



Interview



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Kamel Chibli, president of the Ariège-Pyrenees Regional Natural Park, explains the importance of international co-operation among the three countries linked by the Pyrenees-France, Spain and Andorra - at the level of environment, pedagogy and artisanal products.

-What are the main activities of the Regional Natural Park of the Ariège Pyrénées?

-The park was created in 2009 on the territory of 140 municipalities of the Ariège Pyrénées, entirely located in the department of Ariège, in the Occitania region. It promotes and protects the richness and diversity of the natural, cultural and human heritage of this privileged region.

The park carries out activities in various areas, such as natural forest development, promotion of local products, sustainable tourism, fauna and flora protection, landscape restoration, promotion of energy conservation and renewable energy, environmental management and territorial education.

Our actions also include the reintroduction of the ibex (alpine goat) in the Pyrenees, the management of open landscape restoration projects and the structuring and valorisation of the economy based on the development of local resources.

Please visit our website: www.parc-pyrenees-ariegeoises.fr.

-How do you co-operate with Spain and Andorra in the Three Nations Pyrenees Park project?

-Surrounded by two borders, the park borders three other nature parks: Vall de Sorteny, Vall del Comapedrosa (Andorra) and Alt Pirineu (Catalonia). Co-operation with these protected areas is a priority for us.

The creation of the the Three Nations Pyrenees Park in August 2018 has enabled us to create the largest transboundary protected area in Western Europe.

We are in the process of being classified as a World Transboundary Biosphere Reserve: this recognition by UNESCO will allow us to benefit from an international brand.

-Are you planning any joint projects with Spain and Andorra? What events are you organising this year and next year?

-For several years, we have been developing cross-border exchanges, allowing producers, artisans and creative people from different territories to participate in events on both sides of our borders: Agricole fair (Ordino, Andorra), fair of Andorra la Vella (Andorra), Pitavola del Comapedrosa (Arinsal, Andorra), Agricultural rice fair (Cardos, Catalonia) or Autumn fair (Sort, Catalonia), Spring fair



K.C.

Kamel Chibli

President of the Ariège-Pyrenees Regional Natural Park

«The Park promotes the natural development of forests, sustainable tourism and local products, among others»

(Tarascon-sur-Ariege, France) and the cheese and honey festival, which takes place at Castillon-en-Cousérance, Pastorales de Guzet or Foix (France).

These events are an opportunity to highlight the richness of our territories and to develop co-operation and engage in commercial exchanges. These cross-border associations within the Three Nations Pyrenees Park intend to progress and multiply in the coming years.

In 2024, we will also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the reintroduction of the ibex, to which our Andorran and Spanish partners will be invited.

-Is there a local product support program? What are the best-known products of the Ariège region?

-Our park has a national territorial label, «Valeurs Parc,» common to regional natural parks in France and applied locally.

The unique label identifies these products and services, which demonstrate the commitment of producers, artisans and tourism service providers to the sustainable development of their territories.

By purchasing «Valeurs Parc» products or services, consumers choose to support local economic activity, respecting the environment as well as the park's inhabitants.

Today, «Valeurs Parc» brings together a network of 150 professionals, offering products and services of the highest quality.

Among the most emblematic products of «Valeurs Parc» are cheeses and dairy products (notably the Tomme des Pyrénées with raw milk), beef and lamb of local breeds grown on local farms, jams made from mountain fruits, honey from the highlands of the Pyrenees and wildflower nectar, etc. In our region, we also make more original products, such as ecological Christmas trees or toilet paper.

And for your holidays, you can



«Discover our Valeurs Parc and our organic producers. Imagine your stay in the Ariège Pyrénées!»

stay in a house or a guest room in the «Valeurs Parc» and use the services of a guide during excursions or outdoor activities.

Our website «Consommer Parc»: www.consommer-parc-pyrenees-ariegeoises.fr.

-Do you have educational programs for children and adults? Do you collaborate with educational centers in Spain and Andorra?

-The park promotes the transfer of knowledge and good practice not only to schoolchildren, but also to adults.

Since 2008, the park has been running a programme of activities to enable all residents and visitors to discover the riches of the Ariège Pyrénées. The park organises events in which the plots present their activities related to the discovery of flora and fauna, landscapes, architectural heritage, local products and sustainable development practices.

Along with thorough scientific advice, the park also publishes information on the iconic spaces of its territory, synthesising scientific knowledge about them: geology, fauna, flora, history, culture...

Cooperation with educational centres in Spain and Andorra has not yet been established, but may be discussed in the coming years. ≡



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