



Decentralized cooperation in the Balkans



Macedonia

17th to 27th June 2009

Third mission summary
2009 Macedonia project.

Text: Yves Fouque. Mountain Leader



Objectives

Reminder of the objectives which were put into place at the beginning of the project.

This mission will be an essential part in the realization on the terrain and the organization of meetings with the mountain village population and the schools of Tetovo. The creation and follow up of a tourist office will complete the objectives.

The person in charge of this mission will have double goal as an objective.

a. Finalise a footpath itinerary. The main ideas were established in the summer of 2008 with help from the students of Project Tamdem.

During this observation he will stay at least one day in the stop over villages to initiate an exchange with the inhabitants and chair information meetings about mountain tourism.

This first contact with the mountain population, with the aide of a Macedonian translator, to bring a maximum of answers to the questions the local population may have. It is the order of the day to look at all subjects, but to give priority to all concrete, practical and tangibles ideas. Objectives and ideas must remain realist and problems must not be avoided.

The success of this project depends upon primarily the confidence accorded by the population.

b. In Tetovo information meetings will be held in school establishments to make aware young people of the professions linked with mountain tourism.

c. Following the putting into place a tourist office. Participation at work meetings with the local authorities and local business people of Tetovo to help thoughts and analyses of which concerns tourism in this region.

Itinerary and programme

Wednesday 17th June

At the end of the afternoon arrival at Tetovo from Kosovo.
We were welcomed by Paul Chambéry director of the Alliance Française.

Thursday 18th June

Meeting at the Town Hall of Tetovo with Albert Qazimi cooperation project coordinator at the economic development office and Blake Childs, an adviser. The new town hall is very motivated by the idea of developing tourism, especially mountain tourism. A discussion about putting into place a service that just looks after tourism was initiated and will be the object of a meeting on Monday the 22nd of June. This first step is important as it shows that tourism is not being looked upon as a secondary activity, but is viewed as an economic activity of priority.

Friday 19th June

Morning

Meeting with the new mayor of Tetevo, Mr Bexheti, Paul Childs and Albert Qazimi. The new mayor was completely up to date on the collaboration project with the Hautes Alpes and confirmed his support to continue along the same avenue. As he used to be the Tetovo state university rector, he was very open and positive about all that touched education and training.

Afternoon

At the Alliance Francaise we met with the delegates who had visited The Hautes Alpes between 18th and The 25th of May to discuss plans the next few days.

- Nexmedin HALIDI, the president of Eko Nature an association which is very involved and present in the villages in the Pena.
- Bujamin DURMISHI - Tourism Manager at Euro-Turist Travel Agency.
- Jovan BOZINOSKI – President of the mountain Club at Luboten.

Established in May was the idea that Eko Natura and Mr. Durmishi would look after and deal with the organization up until Tuesday. Then The Luboten Club would take over until the 26th of May.



Departure at the beginning of the afternoon for the Selce and Vejce villages.

Selce is the first village of this valley with a population of 400 and 170 houses. Many of these houses are closed up as the owners have emigrated to Switzerland and Germany. We stopped to visit a workshop which made double glazed PVC and wooden doors and windows. The workshop was installed in the bottom of a large unfinished house. We later learnt that this was once a restaurant which stopped during the war and had not started up again after the fighting had

ceased. Two floors were already done up as rooms and the owner, even before we had visited it, asked who was going to help him invest as most of the work had already been done.

At Vejce we visited two shifteri workshops (the shifteri is a traditional two stringed Albanian instrument). Everything was fabricated locally from wood to strings.

Later at the school that evening, M Haldi presented a film and photos which showed the similarities between the Queyras Regional Park villages (Hautes-Alpes) and the villages of the Shkumbin Valley, there were 30 persons present.

M. Durmish equally spoke about what he had seen and a discussion then proceeded with Yves Fouque. Many questions always come up at each meeting. Is the state going to help us? What are the Local Authorities doing? Are we sure that tourists are going to come? Yves Fouque explains that the government would probably not provide any finance, but however the state would deal with the promotion for Macedonia and the Local Authorities for Tetovo. The fact that a Tourism service has been put into place at the Local Town Hall seemed to be an encouraging factor, alongside this we met people that were open to new ideas and equally ready to invest rapidly.

Saturday 20th June

Leshnica is a symbolic site for the Shar Planina Mountain, with its ideal situation and the foot of cliffs and on the banks of a river (it was at the centre of the fighting in 2001). Three houses that had belonged to the state, police force and fisherman had been destroyed; a reconstruction project to establish a hostel had been in the pipeline for many years.

Sunday 21st June

Visits and meetings in the villages of Veshala and Bozovce.

Using the same principal as Friday afternoon we visited villages followed by a meeting.

Monday 22nd June

Morning

Meeting with Albert Qazimi about the setting up of a tourism service and the tourist situation in the town.

Afternoon

Accompanied by Bujamin Durmishi we met Buja Loma who is the Director of the Loja Association. This association is involved with educational projects and corresponds with the French German Youth Office.

Meeting with Sadije Halidi, a journalist who is interviewing Yves Fouque about the cooperation between the Hautes Alpes and city of Tetovo. She tells us that the Mayor of Tearce, a small town close by Tetovo had included Mountain Tourism on his electoral program. We will meet him on Wednesday morning.

Evening

We met with Kostantin Ciriviri who is responsible for training mountain guides and who is a coordinator at the Macedonian Chamber of Tourism.

He made it clear that Tourism was a priority for Macedonia which has created a Department for Macedonian Tourist Promotion. The Chamber of Tourism, regroups the professional parties for tourism, expressed a desire to work more closely with the Hautes-Alpes Chamber of Commerce (or the CCI mountain clubs). This project could be developed with a trip to France where the costs could be absorbed by the participants.



Tuesday 23rd June

Meetings and visits of the Novo Selo Villages.

Novo Selo is situated at 1300 metres above sea level and at the end of a windy mountain road. It has got a population of more than 1800. A few men have emigrated to Italy, leaving their wives and children in the village. This is the case for Taip who welcomed us into his home which was situated slightly on the edge of the village. He lives in the Bergamo Region (Italy) and realizes that tourism is an important source of revenue and employment. He is the owner of a traditional house in good condition (next door to his own) which it could be transformed easily, especially as he is a stone mason. He showed us prototypes of wooden handicrafts which were very well finished off. They equally owned old carpets and confirmed to us that this art of carpet making was not lost and they still knew how to fabric them. During this visit we were accompanied by Rahim Muharemi who represented the Local Advisory Board for Bogovinje.

The organization from Wednesday afternoon to Friday evening was organized by Jovan Bozinovski and the Luboten Mountain Club.

Wednesday 24th June

Morning

We met Isen Asani the mayor of Tearce. This community has within its boundaries the altitude villages of Brenzo and Varvara. It equally has the Leshok Monastery which is known for the frescoes in its 15th century chapel.

Afternoon

Meeting at the Town Hall with Albert Qasini to decide on a few final points on the tourist office project. Before we went to this meeting we visited the potential proposed site. We spoke about the IPA project which the community is for. See Annexes Visits and Meetings at Vranitca and Beloviste (18H) Most of the houses in these villages were empty, the population was mainly Slavic. The majority of the inhabitants are in the U.S.A. There are many old houses in more or less good condition with a remarkable architecture. The village has an elderly population and the village is a little sleepy.

Thursday 25th June

We visited the higher levels of Tetovo with Jovan Bozinovski which are populated mainly by Slavs. There remain many old houses which were regrouped around Orthodox Churches and a Icon Museum.

At 18h we had a meeting in a school at Brezno and then at 21h at Varvara.

Friday 26th June

End of visit meeting at the town hall with M Bexheti the Mayor, Johan Urhes cooperation Adviser for the French Embassy at Skopje. Paul Chambery and Albert Qasini.

The mayor had just come back from Normandy, France where he had participated in meetings concerning the cooperation towards decentralization and town twinning. The Lycees of Lisieux and Tetovo are already twinned and student exchanges have already taken place. We made a conclusion speech and the mayor confirmed his full collaboration and his desire to create as quickly as possible a tourism service. It is an idea to organize mountain outings for the schools to try and give them the taste for the mountains.

At 19h we had a discussion about the Tourism Service in the presence of journalists. This mission was closely followed and publicized by the press in newspapers and interviews on local and national radio.

Saturday 27th June

Last meeting with journalist Ilco Cvetanoski before returning to France.

Conclusion and outlooks

Whether it be government or local, the motivation to develop tourism has moved into an active phase. For Tetovo, the new mayor took the decision to create a service just for tourism where the CRET has a place as an adviser and trainer for the people recruited.

In the villages even if tourism is still viewed as something a little abstract we always met at least one person who was willing to invest or renovate accommodation to transform it into a small hotel, a hostel or beds for tourists. The fact that the Town Hall decided to create a Tourism Service was a strong factor in this motivation and was certainly a catalyst.

An intercountry IPA cooperation project between Albania and Macedonia was validated and a dossier to accept projects was opened. In the region of Pollog, where Tetovo is the capital could benefit from a grant of 20,000 to 50,000 euros, which would cover a maximum of 85% of the operation. The number one important factor was that Tourism is potentially one of the main areas of regional economic development.

Equally within this measure, the development of training courses with exchanges of ideas and competences within the tourism domain. The CRET is well represented for this area.

To be eligible the project must have an intercountry objective. The project will be organized by the professional representatives of the Albanian and Macedonian Regions. Their objectives are touristic organization, the concept of Mountain Tourism, the optimizing of investment by taking in account the requirements of the international and more local clients.

Annexes

Annexe I

IPA Financing.

The EU supports the candidate countries in their efforts to adopt European regulations and provides financial assistance to develop their economy and infrastructures for pre-admission.

This assistance main vocation is to prefigure the allocated funds within political cohesion. (Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds).

The countries which are in the phase of pre-admission (Western Balkans and Turkey) are naturally the main beneficiaries for funds outside of the EU. For the Western Balkans this aid represents approximately 30 per person.

2007 – 2013 Period

IPA “Instrument de pre-adhesion” Pre Admission Tool the IPA must help the beneficiaries to come into line with the European norms. Aid, which is determined by pre-admission has a temporary benefit and is looked upon as middle term help.

The beneficiaries are split into two categories, each group has different objectives.

Candidature Countries: Croatia, Turkey, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia.

Potential Candidature Countries: Albania, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro.

For the first group aid is given to facilitate completely.

For the second group the mandate is more limited and orientated towards the general interest of the EU and the benefiting country, without supposing that the country will receive full admission, and funds are allocated with this view in mind.

Aid, which depends upon collective objectives and must improve the institutions, reform economic necessities, develop social benefits, uphold democracy and human rights and ensure cooperation between bordering countries.

Aid is programmed and put into practice according to five different areas in which various other domains are dealt with: institutions, regional and inter boarder aspects, human resources, etc

- Help to change and improve institutions.
- Regional and Intercountry cooperation.
- Regional development
- Development within human resources
- Rural Development

Annexe 2

Monday 22nd June

Cooperation between L'ALLIANCE FRANCAISE and Tetovo

« Soon, a touristic centre in TETOVO »

24 orë e hënë, 22 qershor 2009

BASHKËPUNIMI MIDIS ALEANCËS FRANCEZE DHE KOMUNËS

Tetova së shpejti me qendër turistike



saj. Kryetari Bexheti ka bërë të ditur se kjo ide mund të zgjerohet edhe me punësimin e 2 personave nga çdo fshat i malësisë nga ana e komunës, të cilët do të kujdeseshin për mirëmbajtjen e fshatit të tyre. E gjithë kjo është në funksion të rigjallërimit të ekonomisë në këto fshatra malor. Edhe ky projekt është në kuadër të bashkëpunimit decentralizues mes komunës së Tetovës dhe Departamentit të Hautes Alpes. Partnerë të projektit janë, komuna e Tetovës, Departamenti i Hautes Alpes, Qendra regjionale për trajnim profesional nga Briançon, Aleanca Franceze në Tetovë, Klubi i alpinistëve "Luboten" dhe shoqata "Eko-Natyra".