

# Mediterritage

**Valorisation économique du patrimoine naturel et culturel des montagnes méditerranéennes**

## **SOUS-PROJET « CASTAGNA »**

### **Présentation de la contribution de Commune de San Costantino Albanese Région de Basilicate (Italie)**

#### **1. Présentation générale du territoire/village**

*Overall presentation of the territory / Village*

San Costantino Albanese, one of the five villages of the Basilicata of albanian origin, was founded by Coronei refugees coming from Korone in the Morea (Greece) during the fourth emigration (1534). Links with the past are very deep, since, a part from the language, ceremonies, customs and lore have handed down until now. San Costantino Albanese is placed in the south of Basilicata and has a total surface of about 38 km<sup>2</sup> with altitudes ranging from 430 to 1.320 m above sea level.



*photo: chestnut trees*

The exploitation of soil shows a sharp predominance of the natural areas with an agricultural surface that represents nearly 30% of the entire region which more than half is characterized from meadows and pastures. Wood takes up the 28% of the local territory, chiefly, chestnut tree extends over approximately 100 hectares. In 2001 resident population was equal to 931 inhabitants with a worrying trend towards depopulation: in the last fifty years the number of residents has halved (887 inh.).

The main reason for this fall is due to the decrease of the birth rate and to the continuous emigration of the young people. Consequently, the demographic structure turns out to be more and more fragile because of the emphasized ageing process: on 10 young people there are 34 old people currently. The demographic density is of 25 inh/km<sup>2</sup> and it seems to be far away from the average regional (61 inh/km<sup>2</sup>).

Over the years, the productive structure has deeply been modified as a result of the progressive abandonment of the agricultural activities that only employ the 16% of the working force nowadays compared to the 25% that finds work in the industry and to 59% in the service sector. The lack of structures, the small factory system and the productive marginality of lands

make farms less competitive with reference to a more and more worldwide market. Depending on current resources and consumer goods, the development of the endogenous resources seems to be a valuable strategy in order to encourage the economic and social growth of the local community. Programs have already been carried out with the intent that improving local resources within the Parco Nazionale del Pollino, besides development plans for chestnut supply chain realized by village.

## **2. Situation du territoire / village par rapport au thème du sous-projet**

*Situation of the territory / village with regard to the sub-project*

In San Costantino Albanese, as well as in many rural areas, the deforestation of region can be noticed above all in private lands, in chestnut trees particularly.

All along chestnut trees of this area are affected by human intervention which has dealt with administration in order to yield fruit and lumber at the same time.

Therefore, these ecosystems, strongly anthropized by now, have to be ever defended by man to avoid both the decline of wood and the degradation of slope stability.

Chestnut tree cultivation has devolved upon private citizens all along, mainly old people who keep experience and passion for their territory and agricultural products.

Nevertheless, their job is restricted to a family use of products devoid of trade outlet. On the other hand, by the users side chestnuts and by-products consumption is constantly increasing, in addition to growing architectural utilization of lumber.

By virtue of these directions, San Costantino Albanese intends to start a careful expansion of the local chestnut tree cultivation by means appropriate marketing strategy and the advancement of consortium among local firms.

The aim is to promote the exploitation of local chestnut tree cultivation also concerning private woods and to establish a pool of chestnut farmers acting not only in management of chestnut trees but also in picking, transformation and trading of this fruit and its by-products.

The achievement of supply chain of the "Castagna di San Costantino" needs a shared planning by local community that it is essential to set up cultural elements being able to assure the continuity of endogenous development and also to allow a right receptivity of local environment in

behalf of advancing of the touristrecreational business.

## **3. Les attentes par rapport au sous-projet**

*Expectations from the sub-project*

By means of involvement in the "CASTAGNA" project, San Costantino Albanese gets the chance to compete with national and international partners bringing different experiences with regard to management and promotion of the chestnut farming.

Especially, this partnership is able to provide further knowledge suitable for enhancing as raw material (chestnut and wood) as by-products and for promoting new active skills in ecotourism.

In this connection it has to remember local area falls into a significant nature reserve (Parco Nazionale del Pollino) that represents a touristic destination for many people. Therefore, it is necessary to provide to this region appropriate instruments in order to start an effective development turned, on the one hand, to link land usability (correct management of the environment) with enogastronomic improvement of typical local productions. This process will be as more efficient as more effective will be the cooperation between authorities and firms.

At local level, the planned initiatives concern advancement of appropriate marketing strategy aimed at promoting of the associationism in working field of the all chestnut supply chain. In particular, it will go on an awareness campaign of population and firms in relation to the opportunities arising from exploitation of the local chestnut cultivation and also from the promotion of the entrepreneurial activities tied to chestnut farming, picking, transformation and trading of this fruit and its by-products, as well as in tourist services.

Moreover, it will be achieved a survey to define the guidelines required for the organization of a consortium (public-private) addressed to integrated development of Castagna di San Costantino. This track could foster promotion of the chestnut and of complete region in niche markets by appropriate marketing strategy and possible adoption of a quality trademark.

By achievement of the CASTAGNA project, local institutions and residents expect to gain planning and managerial skills which can, in the short and middle term:

- help to preserve the natural setting, the architectural heritage of the countryside and the

extant local lore;

- help to revitalize the local economy by promoting the associationism among young people with the purpose of stopping the drift from the land;
- Encourage an integrated development among activities belonging to the chestnut supply chain (production, processing and marketing) and the other ones existing in this area (typical food products, farm holidays, handicrafts) by means appropriate marketing strategy.