

FORUM ORIGIN, DIVERSITY AND TERRITORIES 2023

Territorial dynamics of resilience in rural areas, particularly in mountains

The dynamics of rural areas are at a turning point due to recent crises, such as the pandemic or the war in Ukraine, the transformation of mobility and lifestyles, and must adapt to climate disruption, the consequences of which are increasing faster than expected, and revise their projects in consequence.

The scientific community of the ODT Forum and the MountMed Institute, co-organizer of the next edition, will examine the rural dynamics of resilience by mobilizing the mountain as a revealing environment of these dynamics. Mountain areas are, in fact, a favourable context for the articulation of sustainability strategies based on the valorisation of territorial resources and on forms of inter-sectoral and solidarity-based cooperation between actors. The questions that arise in the current turn are fundamental ones, which must go beyond disciplinary boundaries to facilitate a new phase in the conceptualization of food systems and territorial dynamics.

The participants are led to resituate the very object of the territorial approach and of endogenous development. It will be necessary to address together the question of knowing what the mountain territories in transition are today and to question their realities of functioning in network. The definition of this object raises the question of scales and their new interrelations. By defining the territories as objects of conception and research located in space, certain limits in the strategies of their development slow down their adaptation to the new realities of exchanges and hinder the construction of solutions. Talking about "network" in addition to "territories" would open the fields of innovative solutions for the design of multi-scale transitions, through proximity connections and chosen interdependencies.

The Forum 2023, in Crete, will be able to draw inspiration from Mediterranean island spaces to reflect on new modes of operation and interconnections, on the forms and functions of knowledge and resource networks that support the transitions of rural communities. The concern of this Forum 2023 will be to put the notion of territory to the test of the notion of network in the perspective of responses to the challenges of resilience to crises, be they sanitary, geostrategic, or climatic. Furthermore, transition alternatives based on a renewed approach to knowledge mobilisation networks will be explored, emphasising a new function: that of conducting the numerous learning processes to be carried out.

The processes of territorial transition themselves will be discussed, insofar as it is a question of reconsidering all the relations between actors, whether human or non-human. In each of the proposed fields of study, the capacity of social innovations and their associated networks to transform the trajectory of territories will be explored. Three modes of intermediation will be explored. The first concerns the construction of new knowledge, necessary for the implementation of territorial trajectories of transition. The second is through the relationship between the long history of the territory and collective innovation, based on the drivers of evolution in the past and future scenarios. The third concerns the capacity of the actors of the territory to articulate norms that are external to them, with their own system of principles and rules, to serve the singularity of the project in a context of transition.

Based on contributions from researchers, but also from project leaders and local development agents, and politicians, the ODT Forum will be able to address questions on local governance, in relation to the current dynamics in their living spaces and their "knowledge communities". Indeed, the knowledge, experience, and creativity of rural communities are the driving force behind the implementation of individual initiatives and local collective action. They influence local public action, which is currently being reconfigured at the European level, and are based on social dynamics that are often motivated by the response to the strongest pressures.

Food systems are also affected by global crises. Population growth, changing consumption patterns, health risks, and production and supply patterns are being challenged by the uncertain effects of climate change and international conflicts. The current unstable context is a starting point for changes of perspective and the search for new organizations for innovation and sustainability. The anchoring of value chains to territories through the optimization of local resources is the first step toward the resilience of food systems. In this sense, many territories use production practices that are integrated into the landscape, adapted to environmental changes, and closely linked to other sectors. For example, pastoralism in mountain areas emphasizes the strong link between livestock activity and varied local fodder resources. As such, it is the subject of public actions that integrate territorial initiatives.

By taking mountain territories as an object of observation and discussion, and by confronting their points of view on the island and Mediterranean territory of Crete, a representative place of the tensions between territorialized food systems and specialized value chains turned towards the tourist sector, the ODT Forum 2023 wants to open new ways to elaborate mediations between landscapes, culture, and local economy that strengthen the resilience, autonomy, and sustainability of rural areas.

For the 11th edition of the ODT Forum and in the continuity of the work carried out by the MountMed Institute, we invite you to the island of Crete to look at the origin, diversity, and territories in transition from the perspective of the mountain areas. To accompany the reflections and debates on the themes, we will organize visits to discover the territory of the mountainous island in the heart of the Mediterranean, through concrete local initiatives, and propose to articulate the reflections on the mutations of the territorial dynamics around 4 thematic workshops, within which the question of the mountains will be approached in a transversal way:

- 1. Public action and frameworks for supporting local initiatives**
- 2. Territorial food systems, between autonomy and specialization**
- 3. The transition of rural territories, pathways and projects**
- 4. Agroecological transition of grassland and pastoral areas in the framework of territorial qualifications**

In Summary

THÈME

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LOCATION

Chania, Crète, Greece

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM)

DATE

21, 22 and 23 of November 2023

ORGANISERS

- Origin for Sustainability: <https://origin-for-sustainability.org/>
- MountMed Institute: <https://mountmedinstitute.com/en/>