



# **REPORT**

## **Pluralism in the Alps:**

### **Learn from inspiring practices!**

Event: EUSALP Annual Forum

Venue: Innsbruck, Congress Innsbruck

Dates: 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> November 2018

Organisations: Regional Development Vorarlberg – Regio-V (lead partner of the PlurAlps Project) and CIPRA International Lab (project partner)

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#### Content of the report:

- Participation of the PlurAlps Project at the EUSALP Annual Forum
- Workshop 4: Pluralism in the Alps: Learn from inspiring practices!
  - Number of participants in the workshop: 80
  - Workshops Topics: Presentation of best practice examples:
    1. Presentation of best practice Talents for Austria
    2. Presentation of best practice Germinale Agricoltura Comunitaria
    3. White Paper - Policy recommendations to deal with pluralism in the Alps

During the two days of the EUSALP Forum, CIPRA International and the EUSALP AG3 shared a common stand and presented some of the actions that were developed in the past months. The Autonomous Province of Trento presented their 10 points for dual education, whereas CIPRA International showcased the project PlurAlps. The stand received numerous visitors, many of them were students.

On the second day of the Forum, CIPRA International, together with Regio-V, facilitated the workshop on pluralisms. Ms Boglarka Fenyvesi-Kiss from the Autonomous Province of Trento and leader of the EUSALP Action Group 3 welcomed the audience and stressed the importance of collaborating at a macro-regional level. Mr Robert Moosbrugger from Regio-V, lead partner of the PlurAlps project, started the workshop with an introduction about the importance that European funding treaties give to pluralism. He went on underlining the fact that pluralism is not a static state, but rather an active seeking of understanding. Many Alpine region experience depopulation and try to adapt to new migration models. The PlurAlps project aims at strengthening a welcoming culture to shape a region where newcomers can find new opportunities.

After this presentation Mr Wolfgang Pfefferkorn (CIPRA International) proposed some ice-breaking activities to create a space for an exchange among the participants and to make pluralism in the room concrete. He started asking about the mother tongue of those who were attending the workshop and asked them if they were living in the same country from which their parents came. The next question was asked to make clear that some of the participants were not living in the country where they were born. A large number of the participants were high-school students. We thought it was necessary to adapt the workshop's methods to this target group. However, all the participants appreciated this activity and were more open to the following discussion.

One of the main actions that were carried out by CIPRA International in the framework of the PlurAlps project was the Alpine Pluralism Award 2018. On 20<sup>th</sup> November an official ceremony had been organized in order to deliver a certificate to the winners. Ms Elisa Agosti (CIPRA International) shared some facts about the award and the selection process of the winners. Two of them had accepted to tell more about their winning project and were present during the workshop.



Picture 1: Ceremony of the Alpine Pluralism Award © EUSALP

The second part of the workshop was dedicated to discussing the winning projects of the Alpine Pluralism Award. Ms Nina Missethon from Styria/AT and Ms Giulia Jannelli from Valle Stura/IT presented their projects briefly to stimulate the curiosity of the participants.

### **Best Practice Talents for Austria**

Nina Missethon was representing a project called Talents for Austria, a boarding school for unaccompanied minor migrants that have the chance to learn German, to follow a curriculum and to be trained to learn a certain position. They benefit from a well-established network that helps them to find an internship or a job. Giulia Janelli presented the social agriculture project that was initiated at Germinale Agricoltura Comunitaria. This cooperative revitalizes abandoned meadows and offers a chance to young migrants living in a protected house to learn about how to cultivate a mountain field and to get a living from the agricultural production.

We divided the participants into three groups: they could choose to know more about one of the winning projects or to discuss with Mr Moosbrugger

about a white paper on pluralism that some of the partners of the PlurAlps project have been drafting. After about 20 minutes the members of each group had the possibility to move to another group if they wished to do so. Both Nina and Giulia were happy to present their project and were asked many questions by the participants and the initially shy students that after a while were no longer afraid of raising their hands.



Picture 2: Nina Missethon and some students during the discussion about Talents for Austria © CIPRA International Lab

Nina tried to involve the members of her group asking them about their personal experience with migrants: Had they met any? How were they? Did they have any trouble with them? The students answered that it is easier to meet migrants in the cities than in the rural areas and that they had not had any problems with migrants. They were curious about young migrants attending an Austrian boarding school and did not expect them to pass the same exams as Austrian students or receiving the same treatment concerning salary and holiday when they were carrying out an internship. Nina went on saying that it is crucial to inform the local population about any activities that involve migrants as this can help prevent opposition. However, some people will always be critical. The only thing that Nina can say to them is that the young migrants were never involved in small crimes or violent episodes.



### Best Practice Germinale Agricoltura Comunitaria

Giulia's group listened carefully to her and was interested to how if the local authorities were supporting this initiative. Unfortunately, local authorities have not shown much interest and have remained rather indifferent until now. Giulia said that the Valle Stura has experienced three emigration flows, one in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one in the 1960s and one that is occurring right now, making it a good example for a depopulated mountain area in the Alps. The major problems that the Germinale Cooperative has encountered are linked to the difficulties that migrants have to rent an apartment, even though many of them are empty in the villages, to the fact that with no car it is very hard to move from village to village and linked to the hard time that they have to look for a market where to sell their products.



Picture 3: Giulia Jannelli telling some participants about the project Germinale Agricoltura Comunitaria © CIPRA International Lab

### White Paper

Robert's group was mostly composed of classes from two schools, i.e. the Liceo delle Scienze Umane Artistico, Giovanni Pascoli from Bolzano and the BHAK/BHAS/HLW Landeck. The discussion with the group focused on one specific recommendation of the PlurAlps policy paper. This recommendation is titled: Betting on education. It states that societies are built, first, at school. However, schools are not necessarily equipped to cope with the increasing

pluralism of current local communities, especially in small municipalities where schools are generally less involved in networks and programmes focusing on integration.



Picture 4: Robert Moosbrugger and Valentina Chizzola exchanging on the White © Regio-V

In order to get the discussion started the group was asked to share their understanding of the term diversity. It became apparent that for the group the term involves hopes and fears and that it is inherently an ambiguous concept. The students were then asked to discuss together what could be done in their schools to better deal with diversity and pluralism. A rich discussion unfolded with many suggestions coming from the students ranging from the offer of intercultural classes, to better understating process of group identity and the realization of school projects with minority groups.