

Submitted Abstract

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Abstract

Following a European conference held in Cyprus in January 2020, the MountMed Institute was created thanks to a private Cypriot Foundation. Its objective is multiple: Research - Training - Action. As it already established facilities in the Troodos mountains of Cyprus it will lead actions in the mountain of the island-State.

But its scope is wider since it aims to operate as a network on the scale of the European Mediterranean Islands. The institute's tasks hence foresee long-term engagement that is envisaged to remediate the under-representation of the Mediterranean regions and their specific issues in the Mountain and European debate.

The Med mountain area (medium or high, island or coastal or more inland) is indeed a biome recognized for its specificity, but also its complexity and fragmentation. It is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, but under increasing threat of climate change. A network cannot be issued by decree. It is hence evolving by connections, detailed issues and discussions on the organization of the analytical and operational apparatus. It must bring together practitioners, actors, researchers from all disciplines and types of institutions. It must also take advantage of the knowledge acquired by other mountain coordination bodies, particularly European ones. In this regard it was for example already capable to lead a discussion forum on global mountain networks during the 2021 Valposchiavo ODT Forum. Two main issues have been identified in this first MountMed phase. First a methodological clarification: If the ambition of such a network is to produce useful knowledge for action, it is necessary to start from the interests, constraints and experiences of local actors, to have a process of co-construction of the "problematizations". Second we need on the one hand, to achieve social and economic inclusiveness in the strategies and mechanisms tested; on the other hand, to ensure their sustainability by integrating the evolving constraints of environmental transitions. Addressing these transitions will be the particular priority for the network, addressing aspects of pressing needs for action arising from climate change, erosion of biodiversity, use of resources and avoidance of pollution. From the discussion methodological issues and a "conversation" around experiences might provide to this Med network an important place in the European discussion of mountain regions.