



Focus

Demographic changes: the Alpine Convention works on the draft of the Fifth Relation on the State of the Alps

The demographic phenomena that, in recent years, affect Alpine territories and change the distribution of



resident population are analysed by the Alpine Convention that, in the occasion of the XII Alpine Conference in Porschiavo, decided to dedicate the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps to demographic change. The Convention commissioned a dedicated group of experts to collect and organize the existing statistical data in order to produce a final document that will be presented at the end of 2014.

The annual increase average rate of the Italian Alpine population between 2003 and 2013 amounts to + 0.49%, it is a positive value, higher than the national average value (+0.45 %), but in a disaggregated territorial level the

situation is much more varied and there are areas where depopulation is certainly a problem. 42.1 % of the municipalities of the Alpine Italian areas present negative rates of the resident population and even when it increases, this mainly depends on migratory factors.

The growth rate is positive in peri-alpine areas, in the northern areas of Valle d'Aosta and Trentino -Alto Adige. In the Trentino -Alto Adige municipalities, the positive effect of the migratory component (in terms of population growth) is combined with that of the natural balance due, mainly, to an increase of births.

These data were presented in Belluno in the occasion of the workshop "How does the population in the Alps change? Economic scenarios and new job opportunities" that offered to the public a starting point for reflection on the state of employment in the Alps related to demographic changes, it also presented some best practices on business, research, mutuality and sustainability field, with a focus on the eastern part of the Italian Alps.

Mr. Saverio Gazzelloni, director at the ISTAT (Italian Institute for Statistic) and president of the Working Group for the V RSA, opened the meeting and described, along with colleagues Giorgia Capacci and Mauro Albani, the planning for the research and the analysis of data. The ad hoc working group organized the draft of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps identifying three main thematic areas: demographic area, labour market and services, for each area experts treat the main points of relevance for territories through the analysis of a set of specific statistical indicators that represent the state and the recent evolution of the phenomena. ISTAT experts presented some considerations focused on the analysis of the Alpine labour market on alpine areas, highlighting how these indicators tend to very similar values with the national one, even if less worrying. Regarding the analysis of the labour market the identified indicators are: the inactivity

rate, the employment / unemployment rate, the employment rate by sector of economic activity, the long-term and youth unemployment, data on labour (seasonal workers , employed Part-time/full time , number of employees / self-employed) data on education levels and commuting.

The employment rate of people aged 15-64 years in 2013 amounted to 63.3 % in the Western Alps and to 65.4 % in the Eastern Alps, in both areas the rate decreases by about 2% points compared with 2007. Within national territory, the loss between the two periods is even greater (more than 3% from 58.7 % to 55.6 %). Indeed, the unemployment rate was about 3% before the crisis in both areas; it underwent a sharp increase in 2013 being 8.6% in the Western Alps and 6.7 % in the Eastern.

Following the speeches of the expert of the Alpine Convention, it was offered a further food for thought by the presentations of the Foundation UNESCO Dolomites and the Foundation Northeast. General Secretary Marcella Morandini spoke in behalf of the first one explaining the process for the approval of the Dolomites as UNESCO world heritage, due to their beauty and unique landscape, this recognition certainly contributes to the promotion of the territory and to its economic development.

In behalf of the Northeast Foundation Mrs. Silvia Oliva, started with the analysis of employment and productive data and focused her speech on the effects of the economic crisis of North-east territory explaining that regions confirm the trend of their respective countries. The report provided the public with some interesting data on the Veneto region with a specific focus on the territory of Belluno, new areas of economic development and employment have been identified in the most dynamic sectors of tourism and agribusiness.

The interventions of the experts formed the starting point to the closing round table on the theme of socio-economic scenarios of the mountain in the Northeast; it was attended by some entrepreneurial and productive stakeholders along with representatives of local Institutions, including the ones from Belluno Province.

[Link to the meeting documents](#)

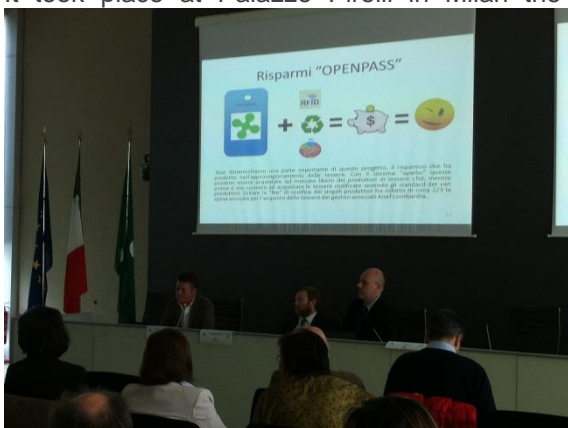
Eastern Mountainside: the latest events

Alpine Digital Agenda, a mean for competitiveness and social inclusion

It took place at Palazzo Pirelli in Milan the workshop A Digital Agenda for the Alps: supporting the Competitiveness and Social Inclusion. In that occasion it was presented an overview of the document Digital Agenda for the Alps, currently at the study of the Expert Group of the Alpine Convention, with a focus on the practices to break down the digital divide in high mountain and peri-alpine areas and the presentation of experiences made by territorial Institutions, in particular of the Lombardy Region programme for the Broadband development.

For alpine territories it is becoming more and more strategic to have a Digital Agenda in order to foster greater competitiveness and social inclusion. In this sense the workshop wanted to highlight the need to identify points of contact for joint work between Alpine Countries aiming at overcoming barriers to the development of the potential of ITC, such as the absence or lack of access to the Internet, the lack of usability and accessibility of products and services, inadequate literacy.

Starting from the analysis of the different national experiences for the development of Digital Agenda, experts of the Alpine Convention identified Competitiveness and Social Inclusion as the two areas that would be fostered by the implementation of the Alpine Digital Agenda. The first one is pursued by developing the



Broadband and the associated infrastructures and by encouraging innovative Start-up related to electronic commerce of local products and to the improvement of touristic accommodation. The second should base on the implementation of measures for the digitalization of Education and Health services and of the Public Administration.

In the coming years the digital will have an important impact on employment but delays and missed opportunities have to be avoid. According to assessments of the European Digital Agenda is estimated that, as it will be carried out, the demand for jobs in the digital sector will grow up to 900 thousand new offers and 1.2 million after the implementation of the necessary infrastructure, moreover it will create 3.8 million new jobs in the long terms. The Alps could get strength and vitality, in a connected, open and secure Europe, that is able to activate virtuous circles through targeted investments and a greater awareness of the added value resulting from the use of ICT, ready to maximize the economic benefit and the social consequences of the knowledge economy.

In terms of social inclusion, the new challenges that involve the Alpine region, above all youth employment and active ageing, can be helped by the emergence of ICT as a tool of inclusion and participation. A strategic key for achieving the objectives of social inclusion and solidarity between generations is to spread digital skills to each age group, with innovative educational courses specifically directed to the promotion of a more aware ICT use.

In line with processes of lifelong learning and with new demographic trends, it is necessary to encourage older people to participate in the social and economic life, ensuring them a greater independence and a higher quality of life. The presence of digital educational programs, supported by an adaptation of internet connections, would also remedy the marginalization of people living in remote and poorly connected communities. To reduce digital divide In the Alpine region means being able to increase the quality of services for citizens, like telemedicine applications and education.

The second session of the workshop focused on some local experiences and best practices: among the various projects discussed the "Veglio Coworking Project" developed and coordinated by Dr. Marco Pichetto, the project aims to invert the trend of young people to leave the mountain areas and to help them during the early stages of start-up activities.

Dr. Natalia Allegretti, project manager of the Directorate General for Health in Lombardy Region, spoke about the actions took by the Lombardy Region for the promotion of telemedicine presenting the project "ALIAS - Alpine Hospitals Networking for Improved Access to Telemedicine Service-" which aims to offer a public service on ITC for citizens and professionals. The project is oriented to the creation of a dedicated network that, through the virtual hospital ALIAS and the connection of 12 pilot nodes, allows the exchange of medical information and of the best clinical practices in order to improve the efficiency of hospitals located in the Alpine regions.

[Link to the workshop documents](#)

Constructive Alps in Ventimiglia: the Alpine Convention meets the "gate of Maritime Alps"

It took place in Ventimiglia, at the enchanting location of the "Forte dell'Annunziata" seat of the Civic Archaeological Museum, the workshop "The inhabited mountain, energy and innovation in the Alps", presentation event of the traveling exhibition Constructive Alps that, after the first stage in Turin (April), was hosted in Ventimiglia from the 12th May to the 4th June.

In Ventimiglia it was presented a framework of the work of the Alpine Convention in the field of water management, forest and energy; areas of research and analysis on which the groups of international experts are engaged in order to implement the commitment of the Alpine Countries for the promotion of sustainable development of the Alps.

It was briefly presented the work of the Platform for the management of Alpine waters, with a focus on the content of the Second Report on the State of the Alps that provides a set of guidelines for integrated water

management in mountain areas. The report has been joined by the presentation of the project for the cross-



border management of the basin of the river Roya that involves the territory of Ventimiglia in collaboration with other Italian and French subjects and that was also supported by the Alpine Convention (The President of the Standing Committee, Paolo Angelini, was present at the signing of the Protocol). A focus has been dedicated to the management of forest resources, which constitute an important resource for the absorption of CO₂ and

certainly play an essential role in protecting the Alpine environment.

Ventimiglia is located on the border between Italy and France, two countries that share a huge portion of the Alpine region; it can be defined as the "gate" of the Maritime Alps. The choice to set here one stage of the exhibition Constructive Alps intends to be a further signal of presence of the Alpine Convention within the territory and partnerships with local Institution. In this sense Mr. Larosa - Prefectural Commissioner of Ventimiglia - and Mrs. Gandolfi - Director of the Civic Museum- opened the event emphasizing the importance of the presence of the Institutions on the territory and thanking the Ministry of Environment and the Alpine Convention for choosing to be present in the city of Ventimiglia.

[Link to the workshop documents](#)

Milan - Conference organized by Transdolomites

Tuesday, 6th of May it was held at the Swiss Centre of Milan the conference "The Transdolomite railway: the relevance of a vision for a Railway through mountains and Alpine passes from West to East", organized by the Transdolomites association. Transdolomites is involved in the promotion of issues related to mobility and sustainable tourism in the Trentino valleys of Fassa, Fiemme and Cembra, in particular in the organization and sponsorship of conferences, studies and research on alternative forms of transport in the Alpine environment and in the sharing of the objectives set by the Alpine Convention. Among the various interventions, some pre-feasibility studies (hypothesis of alignment and station locations) and preliminary considerations on the economic management of possible rail link of the Avisio were presented to the public.

The Alpine Convention guest of the International Parks Festival

It was held in Trezzo sull'Adda from 1st to 4th of May, the International Parks Festival, an event that has animated the city center, the Enel Tacconi power station and other involved locations, by collecting results and acclaim on the theme "value of nature" a program of conferences and workshops, exhibitions and shows, experiences from foreign parks and international guests, gathered in a shared itinerary that has allowed to establish a new form of encounter for institutions, parks, universities, associations and citizens.

For four days, institutions, operators and technicians have met and confronted in an extensive program aimed at supporting "the creativity of nature" and the countries that live it. Emerges as fundamental the development of communication and information that is conscious on these issues, as a tool for a real transition from the Green Economy to the Green Society: the parks as the new engine of the economy, a trigger element for the next cultural revolution, as a model to follow , not to considered as abstract places or just green areas, but realities in which coexist nature, civilization and productive realities and opening the park to citizens and businesses.

The Festival is also sponsored by the Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. Paolo Angelini, the President of the Permanent Committee of the Convention, spoke as a guest during one of the sections of the workshops treating the work of the Convention for the preservation and protection of the natural heritage of the Alps. He focused on the Protection of Nature and Landscape Conservation Protocol, which aims to promote the cooperation between the Contracting Parties to ensure the functional

efficiency of ecosystems, the conservation of landscape elements and animal species and plant species and their natural habitats, the capacity for regeneration and durable productivity of natural resources, as well as the diversity, peculiarity and beauty of nature and the countryside.

For further information: <http://www.internationalparksfestival.com>

Western Mountainside: upcoming events

10 -20 June, Trento: third stage of the traveling exhibition “Constructive Alps”

The Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention promotes the workshop "The inhabited mountain, wood and sustainable construction in the Alps". The workshop was the presentation event of the traveling exhibition on sustainable architecture Constructive Alps, which will remain on display at the Science Museum until 20th June 2014. During the workshop, it has been presented the work of the expert group of the Alpine Convention -Mountain Forests Working Group, participants analysed the role of wood products in the processes of green economy and made an overview of the timber sector of Trento. It was also treated the issue of using wood in sustainable architecture with the presentation of innovative projects implemented in the area.

At the end of the meeting the participants visited accompanied the two thematic exhibitions "Constructive Alps" and "Wood, construction and technology".

23rd-25th June: 56st Permanent Committee, in Brescia towards the Alpine Conference

It will take place in Brescia the next Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention, in preparation for the Alpine Conference of November that it will mark the end of two years of the Italian Presidency.

The delegations of the eight Alpine Countries, along with the institutions with the status of observers, will meet at the seat of the Chamber of Commerce of the Lombard cities to assess the progress of different groups of experts and platforms in preparation for the important event of November in Turin, during which the Ministers of the member countries will agree on guidelines for future work.

The main subject of discussion will be the EU Macro regional strategy for the Alpine region, the participation of the Alpine Convention to EXPO 2015, progress in the preparation of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps on demographic changes and the implementation of action plan on climate change in the Alps.

The sitting of the Permanent Committee will be preceded by the workshop "The guidelines for local adaptation in mountain regions: which prospects for the Alps and beyond?" organized in collaboration with the Lombardy Region and the Chamber of Commerce of Brescia. The workshop aims to discuss the issue of local adaptation to climate change in mountain regions with the presentation of some experiences of regional adaptation plans, it will be attended by international experts.