

TEM Conference on tourism and local development of Alpine Region — 26-27 June 2017 - Aosta

The Alpine Region: The Challenge of Multi-Governance Policies

by Alberto Bramanti* and Francesca Teston[§]

*Bocconi University, Dpt PAM and CERTeT, alberto.bramanti@unibocconi.it

[§]EURAC research, Institute for regional development, researcher – Bolzano, teston.francesca@gmail.com

Abstract

The Alpine region can boast a long history of cooperation, whose first examples can be traced back to a period before the world wars. But it is in the last decades that Alpine cooperation networks have exponentially grown in number and complexity, and have achieved different levels of acknowledgement at the regional, national and European layers.

The situation is still under development due to the European Union strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), which is becoming increasingly important in the Alpine cooperation framework.

When looking closely to the Alpine region, the existing cooperation networks involve different levels of collaboration, which range from the soft and more policy oriented one, to the hard project-based one.

A number of questions arise looking – within this frame – at the policy issue: *i)* what could and should be the relations between the late-comer EUSALP network and the pre-existing ones? *ii)* is a scenario where EUSALP will absorb and replace all the existing networks likely or desirable? *iii)* how could be addressed and pursued the thematic priorities within the EUSALP strategy?

The present work starts answering these questions, analyzing some tangible examples of projects promoted by previous networks that can contribute to make the most out of the Alpine strategy. It will be shown that the most workable role for EUSALP is to act as an umbrella structure/organisation, which benefit from and promote the cooperative work already done by the pre-existing bottom-up cooperation network. This will allow to avoid dispersion of energies and resources and to strengthen the Alpine strategy fostering a place-based approach to policy implementation.

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