

BRIDGE: The Heritage of Connecting Places and Cultures

UNESCO sites: cultural, natural and structural bridges in the Alpine Macroregion

Authors:

Emanuela Zilio (Unimont - University of Milan), Roberto Maggioni (Maggioni Tourist Marketing), Anna Giorgi (Unimont - University of Milan)

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- The language of the bridge – metaphors and meanings in social life
- Touring bridges – travel narratives and tourism economies

Abstract

Tens of UNESCO World Heritage sites can be counted in the Alpine Macroregion (7 countries and 48 regions). They can be cultural or natural sites, sometimes splitted up in different countries of the area. In these cases, a site joint management and a strong transboundary collaboration between the States or Regions are in place, including mechanisms that are agreed by all of the local municipalities in involved countries, through common signed accords and declarations.

The Alpine Macroregion Strategy aims to highlight and reinforce traces of mutual interaction within a shared area: Alps are ancient territories which since ever played as a bridge rather than as a barrier.

Their rocks, forests, structures store the ancient memory of nomadic people.

Actually, some of the UNESCO sites present in the Alpine area are already shared patrimonies, metaphorical connections, such as the “Prehistoric Pile dwellings around the Alps”, which contains 111 small individual sites in Italy, Austria, France, Germany, Slovenia and Switzerland; or the "Monte San Giorgio" and "Rhaetian Railway in the Albula / Bernina Landscapes" between Italy and Switzerland. Some others are metal and stone bridges (e.g. the “Semmering railway” in Austria, the “Pont du Gard” in France, etc.) or walking bridges such as the “Walk of Peace from the Alps to the Adriatic” in Slovenia.

This paper will investigate how UNESCO sites can be capitalized as an effective bridge for the Alpine Macroregion to design a common tourist offer and what's its possible impact; what can be the most efficient and modern communication and marketing strategies to promote it; what's the concrete possibility to create job positions, as UNESCO sites require the relationship between the property, leading research institutes, tourist professionals and communication managers as well as professional staff with a specific responsibility for site management.