

## **Final Declaration of the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions, European Transit Policy and the Challenge of Globalisation**

**Cavalese (Trento, Italy), 16-17 June 2003**

The participants at the Conference on the Sustainable Development of Mountain Regions, European Transit Policy and the Challenge of Globalisation representing mountain municipalities, regions, parliaments and associations, held in Cavalese (Trento, Italy) from 16 to 17 June 2003,

Thank:

- the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe for having taken the initiative of organising the conference,
- the Autonomous Province of Trento for having joined in the conference,
- the municipality of Cavalese for having hosted the conference,
- and the Region of Trentino Alto Adige South Tyrol;

Welcome the work the Council of Europe has been doing for many years to help mountain regions and enable them to benefit from sustainable development, thereby guaranteeing their social and economic development and the preservation and enhancement of their cultural, natural and landscape heritage;

Underline, in particular, the work undertaken in 1995 by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, with strong support from the Parliamentary Assembly, on the preparation of a European Charter of Mountain Regions with convention status, as adopted by the Congress (Recommendation 14 (1995)) and approved by the Parliamentary Assembly (Recommendation 1274 (1995)).

Regret that the proposal was not taken up at the time and welcome the fact that the CLRAE seized the opportunity of the International Year of the Mountains to reiterate the principles of the European Charter of Mountain Regions in Recommendation 130 (2003) to be submitted to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for adoption, which they fully support;

Reassert the need to take account of the specific features of mountain regions and the role they can play in the integrated and balanced development of the European continent, as well as the obligation to ensure satisfactory social and economic conditions for the population of mountain regions.

In addition, they also underline that sustainable management of the forestry resources, of mountain regions in particular, is essential to counter climate change across our continent;

Moreover, development opportunities in mountain regions are largely governed by climate change resulting from inappropriate energy policies, which the Kyoto Protocol seeks to curtail;

In this connection, underline the need to enable mountain regions to meet the challenges of globalisation without suffering its negative consequences and point out that the specific and original features of mountain regions give them a chance to assert their identity against the standardising trends of globalisation, thanks to their biological, cultural and socio-economic diversity. To that end, special importance must be attached to awareness-raising, training and

educational measures in both the education system and information systems and electronic media;

Are aware of the crucial importance that must be attached to sustainable transport policies and particularly to the problem of transit traffic, which should not pose an unacceptable threat to the environment of the regions concerned. Where freedom of choice of means of transport conflicts with public health, the latter must take precedence. They therefore call for the development of base tunnels to enable lorry traffic to be transferred to railways, drawing on the Swiss authorities' policy choices; gradual harmonisation of pricing and regulations applicable to transit traffic across Europe's mountain ranges is also necessary;

Believe that all policies on mountain regions, including transport matters, must fit into the overall framework of a pan-European regional/spatial planning policy, while nevertheless being based primarily at local authority level and involving cross-border co-operation and co-operation between different authorities, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity;

In this context, they consider that territorial units such as the Italian "comunità montane" provide a model for local governance that should not be undermined, but on the contrary encouraged and promoted;

Consider that mountains should not only be protected natural areas, tourist areas and dormitory areas for urban regions, but should be regarded as living areas capable of providing their inhabitants with employment and high-quality public services. European society should remunerate mountain regions for the resources with which they supply it, especially water, a high-quality environment, quality products and irreplaceable landscape assets;

In this connection, special thanks must go to farmers in mountain regions for the services they render in protecting the environment;

Are convinced of the potential advantages of a Charter for Mountains, setting out the principles of a European policy on mountain regions that would provide a coherent framework for action by European authorities, in particular local and regional authorities in the areas concerned, as well as for European co-operation processes such as the European intergovernmental consultation on sustainable development of mountain regions initiated in 1996 by the United Nations as part of the follow-up to Agenda 21, which it would be well worth reactivating under the aegis of the Council of Europe;

In view of the above, call on:

- the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:

· to continue its efforts in support of a genuine pan-European policy for mountain regions by encouraging the resumption of intergovernmental consultation;

· to pass on details of the Council of Europe's work and proposals concerning policies for mountain regions within national parliaments and other European parliamentary assemblies;

· to lobby the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in support of the draft European Charter for Mountains drawn up by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe;

- the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe:

- to take action to ensure that Recommendation 130 (2003) is followed up by a recommendation by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member countries;

- to continue its work aimed at making sure that greater account is taken of the problems of mountain regions in Europe.

- the governments of member States of the Council of Europe and the European Union:

- to recognise the specific features and irreplaceable contribution of mountain regions and the need to pursue a genuine European policy for the sustainable development of mountains based on:

- o the new objective included in the draft Constitutional Treaty of the Union, namely “territorial cohesion”, which must now be added to social and economic cohesion, turning to account quality mountain products and seeking to maintain and reinforce public services in mountain regions;

- o the basic principles of the Council of Europe’s European Charter for Mountains;

- to acknowledge the need for ratification and full application of the Kyoto Protocol, especially in countries which have not yet acceded to it;

- to consider the role of educational institutions at different levels and of electronic and other media (radio, TV, Internet) in promoting the culture, identity and social cohesion of Europe’s mountain regions, notably by:

- o providing appropriate and non-discriminatory infrastructure grants;

- o encouraging networked communication on mountain themes;

- o supporting innovative uses of the Internet to develop training, knowledge economics and innovation in mountain regions.

- to implement the principles of European transport policies bearing in mind the need for a global (pricing), integrated (full cost) policy arising from the specific territorial nature of mountain regions and in particular apply the real-cost principle by placing heavier taxes on commercial road traffic and air passenger transport, in order to prevent the commercial dumping phenomena enjoyed by such modes of transport, which do not adequately internalise the costs of the environmental damage which they inflict on society.