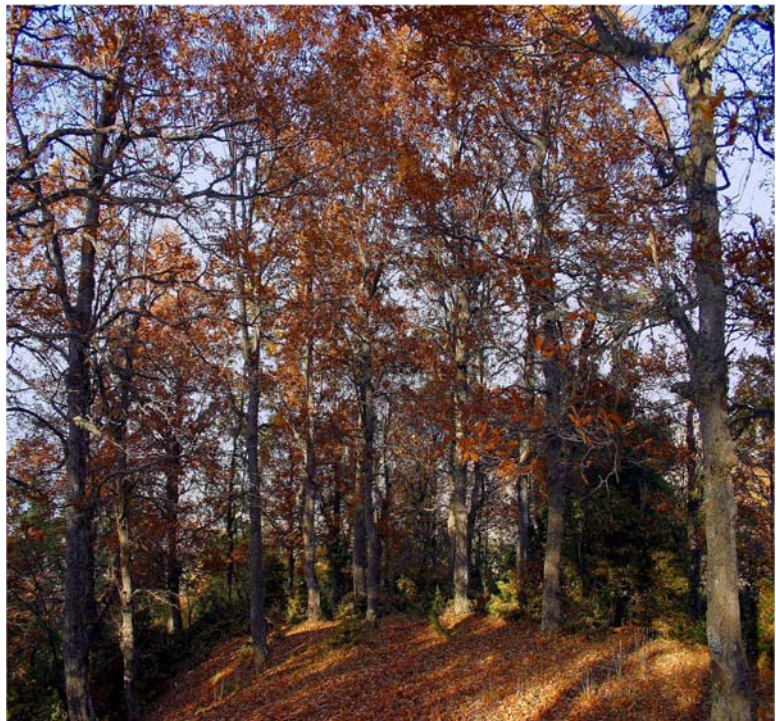


THE NATURAL PROTECTED AREA OF AKKAR IN NORTH LEBANON HAS BECOME A PRIORITY OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

OCTOBER 2008

FIRST VISIT OF COMPAGNIA DEI PARCHI (CDP) TO LEBANON IN THE FRAMEWORK OF UNDP ART GOLD LEBANON AND IDEASS PROGRAMME

The North Lebanon region is divided into three districts (also referred to as Cazas): Akkar, Menieh-Al Dinnieh and Bab Al Tebaneh. It comprises 251 towns, of which 119 have municipalities. Akkar Caza is situated at the northern border of Lebanon, with Halba as the Caza's "capital". Akkar has 208 villages. Around 25% of its inhabitants are very poor, while 43% are poor, and 26% live in average conditions. It is a Caza characterized by very high levels of extreme poverty (twice the national average). In addition, illiteracy in the Caza is the highest in the country. The targeted green area of "Jourd", in the protected area of the Akkar Caza, has unique trees in all the Middle East.



UNDP AGL has already established a Thematic Working Group in this focus area, to contribute to create and manage a unique protected zone, where the 14 target Municipalities are located and a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed upon among all Municipalities, where they commit themselves to the creation of the Natural Protected Area.

Initially funded through an Italian contribution, UNDP AGL is currently financed by several Donor Governments: Spain, Canada, Belgium and several European Decentralized Cooperation actors are participating in the Program.

The IDEASS Programme, operating in the UNDP AGL framework, includes, among its partners, the **Compagnia dei Parchi** <www.compagniadeiparchi.com>, which, since 1999, has promoted the re-



launching of rural and protected areas by setting in train a virtuous circle linking the environment, the territory, the economy and tourism. CDP enables income generation in areas that have been neglected but that possess a wealth of particular assets, and allows the local populations to re-launch a tourism-based micro-economy with a small investment outlay.

Take into consideration the analysis, the studies, the achievements of the UNDP AGL Thematic Working Group activity in North Lebanon and the MoU between the 14 Municipalities, the main objectives to achieve during the mission are:

- Propose a preliminary Plan of Action for elaborating the UNDP AGL guidelines about the National regulatory framework for the support to a National Parks policy, for the defence of natural heritages and their valorisation in terms of economic achievements and better life conditions for local communities, through an overview of main Lebanese laws and rules concerning natural heritage defence referred to more advanced European ones.
- Realise a prefeasibility analysis for the establishment of a Natural Park in Northern Lebanon.
- Propose a preliminary Plan of Action for elaborating the UNDP AGL guidelines to be developed for the establishment of a National Park in North Lebanon, with the aim of valorising the local bio-diversity and heritage, adding economic value, providing decent jobs, according to the principled of equity, environmental safeguard, and social inclusion.
- Propose a preliminary Plan of Action for elaborating a Pilot Project oriented to the promotion of sustainable tourism techniques which will be compatible with the presence of a LEDA and with participatory approach methodology (diffused hospitality, local economy development and community involvement.)

