

Euromountains.net

Networking of European mountain regions in order to promote sustainable territorial development

REPORT FROM

STUDY TOUR

October 10-14, 2005

Aosta Valley

Item 3 - Theme 2

The role played by local authorities in the development and promotion of premium quality mountain resources and products



Study visit programme in the Aosta Valley Autonomous Region

The Aosta Valley is the smallest (3262 km²) and least densely populated (114,000 inhab.) Italian Region.

The Aosta Valley is a typically mountainous Region, with an average altitude of 2106 m. In view of a sustainable improvement of services in the mountainous areas, a study area has been selected including a group of seven Municipalities having similar features and sharing the typical problems that the local mountainous Municipalities are faced with: i.e. Chamois, La Magdeleine, Valgrisenche, Bionaz, Oyace, Champorcher and Pontboset.



All the Municipalities of the study area have been included in the study visit. One or two examples of best practices will be thoroughly studied in each one of them.

In each Municipality it will also be possible to gather general information about the three categories of products that will be studied, either by meeting with local authorities or through the local area visits themselves.

Typical food of the Region will be served.

PROGRAM

October 10, 2005

Arrival at the “S. Pertini” airport of Caselle (Turin) and transfer to the Aosta Valley.

October 11, 2005

08.30-09.30

Welcome at the Assessorato Agricoltura e Risorse naturali seat

10.30-12.00

Municipality of *Champorcher*, visit to:

- the Co-operative “Lo dzeut”, specialised in the typical hemp weaving.

12.30-16.30

Municipality of *Pontboset*, visit to:

- a refurbished traditional windmill during lunch.
- “Il sentiero dei 7 ponti” (The 7 bridges path), i.e. a thematic pathway along the main river course of Ayasse and across the several stone bridges.

17.00-18.00

Municipality of *Arnad*, visit to:

- “Bertolin’s House”, a small factory producing typical Aostan meat products (shop available).

Free evening.

October 12, 2005 :

10.00-12.30

Municipality of *Chamois*, visit to:

- the picnic area along the banks of the Lod lake.
- the basket handicraft workshop.
- Emilio’s farm and his cheese production.

13.00-18.00

Municipality of *La Magdeleine*, visit to:

- the refurbished windmill and bakery pathway.
- the factory “Douce Vallée”, specialising in the production of raspberry vinegar and other typical products.

Free evening.

October 13, 2005 :

09.00-11.00

Municipality of *Oyace*, visit to:

- milk and dairy products : the whole process from the stable to the dairy shop.
- The store of “Fontina”, a typical PDO-Protected Designation of Origin- cheese of Aosta Valley

11.00-14.30

Municipality of *Bionaz*, visit to:

- the Place Moulin Dam.
- The workshop manufacturing the “Landzettes”, i.e. a typical Carnival velvet costume of the Region.

16.30-19.00

Municipality of *Valgrisenche*, visit to:

- the Bearegard Dam, used for the generation of hydroelectric power but also for climbing.
- The Co-operative “Les Tisserands”, specialising in cloth-weaving (sheets).

20.00

Closing dinner of the study tour.

October 14, 2005:

10.00-14.00

Free sightseeing tour of the city of Aosta.

Departure to the “S. Pertini” airport of Caselle (Turin).

Tuesday October 11.

Aosta valley is the smallest of all the 20 regions of Italy, and is an arcade for transport mainly from Italy to the northern part of Europe.

Tuesday 11 of October:

First of all the leader of the Assessorato Agricoltura e Risorse naturali wished us welcome and we were introduced to our lovely guides and organizers.

The first stop was in the Municipality of *Champorcher*, where we visited the Co-operative “Lo dzeut”, specialised in the typical hemp weaving. The Municipality of *Champorcher* hosts 450 inhabitants living in 26 small villages. The small valley, nicknamed Valley of the waterfalls, is famous for its scenery and it becomes a popular ski resort in winter. Tourism causes the main economical income and mostly during wintertime. Pontboset and its surrounding villages lie amid century-old chestnut groves. We were explained, and visited the ancient tradition of hemp weaving. In agriculture there are mainly milk and cheese production and special from the traditional cow-raze from Aosta, the Baldostema? Raze. The milk that are used in the special fontina-cheese must, come from this raze.



Figur 1 Some of the razes to explore in Aosta. The traditional to the right..

Municipality of *Pontboset*, visit to: - A refurbished traditional windmill during lunch.

Lunch: We had lunch in a farm specialised on tourism. In this farm there had been an important mill for the valley. The mill is restored and is a part of the attraction. Norwegians are used to a moderate lunch with a couple of slices of bread and a cup of coffee, and were filled up after the first meal. After that we got 7 more meals....

The menu:

1. Ham, sausage and other local specialities.
2. Some kind of risotto, a local speciality.
3. A thick soup with vegetables.
4. A local speciality made with meat from goat.
5. Cheeses
6. A roll with rhubarb and strawberry sauce.
7. Apple cake and schnapps.
8. Different types of schnapps.

Aosta generally is in EU defined as a mountain region. This means some economical support from EU; Grazing in the mountains, construction and build, farmers under 40 years and other.



Figur 2 - “Il sentiero dei 7 ponti” (The 7 bridges path), i.e. a thematic pathway along the main river course of Ayasse and across the several stone bridges

Municipality of *Arnad*, visit to:

- “Bertolin’s House”, a small factory producing typical Aostan meat products.

In 1957 Guido Bertolin opened the first village butcher's shop. Now the descendants of this skilled Valdaostan pork butcher, Rinaldo, Marilena and their son Guido can boast a modern factory uniting technology and gastronomic tradition. The premises, covering 2500 square metres and built in strictly Valdaostan style, are at Champagnolaz in Arnad, near the main road (S.S.26) and clearly visible from the Aosta-Turin-Milan motorway. As well as lard, the jewel of the Arnad factory, around thirty high-quality varieties of salami are produced and marketed. Mouth-watering delicacies for good food lovers made using natural methods and cured following processes consolidated over the years. Salami, bacon, "coppa", "boudin", cured, salted or preserved meat make exclusive specialities no Valdoastan table should be without. The main ingredient is, meat: pork, beef, horsemeat or game, prepared and mixed with fragrant local flavours. Bay, sage, rosemary, juniper and other mountain herbs give them unmistakable and original flavours.

Wednesday October 12.

Municipality of Chamois

The first stop this day was in Chamois. This small village was free from cars, and the only way to get here was by foot or by cable-car. (There was one small road up to this village, but it was closed and it was only given permission to use it for transport of agriculture machinery etc.) Chamois is situated at 1815 meters above sea level. It is the highest municipality in Europe. It's a small municipality with only 127 inhabitants. There was given a great effort to build up the winter tourism, with many ski lifts and slopes. Some of the buildings in Chamois were used as hotels or other forms for accommodation. The first cable-car to Chamois was built in 1953. There are now two cable-cars, one for goods and one for people. The municipality own the cable-car for goods, and which to buy the other one to insure a better offer for the inhabitants.

Agriculture:

It was totally 543 ha cultivated land in the municipality. Earlier there were tree farms here, but today it's only one. In the summertime farmers from the valley use this area as pasture for their animals. The farmer delivers the milk to the local dairy two times a day. At the dairy they produce Fontina. They have to use the cable-car to transport the milk down to the valley.



Figure 3: Emilio's farm in Chamois

The picnic area along the Lake Lod:

The municipality has arranged a picnic area along the Lake Lod. The area was very good organized for the visitors with paths, 34 tables, 15 barbecues and toilets. The area has seating capacity for 204 people.



Wicker baskets:

An old tradition in this region is to make wicker baskets. Earlier there were 15 families that made baskets, but today it's only one left. We visited him and he showed us the technique he used making baskets, and he also showed us some of his products. He used only local wood in the basketry, and during the winter he could make approx. 60 baskets.

Figure 4: The major demonstrating wicker basket

Municipality of La Magdeleine

La Magdeleine is a municipality with 91 inhabitants, and it's situated at an altitude of 1664 m.

The municipality has restored several water mills situated along the same watercourse through the village. Some of them are still operative. They have established a water mill footpath, and they use local guides that show tourists the mills. EU has financed the project, and it's used to promote the municipality.



Figure 5: One of the water mills in La Magdeleine

The mills have been some sorts of cooperation, where the farmers in the municipality could grind their cereals. The meal was used to bake the rye bread. This was done in the four ovens in the village. The bread was baked in the autumn, and should last the rest of the year.



Figur 6: Inside the manufactory

Douca Vallée farm

At the Vallée farm the owner Paola welcomed us. She showed us the production. She produced different types of jams, jellies and raspberries vinegar. The manufactory and the equipment were modern, and most of the raw materials for the production came from her own farm. The turnover last year was approx. 15.000 €.

Municipality of Valtournanche

In Valtournanche we visited the dairy Valle del Cervino where they produced Fontina. 20% of the cheese Fontina is made here at this dairy, the rest is made at local producers. The milk came in to the dairy two times a day, approx. 2.150.000 litre pr. year. The temperature on the milk was 20 – 25 °C when they received it. 80 farmers delivered milk to this dairy. The smallest farm had a livestock on only 2 - 3 cattle. Beside Fontina, they also produced fresh milk, and yoghurt at the dairy.



Figur 7: Inside the dairy

Thursday October 13.

OYACE COMMUNE

The Oyace Commune is sited at 1.367 metres above sea level and counts 214 inhabitants. A particularity of this village is, doubtless, the remarkable quantity of agrarian farms representing more than 50% of the total firms.

A second characteristic element of Oyace is the presence of a little hydropower station; during the trip we had the possibility to visit one of the about 20 cowsheds active in Oyace and the Ronc brothers Hydropower station.

The farm

During the visit at the agrarian farm managed by a family, we had the possibility to take part directly in the final phases of manufacturing the Fontina cheese.

After milking, milk reaches a temperature till 36°C, then the cheese-rennet is added (one spoon of cheese-rennet every spoon 100 litres of milk) after having wait for 30 minutes, the cheese rennet gets broken and it gets warmed till 50° C for about one hour. After, it gets cool and let deposit. In this farm are utilized gas hot plates whereas in other farms wood is used to warm.

From the cooker Fontina cheese is extracted and insert in the proper forms through the help of a cloth.



The whole Fontina cheeses may have different sizes, but in accordance with the Fontina disciplinary they can't be under 8 kg and above 12 kg in weight.

The Fontina cheeses are put under press in order to get out the serum and produce its typical shape; after about ten minutes under the press, the cheeses are turned on the other side where a plate for the identification and a label made of casein (a cheese protein) in order to stress them with a progressive number, which allows to

recognise if the Fontina belongs to the summer production and in particular if the cows were in mountain pasture, or not.

In this farm are produced 3 Fontina cheeses at every milking, so 6 at day.

The ageing must be coherent with the ambient temperature between 8°C and 10°C and with an elevate humidity rate (more than 90%). During the ageing, on alternate days, it's necessary to dry-salt and brush the cheeses; the cheeses, then, are brought to the Consorzio, that looks after the ageing. The production of Fontina is the most important sector in Valle d'Aosta: the whole Region produces nearly 400.000 Fontina cheeses per year.

Hydropower station "Ronc Brothers"

The small hydropower station was in 1993 and utilizes water coming from Mountains Community's aqueducts, sited at the bottom of the little town of Bionaz. In the successive years

other two stations were built, which utilized the same fount: one, downhill, in 1996, another, upstream, in 1998.

The total gradient between the fount and the station downhill is 500m in altitude, meanwhile between the fount and the intermediate station, we visited, is 330m in altitude. The Mountain Community is owns in majority of the station and the Roncs have the property of the other part. They will be also in chef of the station management for 20 years and at the end of this period, the Mountain Community will submit a call for tenders in order to give privates its management.

The produced current is directly sell to ENEL (Italian company for the production of electric energy)and the revenues achieved will be reinvested by the Mountain Community in territorial development.

The founts are three and water is entirely utilized to feed the station, except for the summer season, when half of water is indispensable to irrigation. In the station are operative many technical tools, which allow a constant check as regard as the water condition, also in term of good drinkableness.

BIONAZ

In Valle d'Aosta the little town of Bionaz is, in terms of territory, the third most vast area, but it counts only 240 inhabitants. The village, mainly agrarian until some years ago, is now considerably investing in tourism sector. The main attraction is the artificial lake of "Place Moulin" and in the area is planning the creation of a natural park. There are moreover numerous opportunities connected to excursion paths, both easy and for expert mountaineers. At present, tourism is essentially connected with summer season: whit the objective to make this sector less seasonal, they are investing in alpine sky, student-bodies and in the biathlon practice at the polygon. In the management of tourist offer, an important place is performed by no-profit associations, that hold a primary role in organisational events.

The most important event is doubtless the traditional carnival, but at present, even if is a custom heartfelt by the residents, it is not already become an attraction for tourists. In summer, an abridged edition of this carnival is organized whit traditional customs, exactly in order to let tourists know these traditions, which should come back in February for the official Festival. In the end, Boinaz territory is interested by problems connected in particular to avalanches, landslips and ruins.

LANDZETTES



Considering the importance of this carnival with traditional clothes, named Landzettes, there is in Bionaz an private atelier, that deal with manufacturing of this traditional clothes, managed by Cristina Bionaz. The Landzettes are inspired by Napoleon clothes' used during the transit in Valle d'Aosta. Textiles, that can be realized in different colours, are velvet, even if once, for economic reasons, were utilized other textiles too.

Clothes are applied with numerous sequins, that compose the picture selected by the buyer; small mirrors too are applied for creating a luminous effect that give off when they are reflected on the snow and little bells that

ring during the dance. At last, The typical custom expects that every fancy dress has in its hand an horse tile supported by bells and fringes to shake during the Festival.

The Festival goes on for two days, Saturday and Sunday: the Lanzettes are habitually used on Sunday.

PLACE MOULIN DAM

Place Moulin dam is the biggest catchments area in Valle d'Aosta and one of the bigger in Europe. The water tank extends for 4 km and it's able to contain even 105 millions/m³ of water. The dam is made of 150 millions/m³ concrete not reinforced (then without iron supports) to allow a better elasticity and to react against different water levels.

Building works developed between 1961 and 1965 only in spring and summer because of the altitude of the place - 1960m above sea level.

The dam is not composed by a single concrete block, but by different sections (45 columns) stuck by copper strings. At the top the width is 6m, meanwhile at the bottom reaches 45m. It's 155m in height and 678m in length.

Its shape expect a double curvature, which assures a better resistance. The arc shape aims to distribute pressure in the sides of mountain.

The mountain in this area is formed by strong metamorphic rocks, characteristic suitable for build a dam.

The wall is covered inside by 7 km of tunnels developed on seven levels connected by a goods-lift.



Inside the dam there are 600 check points, where there are numerous information about dam movements, rotation, concrete temperature, oscillations, etc.



From the dam, a pressurized tunnel starts - 2,5m in diameter and 14,5 m in length, buried in the side of mountain. This tunnel transport water downhill towards the forced pipe. The pipe is 2km in length and transports water to the Valpelline Station, that's 1000 m below.

The exploitation of this position allows to startups turbines that active the alternator, which is able to produce alternating current, more easily transportable than direct current. From the Valpelline Station starts

energy for Valle d'Aosta, Piemonte, France and Switzerland.

Formerly was ENEL the owner of this station, since 2002 the owner is Compagnia Valdaostana delle Opere.

VALPELLINE

Fontina Visitors Centre

The Visitors Centre Valpelline, with the annexed ageing warehouse, is created by the initiative of the Cooperative Milk and Fontina Producers' of Valle d'Aosta, a cooperative that manages the ageing and the marketing of Fontina cheese.

The Cooperative was defined "of second level", because here the majority of co-operative dairies confer their proper products.

The Cooperative was founded with 46 members, but now count about 400 members.

The Visitors Centre offers the opportunity to know complete information about manufacture of Fontina and about its link with Val d'Aosta territory. In this Centre is prepared a permanent exhibition, which explains the different phases of manufacturing and there is also the opportunity to assist to the projection of a film about origins, traditions, manufacturing and production of Fontina Cheese.

The ageing warehouse is obtained by an ancient copper mine, fallen in disuse. There are numerous Fontina cheeses deposited: at the moment of our visit there was about 45.000 whole cheeses.

Every day, in the warehouse, the cheeses are salt and brushed during the ageing. In the most recent part of mine, the most large part, it's possible to enter with machineries and this operation could be finished, in this way, more rapidly.



The Cooperative takes care of quality control: when the cheeses have reached 90 days of ageing, a complete analysis of characteristics (weight, little holes on the cheese surface and taste) is carried out in order to distinguish which cheeses deserve Fontina Dop label from the ones which will be named only "formaggio valdostano" (cheese produces in Valle D'Aosta). This check brings to a total reject of 20% of cheeses, a classification as "formaggio valdostano" for another 20% and the attribution of Fontina Dop label to the remaining 60%.

VALGRISENCHE

The Valgrisenche Commune is sited at 164 m above sea level and count 187 inhabitants.

Les Tisserands

Les Tisserands is a cooperative society, founded in 1968, dealing with wood cloth manufacturing. The cooperative actually counts 9 members, among that 4 women associate worker. The common local authority owns premises used by the cooperative that, on the other hand, owns the machineries.

The production is inspired by traditional techniques (like the texture of Drap, that's a rustic textile), even if the local wool isn't the only raw materials utilized. The variety of local wool ("rossé wool") represent about 20% of raw materials, the remaining wool comes from Sardinia and from province of Biella for nearly 10%. The rossé wool supply to cooperative is guaranteed by a project with sheep farmers association.

The cooperative works prevalently on commission.

The marketing of this product is promoted by participation in fairs in all Val d'Aosta, besides promoting products to tourists that arrive in Valrisenche.



Beauregard Dam

Unfortunately for different hitches, the visit to Beauregard dam took place when it was already dark outside, then was difficult to have an exactly idea of the situation.

The dam was built in 1957 in reinforced concrete, even if the surrounding mountain shown later, some problems connected to landslides. Besides, in consequence of Vajont's tragedy, as a precaution, it was decided to empty the dam and to maintain the water level much lower than peak capacity.

The demolition of the dam was taken in consideration but this hypothesis would be excessively expensive.

In consequence of the initiative of the Valgrisenche Alpine Guides, a rock-climbing gym with courses in different levels: from courses for beginners to courses for international competition was built on the dam wall in 1997

In this dam every year take place a trial of free climbing World Cup.

Le vieux quartier

This construction is a military fortress in disuse, built in 1889. Nowadays Common local authority owns this building thanks to KONVER, an European project, which has the aim to change military structures disused in profitable civil facilities. In this case this project has operated an important renovation. This restructuring cost 1,5 millions € and was covered at 95% by Konver project.

Now "Le vieux quartier" houses a restaurant, a hostel, an exposition room and polyvalent lounge. The management of the structure though a call for bids, is committed to privates.

Summary from Sogn og Fjordane:

The main goal for the County governor of Sogn og Fjordane was to recover how the different management levels in Italy participated in the developing of agriculture and rural life, and how the local and regional government work with rural development. The second goal was to explore how different levels work with trademarking and how the attitudes concerning trademarking are, both from farmers, rural people and local and regional government.

We got a good overview of the rural life and the agriculture in Aosta and to what they do for a living in the rural areas. Tourism seems to be more and more important for the small mountain-communes. The second seems to be cheese production and milk for cheese production. Both well connected to several years of production of the Fontina and trademarking that includes all levels in production, from grazing to finished products.

We did get a small overview of how the different management levels participated in rural development. There are very small municipalities in Aosta, some less than 100 citizens. This

seems to be of great value for the citizens and important for developing of agriculture and related rural businesses.

All days and all arrangements on the study trip to Aosta valley were very well planned, organised and consistent, and our lovely guides did a fabulous job all days.

Summary from Oppland

The study tour was well organized, and every stop was good planned. In all the municipalities we were met and wished welcome by the major or the vice major. All the producers we visited were good prepared, and they all gave us the impression that they shared all their experiences and information about their company and production. They did not only tell us about the positive sites of their companies, but also their problems and challenges.

All though there was a translator with us, sometimes the language was a barrier. But most of the time this was no problem, and in the end of the sturdy tour we even learn some Italian words and sentences.

In our group there were producers of different products, such as food, handcraft and tourism. It is natural that not all the theme was likely interesting for all. But in general every one was very satisfied. It was special interesting to learn about how the municipalities in Aosta Valley, which from our point of view were very small with few inhabitants, were organized. It was also interesting to learn how they managed to play a good role in developing and promoting both the municipality and the products from the area. But unfortunately we did not get a probably view of how the tasks and responsibilities were divided between the municipalities, the region and the state.

We got the expression that the culture heritage was very important in the region, and every municipality used this to promote their own municipality. Old houses, stone bridges, food tradition etc. was all used as a natural part of the society, and became a natural frame for the tourism.

We visited several companies and farmers producing typical food from the Region. The production of Fontina was especially interesting. The network between the producers, the storage, the marketing and the sale organization was impressing. We believe that it has been a long way to go and lots of works to be done, to get this organization to where it is to day. It was also clearly that the DOP (Designation of Protected Origin) recognition had taken several years to get. It appeared that the production of Fontina, with the demand of production in a traditional way, gave the agriculture in the region an advantaged. It also seemed that the producers where proud of making this traditional products. But we missed some information about the governments and the EU's role in supporting the agriculture in this area.

Remarks on the study trip from Lombardia

The study trip was well structured and allows to visit different realities with regard to WP2 of Euromountains project, that concern development and promotion of mountains quality products. The situation of Valle d'Aosta is very similar from some point of view to the one of Lombardy's mountains, therefore it is for us particularly interesting can start a comparison about the solutions adapted regarding some particular problems and on the best practice adapted.

A very important aspect in this study trip was the opportunity we had to know and interact with the numerous local administrators on one hand, and with local producers on the other. Direct contact with them means going into the more interesting aspects for each partner.

A particularity in visited the village, compared to Lombardy's situation, it's the young age of majority of local administrators. This direct engagement of young people in public administration is considerable as the contribution to maintain people on the territory and, if possible, I think suitable to incentive that.

The majority of people that we are met during the visits, especially the administrators, insisted decidedly on importance to assert the couple "agriculture-tourism". On one hand a part of traditional agrarian production may be element of tourist attraction and, on the other, the tourists presence permit to expand the potential market of this product. Moreover the agrarian activities play an important role in territory maintenance that's fundamental for tourist sector.

Many administrators of different common local authorities has underlined many times this aspect in different moments and that reveals an unanimous point of view in regional level on this themes obviously useful for the territory.

Together with this general considerations, it's important to point out some incentives coming from specific realities visiting during the study trip.

Fontina cheese, which is the most characteristic and important product at economic level in Valle d'Aosta also as regard as the induced activities, played a great role during our journey.

We visited in fact during different moment various elements of Fontina manufacturing: the agrarian firm, the cooperative dairy and the visitors Centre. That allows us to understand the running of this sector. Particularly, the Visitor Centre is an interesting reality with the aim to integrate the promotion of these products managed by the Cooperative Milk and Fontina Producers' of Valle d'Aosta.

The choice to prepare a centre where the visitor may know its history, ambient and methods of Fontina manufacture is winning in front at the large diffusion of eno-gastronomic tourism. The Centre permitted also to reuse a structure, the mine, a real witness of the territory history.

The Lombardy's Mountains boast numerous high quality eno-gastronomic products and it's not to exclude that, for a part of this path, could be interesting the realization of an integrated structure inspired by Visitors Centre of Fontina. This typology of centre must be obviously integrated in a studied type of territorial context, able to connect directly the Centre with the product life that promotes. Fontina is a product profoundly connected to territory for different aspects: for instance, the production disciplinary expects that the utilized milk come only from Valdoastans cows, especially from three autochthonous breeds only.

The visit to the Comon of Chamois was interesting for the particularity of this place, which is not reachable by cars, but only by feet or by cableway, although people inhabit it by the entire year. In Chamois a stable is operative with 35-40 animals; once the zoo technical farms were 4 but the

tendency to decrease their number is generalized so it is not necessarily linked to the particular village conditions’.

The choice of this common gave it a specificity with has important aspects on the tourism aspect. Tourists, who reach Chamois, in most of cases, are attracted by the lack of cars. Also this visit has launched a series of observations about the tendency to build streets everywhere, by damaging the mountain landscape.

Chamois shows that different choices are possible, and that of course, have to be evaluated chance by chance.

In Chamons we visited the area on the Lod Lake which is equipped with 34 tables, 15 barbecues, 3 fountains and services established on a natural area with more of 5.000 square meters represents a good solution to give tourists some services with a low environmental impact.

The visit in Douce Vallée, a firm carried out by a private family, is active in the production of typical products, which are linked, above all, to the soft fruit. It underlines how it is really very important for these not extensive productions to come to the production of the final product (raspberry vinegar, marmalades, honey garlic fig) than to sell only fruits. In this way, the added value can be higher, and the activity (which becomes economically much more interesting can contribute to maintaining the mountains guard).

The theme of the water resources management, at least is fundamental for the entire mountain area and in this case too the Valle D’Aosta represents characteristics similar to the Lombardy Valley. Benefits and problems linked to the exploitation of the hydroelectric energy, to the management and the building up of big dams are often similar, so that it is important to start a comparison also on these topics. In particular, the visit to the small hydroelectric generating station, which is property of the Mountains Community, was very interesting because it guarantees that the incomes of the water exploitation will be reinvest on the territory.

Another experience repeatable also in the Lombardy mountains is represented by the tourism exploitation and dams; either in the case of the Place Moulin dam, which foresees the guided visit (this is an activity which is already present in some cases also in Lombardy), nor as regards the original idea of linking together the dam to the climbing as the Beauregard dam. As a matter of fact, this allows to try technical courses, as the indoor ones, by sharing the landscapes around the dams.