors prominence

² <http://www.alparc.org/the-protected-areas/some-figures-about-apa/item/16-some-figures-about-alpine-protected-areas>

³ Swarbrooke J., 1999, Sustainable Tourism Management , CABI,p.183

in cities. In the 1980's the further development of mass tourism turned Tourism into an Industry and appeal to evaluate its impact and heavily visited Ecosystems carrying capacities. It is finally in 1995 in the Green Paper on Tourism⁴ that the EU used the term Sustainable for Tourism sector. Clarke mentioned the importance to preserve archaeological sites, historical buildings and districts⁵. Many more bibliographies since, have debated on the importance of Tourism development and influence for the Future. On another hand Tourism generates exchanges and large amount of money investments into local infrastructures, from transportation to lodging, entertainments. These can benefits to local economy and improve employment demand around the year for rural agricultural societies. The well being might be linked to the touristic businesses. Then sometime, the businesses are international companies, or national chains owned companies which in these cases will not benefit to local communities economy. Some authors believe that even if the businesses are locally owned, local actors will need more considerations not to compromise future business benefits due the fact, they are directly linked to the carrying capacities of the ecosystems. Some authors such Swarbrooke do not believe that Government, regional or localities means can really impact the trends occurred by mass tourism. They believe that tourists need to be aware, "educated" or at least feel concerned by their behaviors possible negative effects on the Nature or historical, cultural Heritages on shorter and longer terms to allow future generations to enjoy same satisfaction.

4) EU Alpine sustainable tourism:

This vast but diverse regions in their altitude or accessibility, went through deep socio-demographic changes within growing or declining rural, resorts, cities or metropolitan area that have accompanied their economic evolution (agricultural, private sectors or tourism industry) and development potentials.

Four main priorities have been established in 2001⁶

- Mutual knowledge and common perspectives + Competitiveness and sustainable development.
- Development of sustainable transport systems with particular consideration of efficiency, inter-modality and better accessibility.

⁴ Green Paper on Tourism, 1995, http://ec.europa.eu/green-papers/index_en.htm

⁵ Issues on Management Archaeological and Anthropology Museum, International Journal of Heritage Studies, Taylor & Francis, 1997

⁶ EU Alpine Space Programme
<https://www.linkedin.com/pub/eu-alpine-space-programme/14/234/868?trk=pub-pbmap>

- Wise management of nature, landscapes and cultural heritage, promotion of the environment and cooperation in the prevention of natural disasters.
- Technical Assistance: can be supported by regional expertise and Knowledge based economy

5) The EU Community initiative :

It was quite recently on May 23rd 2013 that the EP adopted a resolution on a macro-regional strategy for the Alps⁷.

EUSALP⁸ and EU 2020 work in continuation former pre-established experiences of the EU macro regional common theme and single strategy that crosses several borders or countries governments: the EU Baltic Sea Region transborder cooperation and Strategies (2009) and the Danube Region Transnational programmes of cooperation and strategies (2011) as well. For the macro Alpine region too, Governments, Regions and Localities supposed to use preexisting National and Intergovernmental funds and redistributing them to improve mobility and accessibility and consolidate the Macro regional goals with preexisting European Environmental or Cohesion Policies, as well as focused Employment Programme and Innovating projects.

Recently the establishment of a permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention in 2013 coordinate transborder Programs with priorities and strategies are seeking for a European Alpine identity and an ensemble of Cultural heritages The analysis of general interest in these evolving societies comparing and analyzing the regions progress and innovations, raise awareness and practices for low carbon emissions particularly for the mobility and transportation and maintaining, protecting Biodiversity and ecosystems connectivity and finally, a better management coordination of the whole Alpine Space at multilevels and transnational Governments level.

After a public consultation of 400 stakeholders: citizens, organizations and Public Authorities, the EU Strategies for the Alpine region lastly and during Milan Conference (dec.2014) proposed under the three preexisting pillars a Regional cooperation policy and future Strategies and Action Plan for the seven countries concerned.

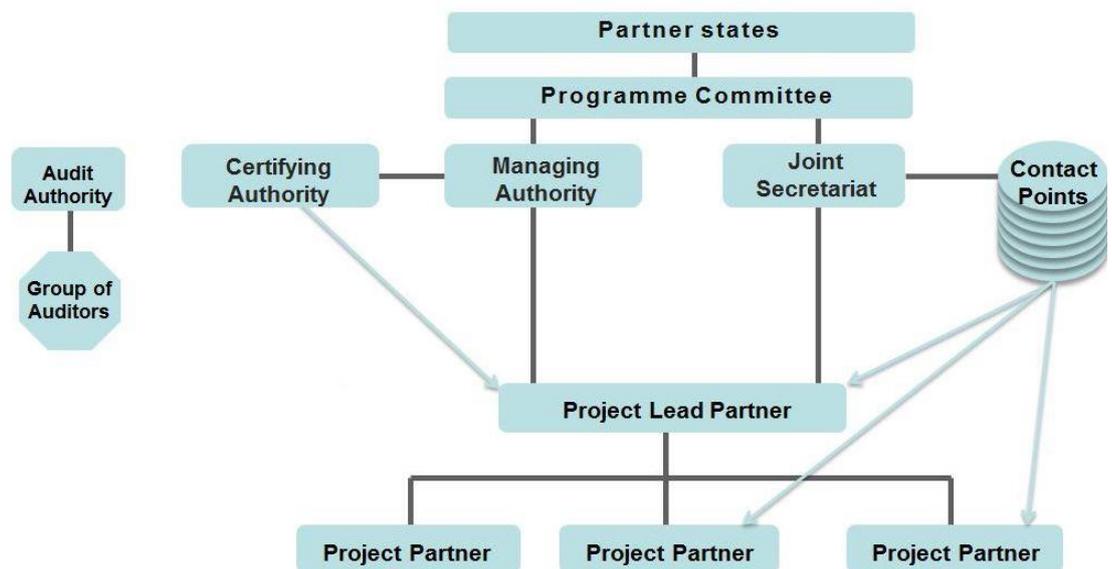
Interreg programmes started to work to reduce disparities or regional synergies and habitats, as well as expertise sharing with more innovative projects sorting.

⁷ (2013/2549(RSP)) P7_TA-PROV(2013)0229

⁸ European Council Brussels, 20th December 2013, EUCO 217/13, CO EUR 15, CONCL 8

-the Alpine Space Interreg IIIB Programme organizational structures, commissioned (2002~2006) to an independent and transnational Experts Group as a survey on Sustainable territorial development in the Alpine Space: towards long term transnational Interreg I IV C (2007~2013) gathering more than 600 projects co-funded with the creation of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), since 2010 involving Interact, Alpine Space and ETC Program.⁹

The New Transnational Interreg I V C Programme (2014~2020) which are constituted by two joint Secretariat in Munich (Germany) and a Management authority on Land in Salzburg(Austria) that help to monitor calls projects online on maximum periods of 36 months, involving a minimum of 3 partners countries for the new period with EU fund (140 M.d'Euro with 85% co-financed projects involving non-state actors supported by the European regional Development Fund ERDF).



Source : <http://www.alpine-space.eu/about-the-programme/erdf-co-funding/>

(2020 Conference "**Project submission and management in 2014-2020**" - A. Widmer-Leitz, S. Amorosi & J-C. Charlier)

II) Sustainable Tourism Experiences in Alpine Region

1) Sustainable Tourism principles and pillars in the EU

Sustainable Tourism should stand on 3 main pillars :

~Host community social and cultural heritage protection

Promotion (Promotion of customs and traditions, further understanding &

⁹ <http://www.alpine-space.org/downloads3a6e.html?&L=yobyrcrvmtmp>

tolerance)

~Lesser impact on Natural resources Environment Conservation

(Conservation of energy, water, landscape, Fauna and Flora biodiversity, soil to be left intact for future travelers discovery, activities and receive same satisfaction along the time)

~Socio-Economical positive gains from touristic activities for local communities

Economical returns (use of local products & local services offered to tourists)

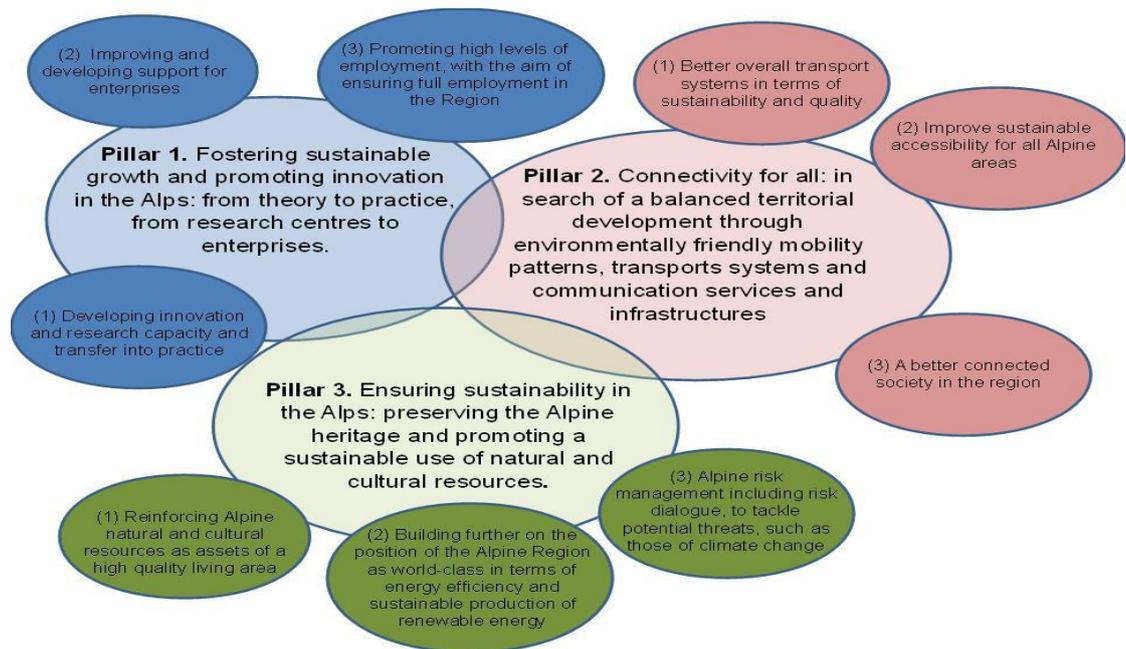


fig 2: EU SALP : EU strategy for the Alpine Region¹⁰

Few examples from Major Projects

“Major projects’ (as so called for those projects worth over €50 million fund) and being implemented between 2007 and 2013.¹¹

2) Examples of Sustainable Experiences in the EU:

a) Mitigation transnational spruce trees seeds field experimentations to Climate change.¹²

(fig : Map transalpine provenance regions bioclimatic regions overlaid areas)

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/conferences/alpine-region/

¹¹ <http://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/projects-per-thematic-field/>

¹² http://www.alpinespace.eu/uploads/tx_txrunningprojects/MANFRED_Adapt_Seeds_Handbook_en.pdf

- a) CLIMALPTOUR Project “Climate Change and its impact on tourism in the Alpine space”: analysis effects and assessment for strategic features and raise of awareness to localities in 6 Alpine transnational Countries .

We find interesting the study case of Lombardy Italy by Bergamo University and which was published by IREALP under CLIMALPtour project .this study offers a complete study on tourism activities in the Italian Lombardy skiing area, with analysis of the different economic situations and impact of temperature raise and snow melting on the ski resort, and further study the solutions or alternatives that could help to overcome real risks and bad seasons due to snow falls irregularity effects on shorter or longer season.¹³ shows quite a complete past study on ski resort areas and possible impact of global warming and variance of snow thickness during winter ski season. It suggests alternative solutions, like producing artificial snow production, or ski in Glacier at higher altitudes for threatened resorts with artificial sheets protection of glaciers during the summer season to prevent against continued melting. Further to prevent from losing in economical benefits (hotels, restaurants services) of ski resort dismantling, they are interesting activities or entertainment proposed with the development of summer season physical activities, such as summer skiing, trekking, climbing, mountaineering, Nordic walking, hiking, cycling or mountain biking, canoeing, hand gliding, horse riding, golf and indoor sports diversified tourism product such as concerts, festivals, exhibitions and a variety of bars, restaurants and retail stores. Also the regain of SPA relaxing treatment for the 18th and 19th centuries mineral spring water or bath therms including spas, health and wellness clubs, These activities should help to mitigate the climate variability and increase for local community more employment and economic income to improve their infrastructures and equipments, or accessibility, and avoid the winter ski resort to face to be abandoned if the destination missing snow falls.

- b) Ecological environment and biodiversity preservation:

The Ecological Continuum Project¹⁴

The project ALPARC, CIPRA, ISCAR, and WWF's European Alpine Program have been carrying out joint activities for the conservation of Alpine biodiversity since 2002. The 4 organizations introduced a new approach to

¹³ <http://www.climalptour.eu/content/sites/default/files/The%20effects%20of%20climate%20change%20on%20alpine%20destinations%20in%20Lombardy.pdf>

¹⁴ Mountain Research and Development, 28(2):168-172. Published by: International Mountain Society
<http://www.bioone.org/doi/pdf/10.1659/mrd.1010>

Alpine nature conservation by looking at biodiversity from an *Alps-wide* as opposed to a *national* perspective.

III) Analysis and comments on situations in Alpine Region

1) Four approaches—the Pan-European Ecological Network approach (PEEN), the Swiss Ecological Network (REN), WWF's Eco region approach, and ALPARC's Protected Area approach—assessed by 16 experts (scientists as well as members of the Ecological Network Platform), based on a questionnaire. The suitability of the 4 approaches differs clearly regarding aims, scale, data needs, and implementation. The results of the expert assessment were verified in a workshop in December 2007 in Zurich (Switzerland), leading to recommendations on priorities

- (where are ecological networks most needed?), methodology
- (what are the most appropriate approaches to achieve the different goals?), and procedure
- (how can regional projects for ecological networks be developed?).

The International Commission for Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) suggests a number of steps that tourist facilities, such as hotels and local communities, can take to build a sustainable future for tourism in the Alps.

First comes the development of environmentally friendly transport options,

- a) About Lombardy Climalptour study and alternatives proposal:
 - Tourist facilities would need to become more energy efficient, using low-energy lighting and installing renewable energy sources such as solar panels, hydropower, or windpowered energy, biomass and geothermic energy.
- The localities would develop activities that take advantage of the local environment and local culture year-round. In winter, replace ski slopes by cross-country skiing which can help to develop tourism that respects the environment and offer good physical activities for the tourists when snow is not so thick. In fact the solution to produce artificially snow is not very interesting as too much water and energy consuming and might be even too expensive to bear. For example to cover a one-hectare ski run with 30cm of artificial snow it would necessitates 600,000 to 1.5M. liters of water – and that does not include the water needed for daily maintenance. It also uses 5,000 to 27,000kWh of electricity. On another hand the solution to ski in higher altitude such in Glacier in the search for snow is threatening to damage the glaciers intrinsically as ski fields move to higher elevations.

- The other activities during the other seasons such as hiking and biking, etc... or organizing local traditions and festivals, could be very rewarding. For example in Taiwan which has been implementing the "one district one specialty" policy the folklore, with music, dance, costumes, foods and artisanal products, combined to accommodations by local hosts, could provide to the lower agricultural activities farms a direct good income and exchanges experiences, allowing international travelers to taste and enjoy the nature. At the same time they can through conversations and activities in the farm or with the local people and their services, better understand the Alpine situation, to improve their behaviors in mountain areas, learn how to respect the ecosystems and practice friendly and relaxing entertainment.
- Further development of facilities need to respect local landscape . When building resort and facilities to encourage the using of local and natural building materials. And systematically encourage treatments of waste and wastewater so that resources can be reused. Same considerations could be adopted for heating and air-conditioning , more eco-practice initiatives to work for 4 seasons hosting, activities and entertainment,

Certainly transportation and accessibility of remote or more fame resorts need to be reassessed, and paired to festive seasons or holidays to avoid traffic jam of private vehicles overpollution, overuse of salt to maintain roads circulation. The more to beneficiate of longer weekends or days -off are ways to de congestion ate the roads and the facilities at peak periods. For example the use of new technologies such as RFID instant resource and help to redirect people in neighboring facilities interregional zone of synergy using ski pass or district passes, which will complete the use of future Sustainable Mobility Information Network as it is experimented for the moment on transport modes in the Alpine Space.
- 2) About Future and an Alpine Macro region

48 regions are standing on the borders the seven-nation and constituting the European "Alpine Macro Region".

 - "...new macro region and make it a reality. This is important not just for the 66 million people who live here but because this is one of Europe's most dynamic growth areas whose success benefits the whole Union. " Regional Policy Commissioner C.Cretu 2014,
 - Therefore a newly adopted budget of 116 M. Euro, to support new transnational cooperation programme known as "Interreg Alpine Space" for Alpine regions in Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Slovenia, Liechtenstein & Switzerland providing National contributions at 139 M. Euro, to develop joint actions in response to shared challenges. These Programmes focused on Alpine MacroRegion are enlarging fore existing European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument

(ENPI) that used to support the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) since 1 January 2007, ensuring a continuity of former cooperation programs TACIS (for the Eastern European countries) and MEDA (for the Mediterranean countries).

IV) Conclusions

The Alps, the Largest and Highest chain of mountains in Europe has been the object for International, European trans=boundary cooperation initiatives, as per the richness of its diversity, and potential for economic the vulnerability of its resources, and the challenges met to on the sustainability of Climate change, threatening risks, and ensure the vitalization of local communities, and help enhance attractiveness and infrastructure under UNEP, thanks to EU funds to build up capacity carrying and local products and persons to benefit and deliver services expected by tourists and reducing environmental impacts at its lowest.

The few examples projects quickly reviewed, are to show that even we cannot change the Nature and the Impacts of our activities or presence in this Uniqueness of biodiversity and resource supply, strategic initiatives, awareness of Tourists of Values to respects, will help the future to mitigate the possible change in the future, and develop thanks to Techniques and skills original and specificities and work for the region peace growth. Disparities between Alpine Regions can be reduced thanks to this type of actions and projects and find possible coordination and some synergies at MacroRegional scale. For the EU it has proven possible in other large Mega Regions Programmes such as the Baltic sea or the Danube river Region and broaden to many more area under the same principle of neighboring countries, sharing a same environment and climate region to enhance consensus cooperation, strategies, actions of all interest groups and individuals viewpoint and avoid to jeopardize their common future Space.

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