



Kosovo

14th to 17th June 2009

Mission summary for the
mountain development pre
diagnostic

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Context

The CRET has been involved with the development of mountain tourism in Macedonia since 2007. The community of Tetovo is situated at the foot of the Shar Planina mountain range and borders with Kosovo. Tetovo is part of the collective territorial partnership in Macedonia.

Josiane Baylac, Culteral Adviser to the French Embassy in Kosovo, contacted the CRET with the idea of a pre-diagnostic mission on a theme for mountain tourism.

The potential development on the Kosovan side of the Shar Planina range is good, as the terrain is relatively gentle; villages have managed to keep their rural character even if traditional farming is in decline. These villages have been emptied of their population over the last 15 years. Many of the houses are closed up and are not even lived in during summer. There are a few tourist infrastructures, but they are rather isolated and not very significant and their organization is not very well linked together.

The motorway, which was put into service in the summer of 2009, links the Albanian capital to Prizren within 2 hours. The region must take advantage of this development opportunity which could open up not effieciently in many different directions if collective thought is not given.

Itinerary and programme

Sunday 14th June

Departure from Lyon Saint Exupery to Vienna, then arrival at Pristina at the beginning of the afternoon. Welcomed by Josiane Baylac.

Monday 15th June

Meeting at the European Commission to give details about our project objectives. They informed us that the Kosovo has been divided into economic zones which could be eligible for subventions from the IPA (Instruments of Pre-Adhesion. See Annexe). However, for 2010 all the projects had already been deposited. This could be an interesting avenue to follow for the future.

At the end of the morning, accompanied by J. Baylac we travelled to Prizren and had lunch with Francis Cutler, Regional Director and Olivier Bricet, expert at the OSCE.

Meeting at the beginning of the afternoon with SadikPaçarizi, the director of public services (who equally looks after tourism) and Jakup Kastrati agronomy engineer and director of agriculture. They are aware that tourism is main card to play and that cultural tourism is important not only in the towns and mountain villages, but also to maintain farming. Visit of Preval (1300m) which is reputed for its pure air.



Prizren

Tuesday 16th June

Using a 4 wheeled drive vehicle, we obtained a first look at the area. We were accompanied by M Pacarizi, M Kastrati and Ms Bytyqi (Director of agriculture and rural development).

Later, meeting using the documents and brochures from the Hautes Alpes as a base of discussion.

Le mayor of Prizren confirmed his interest to cooperate with the Hautes Alpes for consultancy and help to put into place structured project for tourism in the region.

This point of view is the same in Dragash, although the community is much less rich naturally and does not have so many pro points for tourism, except its villages and mountains. Prizren, however is a very beautiful town with well preserved architecture. A cooperation project with the Hautes Alpes could come to light in 2010 with a more thorough diagnostic; a draft of ideas could be presented to the IPA which could permit us to have more ambitious objectives for 2011.

At Brod village, which is situated in a very beautiful but not easily accessible valley, a private investor had built a hotel with a basketball court and he had equally planned to build some ski lifts. We can ask ourselves the question about whether this project is economically viable for such an investissement. For this project there seems to have been no market study of the clientele, they seem to have no previous experience in the tourist domain and even less in the running of a ski resort. It would equally not necessarily have a positive impact on the environment and the security would perhaps not be very efficient.



Wednesday 17th June

We were transferred to the border of Macedonia by a vehicle provided by the town hall. Our itinerary went through an isolated encased Serbian valley called Streptce. Within this valley the authority of the Kosovan government is not recognized. The ski resort of Brezovica which is situated on the north facing side of the Shar Planina was for a long time the most reputed ski resort in the ex-Yugoslavia. Today it still has got potential, but the political situation makes this resort practically impossible for future development

Conclusion

In terms of mountain tourism development the Kosovo side of the Shar Planina massif has an important potential for development. It has gentle rolling hills and villages which have kept their charm even if local farming is in decline.

The occupants of these villages have gradually left over the last 15 years. Many of these houses are closed up and are only lived in during the summer months when their owners return.

The few infrastructures for tourism are isolated, with poor visibility and with little organization within the different structures.

Prizren has managed to keep all of its charm. There is however a little work still needed to make the most out of its patrimony, but otherwise it is well conserved and its attractiveness is uncontested.

The motorway, which has been in service from summer 2009 puts the Albanian capital within a 2 hour drive of Prizren. The region must make the most of this development opportunity which could equally bring about variants if the project is not co-ordinated well.

A decentralized cooperation project with the Hautes Alpes Departement could be put into place in 2010, with the same idea of the one put into place on the Macedonian side.

(www.cret-cci.com/macedoine)

It would consist of firstly an observational trip to the Hautes Alpes for 3 people from the Prizen Region to understand the concept of mountain tourism.

Secondly it would consist of a French team which would look after the structuring of a tourist offer (For example the creation of a Tourist Service at Prizern, like the one which has been developed at Tetovo) and to identify one or two villages to act in a pilot program for this project.

This project could be enrolled in an IPA transfrontier project between Macedonia and Albania with its tourist theme which could be put into an active phase in August 2010.