

## **Regional Meeting - Europe**

**Facilitator:** Martin Price, Centre for Mountain Studies/Euromontana

**Rapporteur:** Said Dağdaş

### **Topics discussed**

Participants agreed that there is a great diversity of situations across Europe's mountains. First, with regard to the various economic, political and environmental situations. Second, with regard to funding, with particular differences between countries inside and outside the European Union (EU). However, increasingly, EU funding is available for involving partners in non-EU countries in projects, and this may be a particular opportunity for the MP members. Third, with regard to institutional frameworks. In the Alps, there are many structures for collaboration: the Alpine Convention, CIPRA, ISCAR, ALPARC, etc. In the Carpathians are the Carpathian Convention and other structures. In the Pyrenees is the Working Community for the Pyrenees. However, in other mountain ranges, despite attempts at developing conventions or other regional structures, with support particularly from UNEP, mechanisms remain limited.

While the governments of all the eight countries that are Parties to the Alpine Convention are MP members, only three of the Parties to the Carpathian Convention (Romania, Serbia, Slovakia) are MP members. Together, these countries account for the majority of governmental MP members in Europe. So, more governments should become MP members. The other MP members in Europe are very diverse in terms of their interests and activities; there could be some distinct groups for cooperation (e.g., in relation to rural development and scientific research).

Participants stressed the need for greater awareness raising and visibility of the MP and its key themes, and the potential of International Mountain Day for this. Key themes include the education of children and cultural activities, building on the long traditions in mountain areas.

One possibility to strengthen the MP and increase awareness of the challenges and opportunities for sustainable mountain development is to 'twin' cities or regions with common interests, either with both 'twins' in Europe, or one in Europe and one in another continent. Such cooperative approaches have already begun between the communities involved in the 'Alliance for the Alps' and others in Central Asia. This would imply having more local governments as MP members.

### **Decision**

While it is important to maintain a Europe-wide perspective, with sharing of knowledge and information via the MPS, and the development of joint projects where funds are available, the priority should be on supporting efforts at the regional scale. This is already happening in the Alps and the Carpathians. However, funding will be required to establish coordination mechanisms.

### **Support expected from MP Secretariat**

- To recruit more governmental members, particularly from the Carpathians, Southeast Europe and the Caucasus – and more members in general from these regions.
- To compile a database containing information on the projects or areas of interest of MP Members and a list of mountain focal points for specific themes in governments.

**Participants:** Antonio Ciaschi (EvK2CNR, Italy), Axel Borsdorf (Oeaw/IGF), Martin Price (Euromontana), Nando Mengual, Vicente Chelet, Jesus Raine, Jose Sala (Municipality of Denia, Spain), Jurant Dika (Macedonia), Vlatko Andonoski (Makmontana), Gotlind Blechschmidt (Mountain Wilderness), Eric Nanchen (FDDM, Switzerland), Jean Bourland (WMPA), Zerrin Toprak Karaman (Ministry of Forestry, Turkey), Ibrahim Gurer (Gazi

University, Turkey), Said Dağdaş (General Directorate of Forestry, Turkey), Ernydin Sitki, Mehmet Rıdvan Çörtü (General Directorate of Forestry, Turkey), Merab Sharabidze (Georgia), Harun Gok (Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Turkey), Halis Özcan, Belkiyse Kaya (General Directorate of Meteorological Service, Turkey), Harald Egerer (UNEP), Taja Ferjanci (Alpine Convention), Yakup Özkaya ( Dokuz Eylul University, Turkey), Alaadin Yuksel (Bingol University, Turkey), Rovshan Abbasov (Khazar University, Azerbaijan).