

# Decentralized cooperation in the Balkans



Macedonia

18th to 25th may 2009

Summary of the  
Macedonian delegation's  
visit to the Hautes-Alpes



# Sommary

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## **Participants :**

### **Members of the Delegation**

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**Text :** Yves Fouque

**Photograph :** Yves Fouque

# Objectives

The mountains of Shar Plannina have the necessary potential to develop mountain Tourism as in the Natural Parks and Mountains of France. To start with the project is to advise on economic development with a respecting the environment and traditions, this can help stop the movement of the village populations towards the towns. The population needs to be convinced that this is possible in their villages by achieving solid results within a short term period. During Yves Fouque's visit in June it was planned to meet up with the villagers and give them information and more solid examples. We wanted to equally answer any questions they may have, exchange experiences- whether they be bad or good that will help us to progress.

## Subjects Treated

- What is rural, mountain, durable, responsible or eco tourism?
- The needs of the clients
- The travel agency market for natural/ cultural/trekking tours.
- Working as a network- professional, villages, agencies,
- How and why to work with neighboring countries and on which projects.
- Specializing in mountain activities and the professions within.
- Farming and local handicrafts. How can tourism make these activities more dynamic?
- Heritage and how to make the most of it.
- Different types of accommodation and their respective clientele.
- What activities to offer to visitors- other than trekking and skiing.
- The footpath network and its organization.



# Itinerary and programme

## Monday 18th May

Welcome of the Macedonian delegates at Lyon Saint Exupery Lyon. Night spent nearby.

## Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May

Return to Briançon via The Lautaret Pass. With a beautiful blue sky they discover the high mountains with La Meije (3982m) and the surrounding glaciers.

We met Pierre Hellion, director for the Mountain Section at the CRET.

After we visited the building and classrooms.

At the end of the afternoon we went to where they were going to stay The Chalet Viso, in the Queyras Natural Park. The Chalet Viso is a good example of a Gite d'Etape and Chambres d'Hotes as it has been transformed from an old farm to tourist accommodation. The restoration respects original architecture, but has a layout that gives privacy to the owners, but also satisfies the principal needs of its clients-conviviality. ([www.chaletviso.com](http://www.chaletviso.com))

## Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May

At the beginning of the morning we visited "Jolis Jouets du Queyras" with Alain Blanc who is not only the manager of this co operative, but equally a Mountain Leader and the Mayor of Arvieux. (see annexe 1) Laurent and Suzanne showed us the different stages to make a figurine- from the cutting out to decoration.

We stopped off briefly The Queyras Regional Natural Park Office to collect some documentation and pick up the keys for the Old Mill that has been transformed into an Eco Museum. The principals of the Park Regional – conciliation, economic development and protection strongly interested the delegates. For a while there has been a project in place to establish a National Park in the Shar Planina Mountains and the Oueryas Park seems to be to good model to base their project on.

The old Mill is a good example of a renovation project as it has been transformed into an eco museum. The project was initiated and supervised by the Parc, but the finance came from other sources, but were negotiated by the Parc.

After a picnic lunch we visited the Queyras Fort and met Florence Olivereau (member of the Chambre de Commerce) at the Maison de L'Artisanat (see annexe 2). The Maison d'Artisanat is a regroupement of nearly all the artisans from the Queyras and sells their products.

## Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May

We left the small village of L'Echalp for a short hill walk upto the Chalets de la Medaille (1980m). We had a good view of the Mont Viso and equally saw marmottes, chamois and roe deer. We spoke about footpaths- their upkeep (as damage had been done by avalanches and many trees had been pushed over the paths), construction and footpath markers. We equally discussed the concept of long distant footpaths, to be used over long distances, but equally for the day walks. At the start of the footpaths which are frequently used during the summer are information panels' informer people of how they should behave within the Park in respect to the flocks of sheep and the sheep dogs. The sheep dogs are called "Patous" and are used to guard the sheep from wolves; this is another point of similarity between The Shar and The Queyras.

The beginning of the afternoon was spent at The Agency Destination Queryras. ([www.randoqueyras.com](http://www.randoqueyras.com)) At the demand of the delegates the discussed everything needed to organize a walking holiday, teaching, obligations, responsibility.

From the beginning of the morning we were joined by Chantal Sobrino-Tafunel and Mathieu Sette, these students had organized a project (Tandem) during the summer of 2008 between France and Spain. The Thursday and Friday afternoon were spent making the last changes to the guidebook for the Shar Massif.

### **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May**

Saint Veran is a protected heritage site and is equally the highest commune in Europe, it is equally one of the most well known villages in the Alpes. The village however is not a museum and remains a real village community although it is heavily visited each summer by many tourists. After, we visited the High Ropes Course in the “Bois des Amoureux” which is a popular activity with families and teenagers.

Transfer to Ceillac during the afternoon.

### **Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May**

A short walk above the village of Ceillac allowed us a full view of the land. From this view point we could see how the land was divided up into farming, villages, borders, plots etc.

After we visited the Ceillac ski resort which was reorganised in 2006. At the end of the valley we came across a group of children riding mules accompanied by a mountain leader, this showed the diversity of activities that are available.

### **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May**

We left the Queyras via the Izoard Pass and continued up to the Ski Resort of Montgenevre. This resort is the oldest in Europe and is linked with Italy. It is equally managed by the Town Hall and is not privately run. The accommodation is from the 1970, but there is equally a new development from 2008.

We drove back to the hotel near to the Saint Exupery Airport via the ski resort of Sestrieres and the Frejus tunnel.

### **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May**

Morning departure for Macedonian delegates.

## **Conclusion**

The Macedonian delegation at the end of the first day were filled with mixed emotions, they were impressed with our mountains, but also felt a little discouraged “why would tourist want to come to our mountains when yours are so beautiful” This is however the base of our promotional champagne. How can we promote the massifs of Western Europe in a different way to a clientele who already knows The Alpes.

The stay in Queyras showed and reassured them that it was possible to live normally in a touristic area. The villages are reasonably clean (so it does not become an obsession) flocks traverse the villages and farmers can make their fertilizers- a real village.

A question that came up frequently was is it Private or Public. Most of the time the public looks after the infrastructure and the private the marketing.

Everyone left with the strong conviction that mountain tourism has a future in the Shar mountains. Although the future may be a little unclear- when it start or who will start...The meetings of June we hope will soon bear its fruits.

# Annexes

## Annexe 1

### « Les jolis jouets du Queyras »

In 1920 there was not any tourism, the only activity was farming. Families were numerous and there was not much to do during the long winter months. In 1920 after the idea of Pasteur Jacques Dupasquier SCOP was created (societe cooperative ouvriere de production) dedicated to the fabrication of wooden toys.

Four reasons for developing this cooperative:

- The wood used for fabrication was readily available on site.
- The people from Arvieux had the knowledge of wood working and have done so for a long time.
- The fabrication of wooden toys only needs simple non expensive tools.
- The fabrication can be done at home by nearly all the members of the family.

<http://www.jouetsduqueyras.com/>



## Annexe 2

### La Maison de L'Artisanat

In 1987 the project was started under the influence of a few artists, farmers and a syndicate of sculptors of wooden objects.

The building was constructed and opened in 1989.

In 1989 there were 14 artists and today there are 23 artists and 10 sculptors.

### Local Produce and Handicrafts

The Maison D'Artisanat displays a variety a goods and local produces made in the Queyras. Pate, liqueurs, honey, sweets, local cheeses, wooden toys, carved furniture and pottery.

### Group Management Keeps the Cooperative Motivated.

Open all year round.

Shop in an excellent position.

Promotion throughout the community.

Shared costs and overheads.

The Maison d'Artisanat is visited by numerous tourists on holiday in the Queyras each year-26000 clients in 2008. This is partly due to a dynamic and warm welcome by the tourism department. For example for organized groups local produce tasting is organized.

