

EUROMOUNTAINS.NET

The creation of a network in European mountainous areas for the promotion of sustainable territorial development

STUDY TOUR

11th-12th May 2005

Palencia



Component 2-Part 1

The Improvement of Services in Mountain Areas



Contents

Introduction.....	page 3
11th May 2005- Aguilar area.....	page 4
12th May 2005- Cervera di Pisuerga and Guardo areas	page 13
Spanish “Good Practice”.....	page 19

Introduction

One of the activities of the Euromountains.net project is the exchange and diffusion of the results of partner study vacations; regarding part 1-the improvement of services in mountain areas- both the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta and its partner area, Diputación de Palencia, were visited. The Spanish delegation stayed in Valle d'Aosta from 26th to 29th April 2005 and an Aostan delegation from the County Council for Agriculture and Natural Resources was in Spain from from 10th to 13th May . The objective of these study vacations is to share experiences and methodology regarding the policy and instruments of regional development.



The following people participated in the visit to Spain:

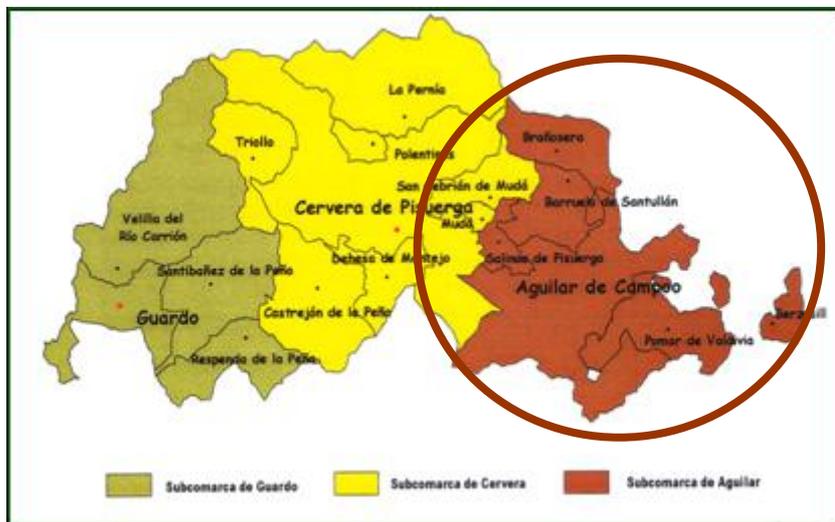


- BETEMPS Nathalie** (County Council for Agriculture and Natural Resources- consultant for office of multi-sectorial programmes)
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- José Antonio RUBIO MIELGO** (Excma. Diputación Provincial de Palencia - diputado)
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Alejandro LAMALFA DÍAZ (Barruelo de Santullán – alcalde)
Blanca NOBIS ALONSO (Cervera de Pisuerga - agente de desarrollo)
Urbano ALONSO CAGIGAL (Cervera de Pisuerga – alcalde)
Teo CALVO (Santibáñez de la Peña ARPANOR – artesiano)
Alicia GONZÁLEZ PRADO (Velilla del Río Carrión - agente de desarrollo)
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11th May 2005-Aguilar



Territory: 473,3 km²

Inhabitants: 10,153
21,35 inhab/km²

Holdness index: 25,62

Programme:

09.30

Reception at the Diputación di Palencia.

11.00 –13.30

Foundation of Santa Maria la Real (Aguilar de Campoo): presentation of the activities and services, visit to the areas of restoration and conservation of the patrimony and to the following works:

- ✓ architectural ornaments;
- ✓ “Enciclopedia del Romanico in Castilla e León”;
- ✓ old people’s home;
- ✓ inn of Santa Maria la Real;
- ✓ network for official communication.

16.00 –20.00

Barruelo - Brañosera

- ✓ visitors centre of the mining sector and mine;
- ✓ railbus;
- ✓ library, recreation room, cultural centre;
- ✓ telecentre;
- ✓ recreation area.

The Aostan delegation was welcomed by the County Councillor for Tourism, RUBIO MIELGO Jose Antonio, at the Diputación de Palencia. The County Councillor briefly described the situation of the Palentine mountains and focused on such topics as: the large number of tiny villages (50-60 inhabitants), numerous mining areas, the existence of various Romanesque structures and the desire to create a skiing infrastructure.



Reception at the Diputación de Palencia



Study vacation group

After a quick visit to the main rooms of the Diputación de Palencia, the work group went to Aguilar de Campoo. On the way we noted various characteristics of this area: numerous fields of wheat, Romanesque remains, the Castilla Canal (18th century canal which is still in use for civil purposes and which provides irrigation for 200000 people), various castles (Monzon de Campos, Fuente Stano)...



Wheat field



Castilla Canal



Monzon Castle

Aguilar de Campoo

Foundation of Santa Maria la Real

The Foundation of Santa Maria la Real is a non-profit organisation with the mission to increase the value of the cultural, natural/environmental and social heritage. It was created 28 years ago by a group of friends and in 1988 became the Association of Santa Maria la Real which focused exclusively on cultural aspects. In 1994 it became the Foundation of Santa Maria la Real and increased its focus to cultural, environmental and social aspects. Today 122 people (68% women and 32% men) work in the Foundation and a large percentage of them are university graduates.

The Foundation is divided into 4 areas:

- 1) governing bodies (managed by 30 unpaid volunteers);
- 2) management;
- 3) activities:
 - ✓ Romanesque study centre (courses, encyclopedia, museums, architectural ornaments...);
 - ✓ conservation of the patrimony (re-building, restoration, regulations ...);
 - ✓ old people's homes;
- 4) General services (transversal):
 - ✓ commercial management (product sales...);
 - ✓ administration;
 - ✓ communication.

The first objective of the Foundation was that of saving the Monastery of Santa Maria la Real: in order to do this the Foundation was supported by “Escuelas Taller” (Trade School). Escuelas Taller were created as part of a project of the Ministry of Work and enabled 300.000 Spanish youths between the ages of 16 and 25 to learn a trade under expert tuition; salaries are not high but the aim was to provide those involved with a trade that will allow them to enter into the job market.

The founder “sold” the restoration project of the Monastery of Santa Maria la Real to the Ministry of Work and it was the young people of Escuela Taller who re-built it; currently 70% of the young people who worked on this project are now employed. The Monastery of Santa Maria la Real after its restoration has become a secondary school and a university for distance learning and for various associations; in 1988, the Monastery of Santa Maria la Real won the Europa Nostra Prize for its restoration. This fact led to the realisation that the Romanesque is a good starting point for various commercial activities, however it was necessary to involve specialists in order to be competitive.

From this point onwards, the activities of the Foundation have focused on 3 topics:

1. Study and diffusion: creation of the Encyclopedia “Romanico en Castilla y León” (14 volumes), (“Romanesque en Catalunya” and “Romanico en Cantabria y Asturias” are currently being collated) and the organisation of summer courses (medieval culture, restoration, initiation of Romanesque art.....).
2. Restoration: the basic idea was that of not only restoring churches but also their surroundings (houses, roads etc) to satisfy not only cultural, but also social and environmental requirements; for this very reason inhabitants are be reimbursed 60% for restoration work. Finance comes from various sources: the Ministry of Work makes a contribution via Escuela Taller, there are also other public contributions such as those from the province and the county, and private financing comes from banks and self-financing of the Foundation.
3. The valorisation of the heritage, the creation of businesses: in fact a genuinely sustainable model has been necessary to transform Escuela Taller into a business in 2 years; following this example, 100 businesses specialised in various activities have been created: architectural ornaments, restoration, old people’s homes, accommodation (Locanda Santa Maria la Réal), the recovery of pathways of cultural-environmental value...

The Foundation has recently exported its model to South America.

Here is some information regarding the most important projects of the Foundation.

Architectural ornaments

One of the businesses involved with the Escuela Taller is that of re-producing miniatures of the most famous Spanish and European architectural masterpieces: churches, cathedrals, palaces, sculptures...

These unique miniatures are hand-crafted and hand-painted.



Cleaning the miniatures



Hand-painting the miniatures



Miniature of Carcassonne (France)

Rete@lavoro

The rete@lavoro project uses a web portal with a server to make the following information available: database, forecasts, work plans, forums, e-commerce, telephone assistance and information with two fundamental objectives:

- ✓ develop a virtual co-operation between the various Escuela Taller, Casa de Taller and Work Laboratories;
- ✓ exploit the potential and experience of the promotion area and local development of various Escuela Taller, Casa de Taller and Work Laboratories.

Old People's Homes

As part of this project, a school has been adapted to become an old people's home. This project, called the "Third Age" prepared 50 student-workers for various tasks: building, carpentry, plumbing and electrics, entertainment, free time and home assistance.

Encyclopedia of Romanesque

The "Enciclopedia del Romanico en Castilla y Leon" is an exhaustive and thorough collection of medieval testimony located in and belonging to the geographical area of the nine provinces of the Comunitá Autonoma di Castilla e Leon. The encyclopaedia has 14 volumes and a total of 8200 pages, 12000 photographs and 4700 projects.



Barruelo de Santullan

Visitors Centre for the Mining Sector

Situated in the old national school, the museum is aimed at children, thus guaranteeing a minimum number of visitors in the winter season when the majority of potential users are principally students.

The Mining Museum has over 600 m² of exposition space and is on three floors and has nine rooms. The first floor is aimed at tourists, the second is aimed at children and the third is slightly more technical and focuses on these topics: geology, pedology etc

The two important variables taken into consideration when planning the museum were:

- ✓ guided and unguided visits;
- ✓ the maximum number of visitors present at any time.

The museum tells the story of coal right from its formation through to its use by man using thematic and inter-active means. Each room has a topic relevant to mining and the various plastics, models and films realistically show how mines worked.



Visitors' Centre



Model: section of the mine

Visiting the Mines

One can visit the mines which are situated at a distance of 1km from Barruelo de Santullán. Various guided visits are open to and aimed at children, adults and technicians and during these visits one can get to know the interesting processes of coal extraction and also observe the different elements present in the mine: tubes for water and air, sloping floors, dynamite... Music and lights make the experience even more realistic.



Entrance into the mine



Making the gallery larger by perforation



Ramp for the exit of coal

Railbus

The local authority has promoted the recovery of an old railway station using the workforce of an Escuela Taller. Once finished, this area will consist of a railbus which is aimed at helping the tourism development of this area. This project is the creation of a railbus museum which will stop at various points along the 13km re-built route.



The Railbus



An old railway station

Library-Games Room-Cultural Centre

The library and games room are in the same building and the cultural centre is in the Casa del Popolo, the following activities will be housed here: projections, music lessons, exhibitions of pictures and photos, dance and acting lessons, hands-on activities.....



Library



Magazines for readers in the library

Technological Centre

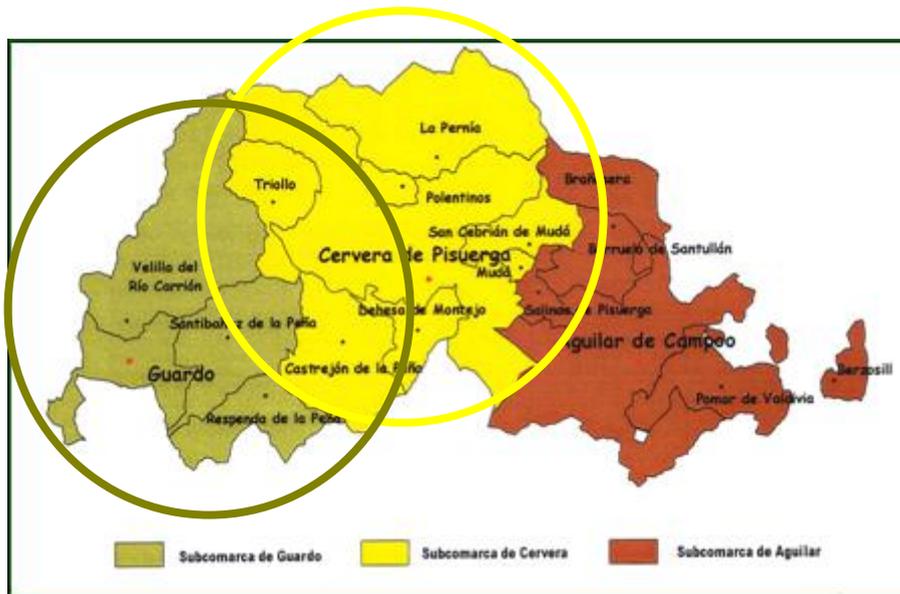
The project, Internet Rural is promoted by the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Ministry for Science and Technology, the European Fund for Regional Development and by the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces and also by the Palencia Province and aims at the promoting the spread of new technology in rural areas. This project finances buying a computer and satellite connection for three years: after 3 years, all expenses will be paid by the Palencia Province. The technological centre of Barruelo de Santullan is situated in one of the classes in a secondary school and is open at least five days per week for at least 5 hours.

Recreation Area



The recreation area is home to a swimming pool, football field and picnic area: it is open only in the summer.

12th May 2005-Cervera di Pisuerga and Guardo



GUARDO

Territory: 439,2 km²
Inhabitants: 11.293
25,71 inhab/km²
Ageing index: 21,53

CERVERA DE PISUERGA

Territory: 768,2 km²
Inhabitants: 4.346
5,66 inhab/km²
Ageing index: 31,28

Programme

10.45 – 11.00

Meeting at Cervera de Pisuerga with the managers of the European programme LEADER PLUS and illustration of the projects which have been developed as part of this programme in the following sectors: health and social service, free time, tourism and infrastructure. Visit to the Information Offices of the Natural Park of Fuentes Carrionas and Fuente Cobre.

12.30 – 13.30

Santibáñez de la Peña-visit to a firm specialising in the manufacture of ceramics; this firm employs people with mental and physical handicaps.

16.00 - 20.00

Velilla del Río Carrión- visit to the river which annually hosts the most important sporting events of this area (canoeing). Visit to the Roman source of “Fontes Tamarici” (Fuentes divinas). Visit to the Telecentre. Visit to the artificial lakes of Compuerto and Camporredondo.

Cervera de Pisuerga

Transfer from Palencia to Cervera de Pisuerga, village of 1800 inhabitants situated at the north of Palencia, at 1009 metres a.s.l., in the heart of the Palentine mountains. The name



“Cervera” probably derives from the numerous deer present in the area. The visit to the municipality was guided by the mayor. The group also met with the director of social services and found that there are numerous services available:

- telephone assistance (permanent communication system which provides emergency aid for those in need: this system uses a special telephone installation which is connected to a help centre 25 hours a day);
- home assistance (older people receive home help for hygiene, help with food, company, house cleaning, meal preparation, shopping and assistance in getting to health centres etc);
- family assistance (educational and psychological programme which provides support for families who have problems).

There is an evident promotion of the tertiary sector of the economy: this sector occupies 50% of jobs in internal commerce, hotels, building and tourism.

The group then visited the Centre for Mountain Development and this office is managed by the Association for the Palentine Mountains; here the manager presented the group with a general description of the Palentine mountains.

The entire population of these mountains is about 28 000 people who live in the five main zones of Guardo, Aguilar, Cervera, Barruelo and Velilla del Rio Carrion.

The majority of the territory is covered by forests and around 16% by herbaceous cultivation.

The industrial sector concerns 3 sectors: energy, agro-alimentary transformation and extraction (coal mining).

The main aim is that of creating a link with these mountains and numerous ventures are organised to bring man closer to the mountains: trekking, climbing etc.



Another important site is the ethnographical museum. This was founded 30 years ago and is situated in a noble house dating back to the end of the 15th century: it was funded thanks to (FEOGA, Ministry for Agriculture, Leader Plus Programme, the municipality). It was the idea of Mrs Piedad Islas, who realised that visitors to the mountains, especially the younger generations, have no memories of how life once was: thus the desire to conserve memories and help people get to know the past was born. This wonderful, tireless lady of 78 has taken photographs throughout her life and now has a collection of 100 000, which, with the help of two technicians, are being archived in order to prevent them from being lost; she is also able



to indicate the identity of the people in the photographs.

The Tourist Information Office of Fuentes Carrionas and Fuente Cobre is a perfect example of an interactive museum to be used by all visitors, both children and adults.

It is divided into various sections which focus on the following topics:

- ✓ the park: a camera records all activity in the park and visitors can see exactly what is going on using this camera and its extremely powerful zoom;
- ✓ environmental education: via photographs and optical effects, visitors can see the result of not separating their rubbish on the environment;
- ✓ water and its uses: an enormous table shows us how much water we waste every day. Every time we forget to turn off the tap when we brush our teeth we waste lots of water: this is illustrated on the table with bottles of water; a water theca shows the water cycle from evaporation to rain.



This system is a useful approach which enables the studying in-depth of topics which may be difficult to teach at school.

The park covers 783,60 Km². The park's mascot is the bear which lives here and re-produces naturally.

Santibáñez de la Peña



The group then went to Santibanez, **to visit a firm which employs people with mental and physical handicaps in the manufacture of ceramics.** The name of the firm is Arpanor – its 14 employees re-produce the ideas of Teo Calvo Doce. Its products are sold all over the world but Chinese products have created problems for the company as the products are almost completely hand-made, costs are high. This private company started in 1988 with public funds for the valorisation of mineral sites.

Velilla del Río Carrión

In Velilla del Rio Carrion, a village of 1700 people, the group visited the river which hosts the most important annual sporting event of the year-canoeing.

The Roman site of **Fontes Tamerici**-a source of allegedly magic water- was also extremely interesting. Historical studies show that even Pliny mentioned this place in his writings.



The objective is to re-launch this area through tourism but funds are not yet sufficient.

The group also visited the telecentre with computers and internet in this area. Every day (for a token fee) a teacher gives I.T. lessons to an average of about 30 students.



The day finished with a visit to the « ruta de los pantanos » which is the route which leads to the two artificial lakes of Compuerto and Camporredondo.



Spanish “Good Practice”

During the study vacation, we observed that some sectors of Valle d’Aosta, are currently more developed than those in our partner area: libraries, recreation areas, sports areas.

On the contrary, other sectors were more innovative than our own and could be used to develop the rural areas in our territory.

Here are examples of “good practice”:

- **Internet Rural** is a project which finances the purchase of computers and satellite connection for three years. This project could be useful for our mountain areas and it requires, apart from equipment, I.T. courses which will aid the development of municipalities and their tourist activities (e.g. web design).
- **The Foundation of Santa Maria la Real** is a non-profit organisation with the mission to increase the value of the cultural, natural/environmental and social heritage. Its activities focus on the Romanesque. This type of organisation could be used in our territory for the valorisation of chapels, windmills and bakehouses etc. When restoration is already under way (e.g. the windmill of La Magdeleine and the chapel of Pontboset) intervention should be available to the public.
- The **Visitor’s Mining Centre** is a museum principally for children; there is also a **Visitor’s Mine**. These two structures show how something which was considered negative for a long time, is now a genuine attraction for the area. This could be something which could be copied in mining areas in Valle d’Aosta.; there are currently two Interreg projects in our territory “Mining Regions” and “La via dei metalli”,
- **Re-use of our historic and artistic heritage** – our territory, which is rich in monuments and vestiges of the past, is perfect for the re-use of certain buildings for tourism, as is the case of the Convento de Sta María de Mave, a monastery in which we stayed.