

Mountain Week -EXPO 2015

Information note

The Mountain Week, a **schedule of events** (conferences, exhibitions, meetings etc.) **dedicated to sustainable development, agriculture, mountain products from around the world**, took place in EXPO and several mountain territories mainly from **4th to 11th June 2015**, although it will go on until the closure of EXPO.

Born in 2013 out of an initiative by the **Italian Ministry for the Environment** holding the Presidency of the Alpine Convention, it took place in collaboration with **the Alpine and the Carpathian conventions** – two international treaties dedicated to the protection and sustainable development of mountain areas – together with **FAO-Mountain Partnership** and **UNEP Vienna** (the United Nations Environment Programme) and with the scientific support of **EURAC research** as well as the technical and organizational support of **Earth Day Italy** and other partners.

The Italian Ministry for the Environment too, as Italian Delegation to the Alpine Convention, actively participated in the promotion of the initiative in collaboration with many national and international partners and institutions, proposing to the EXPO public several events dedicated to mountain farming and promoting, in collaboration with Eurac Research, an info-point dedicated to the mountain within the Biodiversity Park.

All the initiatives scheduled for the Mountain Week are communicated on **the website www.mountainweek.org** and on social media with agendas, information and inputs.

Why focusing on mountains?

According to FAO, **mountains occupy 22% of the earth's surface** and host 14% of the world population. They provide 70% of the global water resources and energy from renewable sources. They host about **50% of both animal and plant species** as well as the richest areas in biodiversity.

Why mountains at EXPO?

They play a fundamental role in nutrition and **food security** with crops such as **corn, potatoes, barley, tomatoes, beans and apples** as well as crops which found the ideal micro-climate in the mountains: wheat, rye, vine, oat and rice. In the Andes farmers know more than 200 different varieties of potatoes and in Nepal 2000 types of rice are cultivated. A great variety of **livestock** can be found: sheep, goats, lamas and alpacas.

Two of the most popular drinks in the world, **coffee and tea, come from the mountains of Ethiopia and the Himalaya.**

Sustainable development for mountains: a challenge?

However, mountains are **vulnerable areas where some of the poorest and most prone to malnutrition populations in the world live**. Pushed to migrate they are often ignored by political decisions. Mountain ecosystems are extremely fragile and subject to the effects of climate change and natural catastrophes: the consequences of earthquakes, landslides, floods can be tragic as shown by the **disaster in Nepal, at the heart of the Himalaya.**

The economic development of mountains and the well-being of those who inhabit them depends on the global market which is the ideal outlet for **high-quality products** (coffee, cocoa, honey, medical herbs, spices as well as handicraft). Strengthening supply chains and connecting them to the global market, even through local and regional cooperation initiatives among producers, can reduce obstacles in access to the market and the number of intermediaries. It could also raise profits for mountain producers, reviving the economy in such territories.

The events promoted by the Italian Ministry for the Environment – Italian Delegation to the Alpine Convention in the framework of the Mountain Week

➤ 29th May “Aldo Moro” Hall Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

Closing event of the exhibition “The depth of the Mountain landscape, an agricultural perspective”

The initiative “*Farnesina Porte Aperte*” closed on 29th May, after opening to the public the Ministry for Foreign Affairs for a fortnight of cultural events and exhibitions. Among those was the exhibition “The depth of the mountain landscape: an agricultural perspective” promoted by the Alpine and the Carpathian conventions in order to combine the beauty of mountain territories and the way they have been shaped by human beings, thus presenting the “inhabited mountains” with their farms, mountain pastures and traditional agriculture.

In the “Aldo Moro” Hall of the Ministry, in the presence of Minister Plenipotentiary Director General Mr. Marco Marsilli (Directorate General for Global Affairs) and Minister Plenipotentiary Mr. Francesco Paolo Venier (Directorate General for Development Cooperation), the programme of events promoted by the Italian Ministry for the Environment in the framework of the “Mountain Week at EXPO 2015” was presented. At the end of the conference, photographer and curator Mr. Georg Tappeiner guided the participants through the exhibition which officially closed the events of “*Farnesina Porte Aperte*”.

During the event, Director Marsilli stressed that 2015 is an important year for the environment and reminded the several meetings foreseen throughout the year which will end with the COP on climate change in Paris.

Mr. Francesco Paolo Venier, on the other hand, emphasized the fact that environmental cooperation is based on solid partnerships and that the Directorate General for Development Cooperation engages in dialogue with stakeholders of different nature, such as the Mountain Partnership as mountain environments are important ecosystems for the survival of the Country.

Ms. Alessandra Pesce also participated in the event bringing the contribution of the Italian Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Forest Policies and explaining how agriculture directly impacts the management of mountain areas; 31% of agricultural holdings in Italy works in the mountains and they need to be protected from discriminatory elements.

The event was closed by Mr. Pier Carlo Sandei, from UNEP Regional Office for Europe which hosts the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and actively collaborates with the Alpine Convention for the valorization of environmental issues related to mountain territories.

➤ 3rd June 2015 Pianeta Lomardia EXPO

The multiple values of European mountain forests: which perspectives in a green economy?

Pianeta Lombardia, the Lombardy Region area within the Italian Pavilion hosted the eve of the Mountain Week opening with an event dedicated to Mountain Forests and the potential that the ecosystem services they provide can play in developing a successful green economy.

A realistic forestry policy, yet aware of the existing forestry value - which goes beyond the traditional timber trade - needs to take into account the potential socio-economic value of ecosystem services provided by forests, such as CO₂ absorption, protection of the territory and biodiversity conservation also in the light of the value attributed to the mountain forest landscape by growing swathes of the population.

During the conference, the potential guidelines suggested by the UNECE were analyzed; they are meant to integrate the forestry sector in a Green Economy paradigm as well as the existing international cooperation

frameworks of interest for valuing European mountain forests, including international requirements set out in the “Mountain Forests” Protocol of the Alpine Convention – the first treaty in the world for the protection and sustainable development of a transboundary mountain territory.

➤ **4th June 2015 Biodiversity Park**

Mountain Cooperation for Food: initiatives in the Alps, the Carpathians and other mountain regions

The opening meeting of the Mountain Week explored the potential of international agreements and interregional initiatives among mountain regions - among which the Alps, the Carpathian and the Andes - for food sustainability and agricultural food products from mountain territories.

The conference analyzed the existing tools and the past experiences of mountain regions in order to suggest innovative methods and reliable best practices to guarantee a sustainable and efficient trade of mountain products.

“In Italy as much as 47,5% of the area is mountainous and the number of agricultural holdings concerned amounts to 31% of the national agricultural holdings. The connection between environment and biodiversity agriculture is all the more true in mountain regions where farming is more costly than elsewhere but where actual sources of biodiversity can be found.

Italy is at the vanguard in putting forth policies dedicated to the implementation of sustainable development of high-quality products: we have launched voluntary initiatives and environment programs which involve producers, certify sustainability and above all highlight how the quality of the environment and biodiversity count to get to that product and of course help the enterprises reduce their impact on the environment, understand that the quality of the environment is good for everyone, that each enterprise can contribute produce it and conserve it and that doing so can constitute a global competitive edge.

Such was the opening address by Undersecretary of State Ms. Barbara Degani at the meeting which was attended, among others, by Secretary General of the Alpine Convention Mr. Markus Reiterer, Ms. Alessandra Pesce Head of the Technical Secretariat of Vice Minister for Agriculture Policies Mr. Andrea Olivero, Vice President of Euromontana Mr. Jon Andreas Kolderup, Ms. Rosa Laura Romeo for the Mountain Partnership.

The event was also marked by the presence of the Director of UNEP Regional Office for Europe Mr. Jan Dusik who stressed that “very often non intensive traditional agriculture has created and maintained semi-natural habitats in the mountains which today have a great potential for high-quality local products and for organic agriculture. Thus special political agreements, international and regional ones, are required for mountains. The Alpine and the Carpathian conventions are unique examples of this successful cooperation.”

➤ **11th June 2015 Biodiversity Park**

“Selling the mountain excellence: labels, marketing and internationalization of mountain farming products”

The “Mountain Week” closed at the Biodiversity Park with a meeting dedicated to green marketing for mountain products, in consideration of the consumers’ growing attention for green products in the food sector. The day was the occasion to network food enterprises in the Alpine arc, mostly Italian, seeking synergies for the global market. The existing tool and excellence cases in green marketing were presented so as to highlight data, analyses and points for reflection on the growth of the sector to enterprises, agriculture producers, government bodies and of course consumers.

The meeting saw the participation of bodies and institutions from several Italian regional experiences: the Agricultural Institute of Valle d'Aosta, the S. Daniele Agro-food Park from Friuli, the Angelini Foundation – Centre for Mountain Studies and the UNESCO Dolomites Foundation from Veneto. Without neglecting the presence of the academics: the Mountain University from Lombardy and the University of Camerino representing the Apennines; and the civil society, represented by the Città del Bio association from Turin and the World Rural Forum. The Trento Film Festival and the European Academy of Bolzano – EURAC Research animated the cultural sessions with videos and films also in collaboration with the other participants. The exhibition “The depth of the mountain landscape, an agricultural perspective” was also in the venue, ending its journey through EXPO where it stayed during the whole week.

The event was opened by addresses by President of the national Confcommercio Mr. Carlo Sangalli together with Undersecretary of Lombardy Region Mr. Ugo Parolo, the Dean of the University of Camerino Mr. Flavio Corradini and Deputy Secretary General of the Alpine Convention Ms. Simona Vrevc.

Mr. Sangalli sought to emphasise the strong interest of Confcommercio and its members for mountains and its products, highlighting how the association committed to give voice to the realities and good practices coming from the mountains, figuring to entrust the President of the Belluno Confcommercio Mr. Paolo Doglioni with the important role of spokesman of the Alpine Confcommercio.

Mountains are an abundant and precious wealth, though not inexhaustible. This means that interventions aiming at realizing and developing economic and social networks are required to keep it alive. In this regard, mountains needs to be fed. Such was Mr. Doglioni’s intervention during the meeting.

The deputy president of the Italian Alpine Club, Erminio Quartiani, also took part in the meeting, he wanted to emphasize that "the world need the onset of a new relationship between the mountains and the city, so that sufficient resources are made available to enhance the sustainable mountain farming, which is able to adapt to altitude, climate, culture and customs of the people of “High Lands”: from the Alps, the Himalayas and the Andes, to arrive to all the mountain areas in the world, which present different condition of development".

Web Review

20-05

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E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE



THE ALPINE CONVENTION IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TREATY FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A CROSS-BORDER MOUNTAINOUS REGION
italian delegation
alpine convention

Photo Gallery





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