



## AlpGov 2 - Newsletter n°3 - January 2021

### AlpGov 2 - enhancing the governance mechanisms of the European strategy for the alpine region

**Duration:** January 2020 - June 2022

**Budget:** 3.003.076,8 € - (ERDF: € 2.399.615,28)

**Best wishes for 2021!**



In these last days of January, the team of the EUSALP French Presidency sends you its best wishes for the year 2021. If 2020 has been an unprecedented and complicated year, 2021 will not fail to be structuring in terms of responses to the various challenges.

At our modest level, we would like to take part in ensuring that "the Alps", in all their diversity, from the local to the European scale, once again demonstrate their capacity for resilience, cohesion and innovation in the face of the challenges set or the constraints suffered.

In this third edition of the newsletter, you will find:

- The main lines of the French Presidency's strategy for 2021;
- An assessment of the year 2020 through the Annual Forum;
- An exclusive interview with Ms. Andreja Jerina, the National coordinator for macro-regional strategies in Slovenia.



## A promising agenda for 2021

These 2021 wishes are also an opportunity for the French presidency to look back on the themes that will mark this second year of the presidency:

- **2021 is the European Year of Rail, following on from the Green Deal political initiative**  
The French presidency of EUSALP is proposing the recognition of several interregional and cross-border railway lines for their subsidy by a transport infrastructure development programme (Trans-European Transport Network - TEN-T) currently under review.
- **From white gold to green tourism: the mountains are rising to the challenge**  
The French Presidency wishes to set up a sustainable Euro-Alpine network for cooperation between mountain resorts engaged in their ecological transition, in all seasons, and adaptation to climate change.
- **At the World Congress of the International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN (from 3 to 11 September 2021), the French Presidency will defend EUSALP's expertise on the multifunctionality of mountain forests and biodiversity.**
- **Incubation of European projects**  
The French Presidency wishes to promote projects aimed at preserving biodiversity, preventing natural risks, enhancing energy transition, sustainable mobility and sustainable tourism, promoting local mountain products, and involving young people in the Alpine region.
- **The challenges of EUSALP governance**  
The year 2021 will be a pivotal year for the constitution of a EUSALP Youth Council as an advisory body and a technical support structure - TSS - for the proper functioning and monitoring of the strategy's orientations.



## Back to an unusual Annual Forum

Within the framework of the activities of EUSALP, the French presidency organised on Thursday, December 10, 2020, the 4th EUSALP Annual Forum by videoconference from Marseille.

This event marked the end of the first year of the French Presidency, which will continue in 2021, carried out by the French State and the three Regions: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Bourgogne-Franche-Comté.

This Annual Forum took place in two parts: the first one, political, in the morning with the General Assembly, to draw up the assessment of this year of French presidency impacted by the COVID-19. The second time included different thematic workshops open to the public, in the afternoon.





## The General Assembly

The General Assembly brought together, in a hybrid format, high-level representatives from the 7 partner states (France, Italy, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Germany and Austria) and the 48 Regions, following the guideline “**An Alpine region united and resilient in the face of crises**”.

Like the rest of the continent, the Alpine region has been put to the test during this unprecedented year: global health crisis and climate crisis followed by an economic crisis and then a social crisis. The political representatives underlined in their opening speeches the exceptional character of this year, which also showed our capacity to adapt and the strength of EUSALP, which accustoms us to work together and to come up with concrete projects.

5 priority topics were at the heart of the discussions:

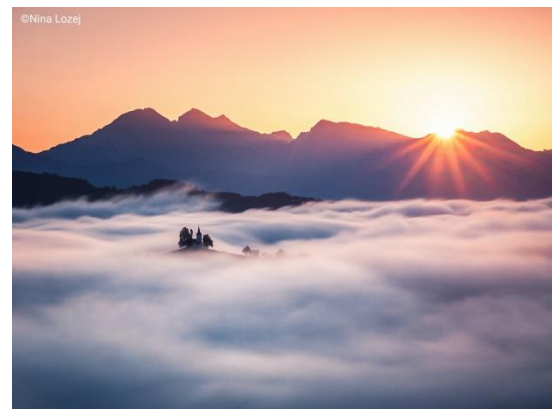
- Presentation of a motion on storm Alex and the appeal to the EU Solidarity Fund;
- Mountainous tourism in the Alpine region: from sanitarian crisis management to adaptation to climate change;
- Faced with climate, sanitarian and economic crisis, a united, sustainable and resilient Alpine region: from commitments to implementation;
- Keep working together on EUSALP implementation.

The launch of a EUSALP youth council was also discussed and adopted at the end of the general assembly.

## Review of the workshops from 1 pm to 6pm

### 1:00 P.M. - 3:15 P.M.: ALPINE YOUTH COMMIT TO A RESILIENT ALPINE REGION IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

This workshop brought together more than 466 participants by videoconference in addition to those present on live streaming on YouTube. The participants discussed the role of young Alpine people and their commitment to a climate-resilient Alpine region, with notable interventions by Nicolas Plain, Ambassador of the French Presidency and Camille Etienne, a young activist fighting against the climate change. This workshop illustrated the involvement of young Alpine people through the presentation of the 5 best projects of the "Pitch Your Project" competition, followed by a vote of the participants to select the 3 best projects and the awarding of the prizes (Terra preta in the alps –AT; 100%Alps – IT; Bergsohle – DE) ; the presentation of the winning picture of the Alpine Convention's photo contest 2020, which was taken by Nina Lozej; and presentation of the "Youth manifesto" of the European Commission followed by an interactive time of exchange with young people.



Nina Lozej – Winner of the 2020 Alpine Convention's photo contest



### **3:25 P.M. - 4:25 P.M.: AT THE HEART OF THE ALPINE GREEN DEAL - THREE PARALLEL WORKSHOPS: ENERGY TRANSITION, FORESTS, DIALOGUE BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND DECISION-MAKERS**

The first workshop dealt with macro-regional strategies, Interreg and the **EU's sustainable energy policy agenda: why is cooperation important?** It was an opportunity to show how macro-regional strategies, with the example of EUSALP, and Interreg programmes contribute to the implementation of the EU sustainable energy agenda and the European Green Deal through presentations of good practices and an interactive discussion with the audience (about 143 people).

The second focused on **multifunctionality of the Alpine forests: which uses, which conflicts?** The lessons and conclusions of this workshop will be used for the future work of the 5 action groups that form the task force on multifunctional forests and sustainable use of wood. The economic, environmental and social benefits of multifunctional forests for the territories and populations of the alpine region will be highlighted, as well as their importance in the context of the energy transition at the European level. This workshop brought together nearly 100 people.

Finally, this complementary workshops on the Alpine Green Deal, closed with the awarding of the **Alpine Convention's Young Academics Awards**, dedicated to young researchers who have dedicated their master thesis to relevant Alpine themes, and presentation of the YAFA (Youth Act for Alps) project, which enables meetings between young Alpine people and decision-makers to take into account the vision of young people in the policies of the Alpine region. This workshop brought together nearly 200 people. The winners are: Giacomo Colombo (IT), Eva Ulčnik (SI), Andrea Terenzian (IT).

### **4:35 P.M. - 6:05 P.M.: THE SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ALPINE REGION IS PREPARING IN EUSALP ACTION GROUPS**

To conclude this Annual Forum, about 200 participants exchanged views on a key issue: **how the sustainable and resilient Alpine region prepares itself in the EUSALP action groups.** The programme included reflections on how the projects carried out with the action groups feed into policies at the European level for a sustainable and resilient Alpine region; presentation of the main achievements of 2020 and initiatives in the context of the health and environmental crisis; political dialogue on the topics of innovation as a key to sustainable development and the fight against climate change in the framework of EUSALP.

First EUSALP Annual Forum in 100% digital and despite the technical prowess of the organisers, this event has not escaped a few connection issues, which notably prevented us from hearing the intervention of Minister Gašper Dovžan from Slovenia. To remedy this issue, we now invite you to discover the interview of Ms. Andreja Jerina, the National coordinator for macro-regional strategies in Slovenia.





**Interview with Ms. Andreja Jerina, the National coordinator for macro-regional strategies in Slovenia.**

**What is the added value of the macro-regional strategy EUSALP in the development of the Alpine region?**

EUSALP (and macro-regions in general) are a helpful instrument for countries and regions to deal with the common challenges facing their respective geographic areas. Unlike some other associations that limit participation to authorities of the participating countries or regions, EUSALP provides an inclusive platform for many other stakeholders. This is what makes its macroregional initiatives a unique tool for putting ideas into practice and commonly addressing topical challenges. Macroregional initiatives also help improve mutual understanding among participants of different provenance within each macro-region. Participants from different surroundings can interact in various activities and benefit from the exchange of good practices.

**What benefits does Slovenia get from its involvement in EUSALP?**

In 2016, Slovenia was the first country to take over the EUSALP presidency. The main ideas from that time are being implemented now: macro-regional strategies are included in the planning and implementation of European financial mechanisms; the participation of youth is now ensured with the establishment of the Youth Council; bringing macro-regional strategy closer to the people is now a priority. In general, EUSALP proved to be an instrument of political inclusiveness that people recognize and accept. A circle of like-minded and mutually supportive countries and regions proved that tangible results may be achieved, bringing significant positive effects for the people living in this region. Presenting ideas and activities in macro-regional frameworks is always a good opportunity to re-examine existing activities and stimulate further development. In addition to EUSALP, Slovenia also participates in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR). Through its current EUSAIR presidency, it also promotes the EUSALP and EUSDR initiatives and activities and, most importantly, builds synergies among the macro-regional strategies in general.



## What is your assessment of EUSALP's work for the year 2020?

Natural disasters and the overwhelming COVID-19 crisis made the year 2020 extremely challenging. However, when looking back, one might infer that this new working environment has, in some way, even enhanced our productivity, and that we have become even more constructive and patient with each other. I can only commend EUSALP for results achieved, including the consensus on many concrete issues regarding future work in the framework of the macro-region. I would like to underline the importance of priorities agreed within the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027. However, reaching this point is only part of the success. The final success will be assured only if all member states and regions use these building bricks to set up their priorities. Not a single link in this chain may be allowed to fail. And here, we depend on each other.

## What are the future challenges for the Alpine macro-region?

Our basic task should be to achieve a substantial reduction in disaster risk and the loss of lives, livelihood, and health in the Alpine region over the next period. Sustainable management of urban and rural areas and especially natural resources is crucial for the region to remain safe and promising for its residents, providing the basis for further development of services and other economic potential. Secondly, it is vital to strengthen the visibility and raise both political and public ownership in the macro region. Concrete results may be achieved with

projects and activities, but only with proper political support. I am pleased to note that all EUSALP member states and regions are resolved to continue and even increase their cooperation within EUSALP.

### EUSALP Past & upcoming events :

**28 January 2021:** 4<sup>th</sup> Forum of AG3 – How I met...my future job: on creation and development of jobs for young people in the Alpine region

**29 January 2021:** Alp Gov II Project steering group meeting

**4 February 2021:** Technical support structure Working Group meeting

**25 February 2021:** AG1 event "RIS 3 Strategie for a competitive and sustainable ecosystem in the alpine region"

**25 to 26 February 2021:** Digital ALPTREES Conference

**1 to 5 March 2021:** Online 2<sup>nd</sup> Macro-Regional Strategies week, with an EUSALP Embedding workshop on March 2 from 9 am to 13 pm.

**9 March 2021:** AG 4 meeting - TBC

**11 March 2021:** AG9 meeting - TBC

**16 – 17 March 2021:** Physical and digital event in Métabief (FR) on mountain resorts transition and sustainable year-round mountainous tourism

**For more information:**

**Websites:** <http://www.alpine-space.eu> (AlpGov project) and [www.alpine-region.eu](http://www.alpine-region.eu) (EUSALP)

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