

# EUROMONTANA (BÉLGICA)



## ABOUT EUROMONTANA

**Euromontana** is the **European multisectoral association** for co-operation and development of mountain territories. It embraces regional and national mountain organisations throughout greater Europe, **including regional development agencies, local authorities, agriculture organisations, environmental agencies, forestry organisations and research institutes**.

## EUROMONTANA'S MISSION

Euromontana's mission is to **promote living mountains, integrated and sustainable development and quality of life** in mountain areas.

In order to achieve this, Euromontana facilitates the **exchange of information and experience** among these areas by organising **seminars and major conferences**, by conducting and collaborating in **studies**, by developing, managing and participating in **European projects** and by working with the **European institutions** on mountain issues.

The association has been founded as a **non-profit and scientific organization**, with international vocation, neutral in terms of religion and politics, registered under the French law of 1st July 1901.

Its constitution stipulates that the association shall have the object of **ameliorating the living conditions of the mountain populations of Europe**, in particular by:

- **expression, promotion and defence of the cultural, economic, political and scientific interests of the mountain populations** to the European Union, vis-à-vis the European Union, the governments of the European States, the organisations responsible for regional development, the organisations in charge of cultural, social and economic policies and vis-à-vis all organisations involved in the mountain areas;
- **valorisation of research carried on in the mountainous zones** at the levels: local, regional, national and sectoral. Agriculture, forestry and the environment shall be the subject of particular attention;
- **informing public opinion on problems** of mountainous zones and their publication;
- **encouragement of training and research in mountainous zones** as well as the study of economic, social and ecological problems of Europe and the mountainous zones from the perspective of mountain populations;
- **development of international cooperation to reduce inequalities** between the mountain regions of Europe.

**About 75 organisations across 20 countries comprise the membership of euromontana.** Organisations are diverse in nature: local or regional authorities, socio-economic organisations or chambers, environmental, forestry or development agencies, research institutes, schools, training centres ...

This diversity enriches the Euromontana reflection on sustainable development of mountain areas and the lively exchange within the network.

## OUR ACTION RESPECTS SOME FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES:

- **To always be consistent with the concept of sustainable development:**

Euromontana's proposals will always seek to put forward the three pillars of sustainable development: **environmental, social, economic**.

- **To promote quality :**

In order to bring added value, our mountains must play the **card of quality** : quality of life but also quality of products and projects. Euromontana's proposals will systematically ensure that quality is promoted, especially through marks of quality.

- **To operate as a network :**

Each project will be carried out by several organizations with a leader responsible for implementation and reporting to the Board of Directors. **Communities of shared interests** will be created to better analyse problems and to design solutions, building on **the collective intelligence** and solidarity among mountain populations.

- **To use new technological tools :**

The physical distance between Euromontana's members is a constraint to our efficiency. Hence we will **use new technologies to communicate and work on a day-to-day basis**: this will be our first contribution to minimizing energy expenditures. However, human contacts will never be replaced by technologies and each member organization will commit to participating in at least one event every year (seminar, colloquium, general assembly, conference).

- **The direction of our activity**

In order to facilitate the sustainable development of mountain areas, we direct our reflection towards:

- **Economic development** : to increase the value given to existing economic activities and to diversify economies.
- **Human capital** : to favour the passing on of businesses to younger generations; to promote entrepreneurship, and to develop training and the diversification of skills.
- **Natural and heritage resources** : to better manage the environment, water, waste, energy, and landscapes, in the framework of an integrated approach (at the level of massifs, relationships between mountains and cities/lowlands, etc); to remunerate positive externalities; to adapt to climate change.
- **Services and networks** : to rapidly solve problems of physical accessibility and of electronic communications; to support businesses in the use of ICT; to set up efficient public services.
- **Culture and traditions** : to increase the value given to initiatives (promotion, events, links between education and mountains, etc.) while ensuring that all generations share the positive links between the economy and nature; for products in particular, to set up an efficient framework facilitating protection, recognition and adding value to mountain products.
- **Policies and governance in mountain areas** : to reinforce subsidiarity at the European level, relying on national and regional policies, keeping in mind the need for an integrated approach taking into account mountain specificities, massif dimension, better connections between mountains and lowlands and their cities, and effective territorial cohesion.

- **Our concrete ACTIONS**

Euromontana fulfills its duty by implementing the 4 following types of actions:

- **Representing mountain communities** by keeping in regular contact with European institutions, national governments and intergovernmental organizations involved in governance at the massif level; by making constructive proposals during the revision of European policies that impact mountain areas, and by elaborating these proposals with all members so that they are representative and strong.
- **Promoting the strengths of mountain areas** and the added value for Europe of sustainable investment in these areas: by organising events (conferences, seminars, meetings, conventions, etc) and by publishing articles and reports.
- **Organising cooperation between mountain people** by developing and managing European projects (research, territorial cooperation, training/exchanges, etc); by coordinating discussions and exchanges between members on priority action themes.
- **To carry out, participate in or compile studies** that can enrich our collective knowledge on the situation of mountain areas and the orientations to take for their sustainable development. The concrete actions are carried out on different working themes that have been given a priority by the Board of Directors for the period 2008-2012.