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## **Adventure sports and tourism at the beginning of the construction of Europe in the Pyrenees**

Cross-border cooperation between France and Spain  
during the 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games

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## Adventure sports and tourism at the beginning of the construction of Europe in the Pyrenees

### Cross-border cooperation between France and Spain during the 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games

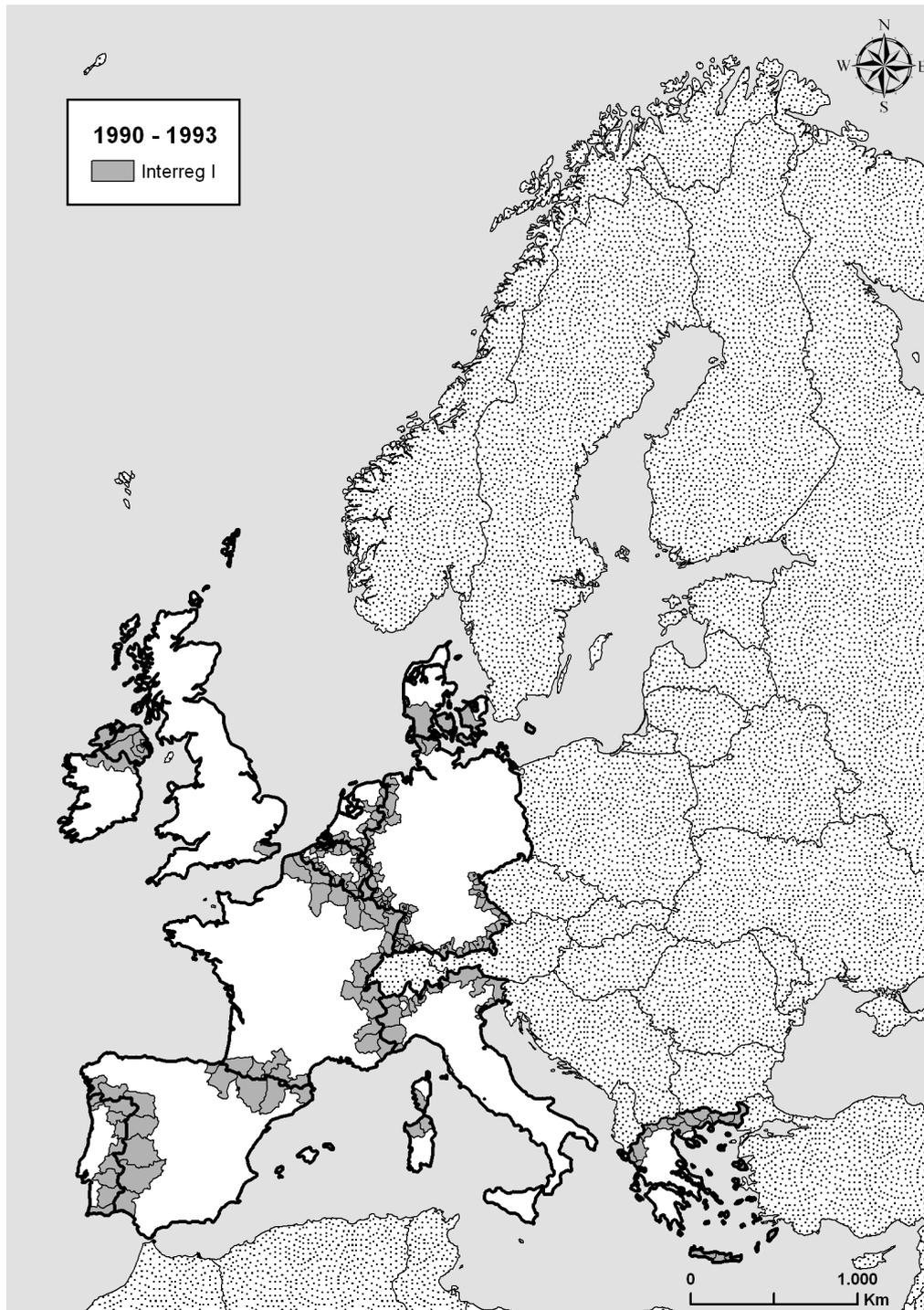
- 1 The European Union (EU) currently represents an institutional framework that organises the European Community area and political, economic and monetary cooperation among 27 member states.<sup>1</sup> Although the project was formulated by some precursors as far back as 1920, European integration began with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 which opened the European Economic Community and gradually evolved towards a single European market. In the history of countries of the European Union, there were certain notable events between the 1980s and 1990s, in particular the fall of the Berlin Wall that separated West and East Germany. At the same time, the 1990s correspond to the establishment of Euroregions (Gaubard, 2002; Bataillou, 2002; Goldsmith, 1993). The Catalan Euroregion<sup>2</sup> dates from 1991. It comprises Barcelona and Perpignan, as well as the Hautes-Pyrénées Department in France, whereas the Huesca province is not part of the Euroregion. The area is only part of a cooperation programme, the C-6 network, which also includes the cities of Toulouse, Montpellier, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Saragossa and Valencia since 1991 (Morata, 1995). Although there are many publications about the history of political ideas in Europe or the history of institutions, treaties and economic development orientations (Laude, 2004; Lequesne & Doutriaux, 1995 among other summary publications on the 1980s and 1990s), there are relatively few studies concerning the wings of European construction, the way that subsidies are used and what actually happens on the field with respect to declared collaborations. Moreover, it is difficult to monitor aid granted because of local administrative structures and the fact that projects can ask for European aid through different channels (Dressler-Holohan, 1992; Poli, 1995; Sousse, 2006, p. 467). It is therefore advisable, for a case study, to adopt a field-oriented and qualitative approach.

### Cross-border cooperation in the Pyrenees in the early days of the construction of the European Union

- 2 To obtain local insight into the reality of political, social and cultural relations between EU member countries, we can use a certain number of key indicators. People who have written on the subject have focused in particular, on transportation, regulations, local and festive traditions, educational programmes or even marriage. More specifically, in an assessment of the state of the art in political sciences, Harguindéguy (2007, p. 16) observes an “exponential expansion of scientific literature on cross-border cooperations”. According to him, there are three different branches: authors focused on borders and their specific or even anthropological dynamics, specialists of regional issues and researchers from a background of international relations.
- 3 From a somewhat regional perspective, this article analyses the case of a programme of outdoor sports and tourism<sup>3</sup>, the Pyrenees Adventure Games (*les Jeux Pyrénéens de l’Aventure* or *los Juegos Pirenaicos de la Aventura*) envisaged at the end of the 1980s and organised in the spring of 1993. The idea of the Pyrenees Adventure Games was established in 1988, soon after Spain joined France in the economic and political Europe with the signing of the Single European Act which came into force in 1987. The first requests for funding were filed in 1989 for the feasibility study, and then from 1990 to 1993, which corresponds to the setting up of INTERREG 1, a cross-border cooperation support programme in the Pyrenees. The opening of the Spring Games in 1993 coincided with the period of ratification of the Maastricht Treaty which established the EU. The treaty was signed on 7 February 1992, ratified from 1992 to

1993 by the 12 member countries of the European Community, including France and Spain (Bitsch, 2003; Lequesne & Doutriaux, 1995). The Games were held in the Catalonia Euro-region and between the cities of the C-6 network. The concept of cross-border cooperation, which must not be confused with current measures of territorial cooperation (Levrat, 2006), dates from this period.

**Figure 1: Map of the 12-member European Union and zones concerned by INTERREG 1.**



Map of areas that qualify for EU assistance for cross-border cooperation under INTERREG 1 funding, i.e. for the period between 1990 and 1993. France and Spain are concerned for the Pyrenees as well as for all their non-maritime borders, or when a specific proximity facilitates exchanges (Coletti, 2010).

- 4 It may seem surprising to choose the sports dimension to understand the political geography of Europe, or its geopolitics (as defined by Rosière, 2007). It is true however, that over and above the criticisms about the lack of seriousness of the sports dimension in academic research, which are fortunately outmoded, sports cultivates a policy of taking an apolitical stance (Defrance,

2000). Major international competitions, including, first and foremost, the Olympic Games, are presented as an ideal of peace and tolerance among populations and as a highly apolitical event. The 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games adopted the same philosophy in their charter, which stated:

“The Pyrenees Adventure Games [...] wishes to position itself with the tradition of the spirit of Olympism as defined by Pierre de Coubertin. [...] The goals of the Pyrenees Adventure Games are those of Olympism as they wish that sports serve the harmonious development of man so that the establishment of a pacifist society, concerned with preserving human dignity, may be privileged”.

“The Association of the Pyrenees Adventure Games is against all improper political or commercial use of adventure sports, athletes or the areas used”<sup>4</sup>.

- 5 Even so, sports continues to be a relevant reflection of international relations and political configurations (Augustin & Gillon, 2004; Errais, Mathieu and Praicheux, 1990). This is illustrated through certain images, which have become dogmatic<sup>5</sup> and which are so banal that citing them is a problem. Since the end of the 1950s, the selection of a city for the World Football Cup and a European Cup has become an important political decision. With international meetings, sport continues to be a formidable terrain for interpreting the geopolitical situation. As such, studying the governance<sup>6</sup> of the Pyrenees Adventure Games (*les Jeux Pyrénéens de l’Aventure* or *los Juegos Pirenaicos de la Aventura*) reveals some realities of the local cross-border Pyrenean situation at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s.
- 6 If several documents cite the Pyrenees Adventure Games as an example of community initiative between France and Spain<sup>7</sup>, what were the common organisation procedures for the competitions? What were the various political, social and cultural exchanges between the valleys in terms of sports and tourism in the Pyrenees at the inception of the European Union? More precisely, what cross-border cooperation was implemented on the field for the 1993 Pyrenees Adventures Games?

## The Pyrenees Adventure Games

“These Pyrenean Games herald a new era of cohabitation and collaboration between our two countries“ Opening speech by José Luis Sierra<sup>8</sup>

“The Pyrenees Adventure Games will be the first sports example of the opening of borders”News on the French channel France 3 of 20 May 1992<sup>9</sup>

- 7 Organised in the spring of 1993, the Pyrenees Adventure Games (*les Jeux Pyrénéens de l’Aventure* or *los Juegos Pirenaicos de la Aventura*), brought together more than 1,000 athletes from 26 countries and were attended by 21,000 visitors. The event covered nine days, with an opening and closing ceremony along the lines of the Olympic Games. The events took place in the Aure Valley in France (Hautes-Pyrénées) and in the Sobrarbe in Spain (Huesca province). Held under the patronage of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) with the various Olympic committees of the cross-border Pyrenees countries, the week of competitions was set to become a very grand and innovative sports and tourist event. For the first time in history, the Olympic flag was flown above new adventure and outdoor practices: BMX, skateboarding, rock climbing, paragliding and hang gliding, hydrospeed, canyoning, rafting, etc. (Suchet, Jorand, & Tuppen, 2010).
- 8 The Pyrenees Adventure Games were the brainchild of a caving instructor from the Midi-Pyrénées region called Jacques Marion. Creator of the caving lodge, Maison des Gouffres, and founding president of Ouarnède Loisirs<sup>10</sup>, Jacques Marion deplored the “lack of exposure” of the Pyrenees compared to the Alps” which had an adverse impact on local mountain and tourist service providers. Inspired by the momentum of the Winter Olympics that was being prepared in Albertville (Rhône-Alpes) and the Mediterranean Games scheduled in Agde (Languedoc-Roussillon) in 1993, Jacques Marion’s idea was to create Adventure Olympics under the name of Spring Games. Initially, the project launched by Jacques Marion did not involve Spain, and no cross-border dimension was planned.
- 9 Early in 1989, with the help of Yves Janvier, a tourism consultant, Jacques Marion succeeded in convincing the DATAR to grant him a subsidy of 300,000 francs for the feasibility study.

However, the DATAR imposed a cross-border dimension with Spain, and in the course of the ensuing discussions, the Spring Games became the Pyrenees Adventure Games to better emphasise the territorial and cross-border entrenchment of the project. In October 1989, Jacques Marion created an association called Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure and mobilised the regional managements of the sports federations concerned. Their work consisted in drawing up the competition timetable, specifying the types of event and the safety conditions required for the Games to run smoothly. The feasibility study gave a positive conclusion. To meet the cross-border constraints of the project defined by the DATAR, Jacques Marion turned his attention very quickly to the ski resort of Saint-Lary in the Aure Valley. The Aragnouet-Bielsa tunnel, which connected the Aure Valley to the Sobrarbe was close to the border, at a high altitude, and could be used to go to Ainsa outside the snow season.

## The border upon the proposal of institutions

- 10 The imposing of a cross-border dimension on the Spring Games project was a reflection of the political concerns of the early 1990s. Not only were the DATAR and its Spanish counterpart, the MOPU, preparing the Jaca conference on the cross-border development of the Pyrenees<sup>11</sup>, but more broadly, and in all the political speeches that we consulted over the period between 1988 and 1993, Europe was at the heart of all projects. The testimony of a consultant involved in the Games gives the details of what was happening on the field “in 1990, anybody who prepared a project without a European component was sure to be rejected. When Marion launched the Games, I was working for a local tourist development company, and we systematically included a European chapter in our projects. It’s like sustainable development today. You cannot create a project without it, even if it’s all phony”. According to a municipal councillor from Ainsa, in Spain “in 1989, the press and the public were only talking about the Berlin Wall. It was as if the Berlin Wall was between France and Spain and we had to say Europe, Europe in everything that we did!”<sup>12</sup>. Interviews with the municipal authorities of Saint-Lary-Soulan returned the same results, also with the reference to the Berlin Wall. The 9<sup>th</sup> November 1989 seems to have permeated the collective memory of the 1990s, even on the issue of tourism in the Pyrenees. It must be said that for the Association of European National Olympic Committees (AENOC), which joined the project a little later, the cross-border dimension was crucial<sup>13</sup>. In 1993, the AENOC was headed by Jacques Rogge, who aimed to develop a European Olympic movement that was practically non-existent at the time (Chappelet, 1991; Chappelet & Bayle, 2005). While each continent had its regional Games, Europe had nothing of the kind. For Jacques Rogge, the Pyrenees Adventure Games could, in the long term, become the Adventure Games, modelled on regional games. Further to this, the 1993 charter specified that “the events of the Pyrenean Games would not be concurrent with those of the Olympic Games. Only non-Olympic disciplines will be part of the programme”.
- 11 Lastly, it is also interesting to know the position of leaders of the European Community, to understand the history of sports policies in Europe at the time the Maastricht treaty was signed. In December 1992, Jacques Marion went to the headquarters of the European Commission, at Berlaymont, in Brussels, to ask for a direct subsidy. The proposal made obliged him to “create a single sports team for Europe”, and “Germans, French, Spanish, Portuguese, etc. ... and make all the athletes march under the European flag”<sup>14</sup>. With the Pyrenees Adventure Games, the European Commission was testing out a new, as yet unrecognised, Community sports policy. The proposal was unthinkable for the Olympic Games or for a World Cup final where it would have created a diplomatic crisis. In 1993, European leaders attempted to create a precedent. The proposal was discussed with the Olympic Movement involved in organising the Games. Jacques Marion proposed the project to Jacques Rogge who was also present in Brussels. Jacques Rogge refused to “endorse this”<sup>15</sup> and the organisation of the Games moved away from the European commission’s cultural and communication dimension. In actual fact, the EU provided nearly 5 million French francs under INTERREG 1, a cross-border cooperation support programme that covered the period 1990-1993 (Bataillou, 2002; Harguindéguy, 2007; Poli, 1995). The INTERREG 1 funds were allocated by department, and Jacques Marion remembers “we took almost the whole envelope allocated to the Hautes-

Pyrenees Department”. The subsidy was paid in France to promote cooperation with Spain. However, it was all spent in France. At the same time, the Nouvelles Pyrénées company, created for the Games, used the European Social Fund (ESF) for training programmes for the team’s 10 trainees. “Marion’s business worked entirely with money from Europe. He said he had, I don’t know, how many employees, when in fact they were only two or three. All the others were subsidised jobs, [...] jobs funded by Europe, the more employees he had, the more money he received”<sup>16</sup>. On the other side of the border, the organisation of the Games in Spain also used public funds based on the argument of cross-border cooperation.

## What to do with the border?

12 On the field, the Sobrarbe and the Aure Valley had sites that were already equipped for new sports and a favourable, local political configuration. However, despite economic and industrial cooperation with the transportation of goods in the Aragnouet-Bielsa Tunnel, and the cooperation boosted by the Spanish origins of the first mayor of Saint-Lary-Soulan, Vincent Mir,<sup>17</sup> there was no real cross-border culture. Unlike Catalonia or the western tip of the Pyrenees, which is beleaguered by Basque separatism, the Sobrarbe and the Aure Valley have no common linguistic tradition (Allières, 1995). The “*language barrier*” was therefore very present. Nearly all the tourist and sports leaders in the Pyrenees during the 1990s that we met cannot communicate in the other language. Contrary to all the recommendations for a common organisation with political, social and cultural dialogue between the valleys as part of a cross-border Pyrenean local development<sup>18</sup>, the Pyrenees Adventure Games reveal a division of work between Spain and France. Although the governance of the Games was formally a joint one (an association co-chaired by Maurice Dubarry from France and José Luis Sierra from Spain), on the field, there was a separate dual organisation (Figure 1). Between the two, Sandrine Valentie and Juan Carlos Crespo, who were in charge of translations and French–Spanish relations, became relays as defined by Crozier & Friedberg (1977). Sandrine Valentie was part of the French organisation, but had part of her activity in Spain, and *vice versa* for Juan Carlos Crespo (Figure 1). Management was not joint. Budgets were separated<sup>19</sup>, and the money paid for joint funding was divided between France and Spain. The same was true, for that matter, for all cross-border cooperation operations in the Pyrenees. Each party used the cross-border argument to obtain public subsidies for their country, which they then used entirely in the country concerned. In 1993, when one of the two parties of the Games, the French organisation, was faced with financial difficulties, the other country did not intervene<sup>20</sup>, although the co-presidency of the association (figure 1) obliged each party to offset the deficit under any circumstances, pursuant to French legislation under which the structure was governed.

13 Even worse than the division of labour to avoid cross-border collaboration, other testimonies on the same period reveal fake local exchange projects created to obtain “as much public funds as possible”, in particular, funds available at the beginning of INTERREG 1. For many people, “Europe was a cash cow”. The testimonies are damning:

“In the 1990s, it was not at all surprising for a project, when the great local craft tourist markets were organised, to showcase the traditions of Parzán, of the whole of Haut Aragon, with French craftsmen... when we created a project and we needed a Spanish signature, we always went to see the same person because he spoke French. You then had the poster in two languages, the band playing pseudo-Spanish music. Were there any Spanish exhibitors? ...you had only one. The partner who had signed the project in the beginning”.

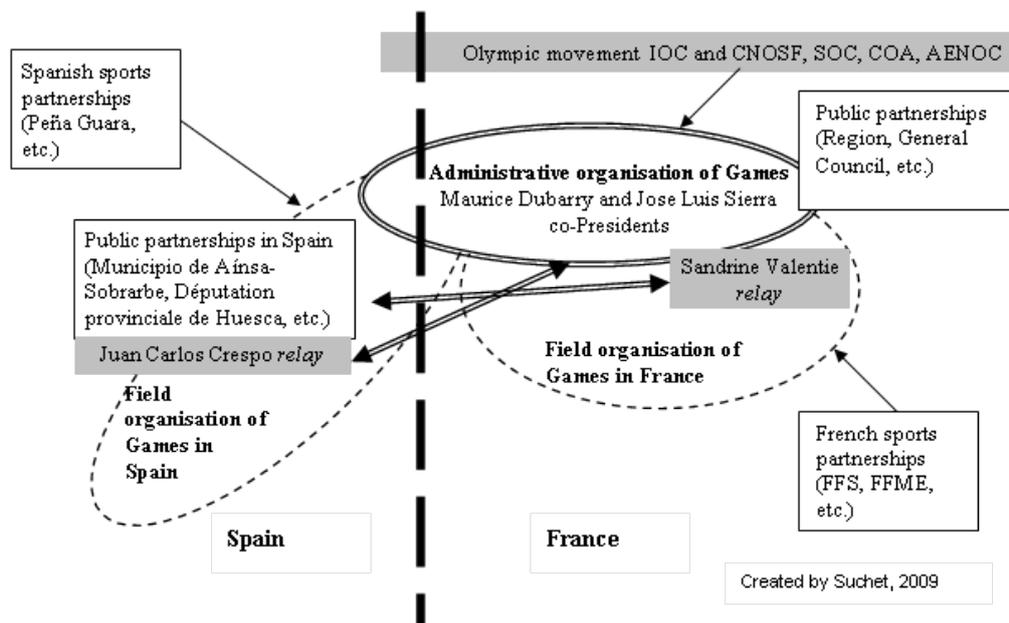
“In 1990 [...] Europe... Europe was a label, just like sustainable development today”.

“In the 1990s, for young people, using public funds to create cross-border projects was practically ... a professional opening. But well, that’s all over now”.

14 In all the other cases mentioned during interviews with local elected representatives and presidents of sports associations between 1988 and 1993 in France or Spain<sup>21</sup>, the inability to communicate in the other language appears to have been a determining factor. Moreover, except for some specific sectors of activity (shopping in Spain for the French, holidays for the upwardly mobile Spanish classes in French ski resorts, etc.), the testimonies reveal a

weak tradition of exchange between the valleys of the Hautes-Pyrénées and Upper Aragon. Historically, over and above the difficulties in crossing from one valley to another, Spain and France do not share the same problem-solving approach on the ground or in politics, or the same notion of collective action. Collaborations are political or economic (Harguindéguy, 2007; Keating, 1997; Morata, 1995; Poli, 1995), but there is a local lack of social and cultural motivations. Caught between the division of projects and fake collaborations, subsidies do not always serve real-life situations. In other words, the construction of a political Europe in the Pyrenees in the early 1990s came up against the issue of nationalism in the East and to the West – Basque country and Catalonia –, as well as the lack of a cross-border motivation in the centre of the mountain range.

**Figure 2: The border in the governance of the 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games**



The border clearly split the organisation of the Games in two, instead of serving as a “bridge between the peoples of the Union” according to the MOPU and DATAR recommendations. The relays were those in charge of translations, i.e. those who could communicate in the other language. Although the President of the OIC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, was Spanish, relations with the entire Olympic movement were conducted through the French organisation of the Games.

- 15 In terms of governance, the way the organisers functioned in Spain reveals a lower level of formalisation of the system of concrete action (as defined by Crozier & Friedberg, 1977; Friedberg, 1993). First of all, the distinction in France between elected politicians within the Association of the Pyrenees Adventure Games or partners (general council, municipality of Saint-Lary-Soulan, etc.), the decision-makers “who stayed in their offices” and trainees, employees and volunteers on the field was not taken into consideration. Sandrine Valentie, translator in charge of relations with Spain, recalls “The politicians were on the field, unlike in France. Eva Almunia (today a Secretary of State) came with me to mark out the land (for the sports events on the field)...” However, what the French and Spanish organisations had in common was the funding that came practically solely from public sources. Lastly, the Spanish organisers used what is now known as the Greek method: all the facilities were completed at the last minute. This situation does not seem to have reduced the efficiency and quality of the organisation in the Spanish Pyrenees.

“The rock climbing wall was erected during the night, on the eve of the safety inspection! There was not even a single mistake in the assembly”. “The Spanish always did things late, but always finished before us”<sup>22</sup>.

“It must be said that although the Spanish had a much smaller team, they were much more efficient than us”<sup>23</sup>.

- 16 There was a sort of subjective division of skills. Because the project originated in France, shared components (Olympic relations, invitations to competitors, the design of the programme, etc.) were implemented in France by Nouvelles Pyrénées or by Maurice Duchêne

in his capacity as a civil servant on secondment. All the red tape was carried out in France (Crozier, 1963). Permits, contracts, bills, subsidy applications, technical reports, sending of invitations to all participants, sports reviews and relations with federations, summary documents, etc. ... The French organisation of the games was surprisingly bureaucratic. In exchange, the festivities were organised in Spain. After the opening ceremony which took place in the Aragnouet-Bielsa Tunnel, a choreographic and pyrotechnical show was organised in Aínsa on the theme of Miró's paintings "It was a real party". Former volunteers and managers of the organisation remember the parties in Spain, saying "the only word I knew in Spanish was "tinto"! i.e. *vino tinto*, red wine<sup>24</sup>. Spain was a symbol of the exotic (Bellefon de, 2003) or difference (Velasco-Graciet, 1998) just across the Pyrenees.

17 In actual fact, political and financial difficulties of the French organisation led to the loss of the sports and tourism programme that had been designed to ensure the continuity of this cross-border event. The 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games continue to be the only Olympic competition of adventure and outdoor sports never to have been organised on an international scale. However, the subject of this article is not the strictly French stormy history of the organisation. At the very most, we can note the absence by the Spanish team to take up the French Pyrenees project.

## Discussion and conclusion

18 Linked to the political pressures from the DATAR at the very beginning of the project, i.e. in 1989 specifically, the cross-border dimension of the Pyrenees Adventure Games (*les Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure* or *los Juegos Pirenaicos de la Aventura*) is a particularly representative testimony to local border practices in a tourist and sports project in the Pyrenees at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s, or more broadly to international relations between France and Spain at the time of the paradigm of local and cross-border development. The results show that the French and Spanish organisations functioned side by side instead of working together on the field. This division of work enabled them to override the language problem. The lower level of formalisation of the system of organisation in Spain and the choice of the procedure of festivities on the south slope, while France handled the red tape, gives the effect of a division of the representations related to each country. However, the practically solely public-funded part of a local cross-border development is what the French and Spanish organisations had in common. With this aspect, the 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games appeared to be the proof of the political European entity that was being built after the events of 1989. It was a period marked by the determination of institutions that exceeded the motivations of the populations of the Union.

19 At a geographical level, while a set of physical constraints (slope, relief, climate, etc.) gives the impression of mountain areas in privileged zones for the implementation of cross-border policies, several factors also maintain the weight of a "natural barrier" between the populations (Velasco-Graciet, 1998). As such, although several texts give the Pyrenees Adventure Games as an example of community initiative, the organisation of the competitions of this Olympic event effectively illustrate the difficulties faced in cross-border cooperation. It must be said that given the magnitude of the European funding of the event, it was in the interest of Community officials to defend the importance of the project. However, the difficulties in the Pyrenees were of an organisational as well as of a cultural nature. The organisational variances around the border and dysfunctions observed were due, not only to the differences in timetables, to the various national partnerships that imposed their way of functioning, but also to the European Union which did not require that communities create a single structure to manage cross-border programmes. It must be said that Member States benefitted largely from this "breach" by "recycling" the loans that they granted to Europe in a resolutely national rationale. Otherwise, differences in local culture among neighbouring societies who do not know each other well enough, heightened the problems of the collaboration. Looking back on this history enables us to assess public policies at an international level.

20 Lastly, although the period of calls for European proposals is over, summed up in the testimonies by the expression "Europe is no longer a cash cow", Pyrenean cooperation between

Spain, France and Andorra continues to be a working theme, and since the 2000s, there has been a shift towards a territorial cooperation model (Levrat, 2006) and new concerns of sustainable development in international policy.

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## Notes

1 A first version of this work was presented at the Symposium of the Pierre de Coubertin French Committee “*La gouvernance du sport*” organised at the University of Grenoble on 4, 5 and 6 June 2009. My acknowledgements to Dominique Jorand and John Tuppen for their help during the writing of this paper and to the anonymous reviewers who improved this paper.

2 Enlarged since 2004 under the name Eurorégion Pyrénées-Méditerranée.

3 Sources used: technical reports, internal organisational charts, employment contracts and reviews made after the Games. We were also able to access letters exchanged between the people in charge of the competition on the field (France/Spain), Games organisers and officials of the Olympic movement. Lastly, we consulted various archive documents on the Aure Valley and Sobrarbe at the Saint-Lary-Soulan Town Hall and the Provincial Historic Archives of Huesca. We also conducted eight semi-directive interviews with the main stakeholders of Games in France and Spain, which we analysed. The field studies were carried out during the summers of 2008 and 2009. References to the fall of the Berlin Wall are not related to the media coverage of the 20th anniversary of this event which is being celebrated at the time this article is being completed.

4 *Charter of the Pyrenees Adventure Games*, Association Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure, Arreau (France) / Aínsa (Espagne), 1993, p. 2 and 4. (Written by Jean-Pierre Monteil, tourism consultant)

5 The geopolitical race for medals, the 1936 Olympics, Tommie Smith and John Carlos in Mexico raising a gloved hand in the Black Power salute in 1968, or recently the furore over the Olympic flame for the Beijing Games.

6 The notion of governance is not used as an operational concept, i.e. as an analytic tool, but simply as a denomination of the subject studied. It is true that the international, French/Spanish, public and private, association and corporate dimension of the games seem to correspond to the main governance indicators regardless of specific conceptualisations, as compared with a state-level or strictly managerial operation.

7 Yves Dupin, general secretary of the Pyrenees Working Community, intervention paper published in the Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *European Conference of mountain regions*, p. 151. Also, the text of the report of the French Liaison Office of the European Commission, 1994, *Les Régions françaises dans l'UE*. Luxembourg : Office of official EC publications.

8 Interview retranscribed in *La dépêche du Midi*, 16 May 1993.

9 Midi-Pyrénées Regional news, France 3, Report and subject by Josiane Magne and Serge Liberge.

10 The two above-mentioned structures manage outdoor tourism in the Pyrenees and in particular, caving.

11 MOPU & DATAR, 1990, *Los Pirineos: Montana de Europa. Desarrollo de una cooperación transfronteriza*. Actas del coloquio de Jaca, 22 - 23 Junio 1989. Madrid : MOPU.

12 Javier Bergua Sánchez, 2008, interview translated from Spanish.

13 Jacques Rogge, Letter sent on 2 March 1993 to Maurice Dubarry.

14 “Les Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure”, *La semaine des Pyrénées*, 15 January 2004. Followed by the Jacques Marion, 2008 interview.

15 “Les Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure”, *La semaine des Pyrénées*, 15 January 2004. Excerpt of interview by Jacques Marion.

16 Maurice Dubarry, 2007 interview

17 *Petit historique de Saint-Lary en vallée d'Aure*, Brochure edited by the Saint-Lary-Soulan tourist information office. Jacques Salat, 2007 interview

18 Title of MOPU and DATAR recommendations, 1989. See also, Commission of European Communities, 1992, *European social fund: Community support framework 1990-1992 (objectives No 3 and 4: Spain)* Luxembourg: Office of EC official publications. Commission of European Communities, 1990, *Guide for community initiatives*. Luxembourg: Office of EC official publications. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1988, *Spatial planning for leisure and tourism in countries of the EEC region*. New York: United Nations

19 Expert assessment report by EXCO, Tarbes, a document consulted in 2007. Maurice Duchêne, interview 2007.

20 Maurice Dubarry, 2007 interview

21 Manolo Bara Alós, 2009 interview translated from Spanish. Lorenzo Otraz Pont, 2009 interview translated from Spanish. Jacques Salat, 2007 interview. Maurice Dubarry, 2007 interview. Jean Mouniq, referred to as “one of the rare ones to speak Spanish”, 2007 telephone interview. *Especial 75 Aniversario de Peña Guera. Diario del AltoAragón*, 29 de noviembre de 2007.

22 Sandrine Valentie, 2009 interview

23 Maurice Dubarry, 2007 interview

24 Gilles Goetghebuer, “: one year after the Olympic Games in Spain and in France, the Pyrenees Adventure Games have opened a window onto tomorrow's sports”, *Sport et Vie*, No 18, May/June 1993, p. 31-50. Guy Quer, 2007 interview. Sandrine Valentie, 2009 interview. Brigitte Mauret, 2007 interview.

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### ***Résumés***

Organised in the spring of 1993 on the border between France and Spain, the Pyrenees Adventure Games (*les Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure* or *los Juegos Pirenaicos de la Aventura*), brought together more than 1,000 athletes from 26 countries and were attended by 21,000 visitors. An alternative Olympics of adventure and outdoor sports patronised by the IOC, the events took place in the Aure Valley in France (Hautes-Pyrénées) and in the Sobrarbe in Spain (Huesca province). This article analyses the governance of this international sports competition. More specifically, this case study will enable us to find out more about the conditions of organisation of a cross-border project in the early 1990s. What were the various political, social and cultural exchanges between the valleys in terms of sports and tourism in the Pyrenees? The results show that the French organisation and the Spanish organisation functioned side by side instead of working together on the field. This division in working enabled them to bypass the language problem. The cross-border dimension of these adventure Olympics in 1993 stemmed from pressure from the French regional planning agency, DATAR right from the beginning of the project, i.e. in October 1989, to be exact. This dimension made the 1993 Pyrenees Adventure Games a testimony to the new political Europe that was being built after 1989. This period was marked by the proactiveness of institutions, which far exceeded the motivations of the populations of the Union.

Organisés au printemps 1993 sur la frontière entre la France et l'Espagne, les Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure, ou *los Juegos Pirenaicos de la Aventura*, réunirent plus de 1 000 athlètes venus de 26 pays du monde sous les yeux de 21 000 visiteurs. Olympiade des sports d'aventure et de nature patronnée par le CIO, les épreuves se déroulèrent dans la vallée d'Aure en France (département des Hautes-Pyrénées) et le Sobrarbe en Espagne (province de Huesca). Cet article analyse la gouvernance de cette compétition sportive internationale. Plus précisément,

cette étude de cas permet d'interroger les modalités d'organisation d'un projet transfrontalier au début des années 1990. Quels sont les différents échanges politiques, sociaux et culturels entre les vallées sur le plan du sport et du tourisme en Pyrénées ? Les résultats montrent un fonctionnement parallèle d'une organisation française et d'une organisation espagnole plutôt qu'un travail de terrain en commun. Division du travail qui permettait de contourner le problème de la langue. La dimension transfrontalière, présente dans cette olympiade de l'aventure en 1993, résulte en fait des pressions de la DATAR au tout début du projet, c'est-à-dire précisément en octobre 1989. Par cet aspect, les Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure 1993 apparaissent le témoin d'une Europe politique en construction au lendemain de 1989.

***Entrées d'index***

***Mots clés*** : construction européenne., coopération transfrontalière, Jeux Pyrénéens de l'Aventure, Pyrénées

***Keywords*** : 1989, cross-border cooperation, European construction, Pyrenees, Pyrenees Adventure Games