



## **IX. General Assembly meeting within the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region**

### **BRDO DECLARATION**

**14. November 2024**

We, the representatives of the National and Regional Governments of **Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia** and **Switzerland**, gathered at the General Assembly on 14 November 2024 in Brdo pri Kranju within the framework of the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP):

\*\*\*\*\*

**REAFFIRMING** our commitment to continue the joint implementation of EUSALP for the benefit of more than 80 million people living in 48 regions in seven States, of which five are EU Member States and two non-EU countries.

**RECALLING** in this regard the political commitments outlined by the General Assembly meetings. on 25 January 2016 in Brdo pri Kranju (Slovenia), on 13 February 2017 in Rottach-Egern (Bavaria, Germany), on 23 November 2017 in Munich (Bavaria, Germany), on 20 November 2018 in Innsbruck (Tyrol, Austria), on 28 November 2019 in Milan (Lombardia, Italy), on 4 February 2020 in Lyon (Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, France), on 10 December 2020 in Marseille (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France), on 14 December 2021 in Nice (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, France), on 24 November 2022 in Trento (Trentino-Alto Adige, Italy) and on 19 October 2023 in Bad Ragaz (St. Gallen, Switzerland).

**CONVINCED** that the macro-regional strategy is an instrument aimed at enabling more effective use of existing financial resources, better coordination among existing institutions and improved implementation of existing legislation.

**RECALLING** the need for strengthening the strategic focus and reinforcing the political relevance of EUSALP.

**REAFFIRMING** the importance of cross-border cooperation in pursuing the objectives set by EUSALP. **RECOGNIZING** the role that civil society can play in



promoting common approaches to address the challenges that concern the Alpine region and **UNDERLINING** the importance of increasing cooperation with municipalities, local communities and civil society with a view to strengthening the effectiveness of the Strategy.

**HIGHLIGHTING** the importance of the 9th European Union Cohesion Report which underlines the role of the EU Cohesion Policy in supporting growth and recovery across Europe's regions, while delivering on the green and digital transition and helping regions adjust to ongoing demographic, industrial, climate and geopolitical challenges.

**BEARING IN MIND** the Council conclusions of 27 June 2023 on the fourth European Commission report on the implementation of the four EU macro-regional strategies, in particular on the financial embedding of macro-regional strategies in the existing different funding sources and on the value of adjusting their Action Plans in order to adapt the strategies to emerging needs and challenges in the area.

\*\*\*\*\*

**RECOGNIZE** the importance of the three thematic priorities of the Slovenian Presidency of EUSALP – (i) circular economy, (ii) water smart society and (iii) quality of life in the Alps for young people, which respond to some of the main challenges the Alpine region is currently facing. **APPRECIATE** significant efforts of the Slovenian Presidency in committing to those priorities and **CALL** on all EUSALP stakeholders to continue contributing to their implementation.

**ACKNOWLEDGE** the adverse impact of increasingly frequent extreme weather events in the Alpine region and strongly **ENCOURAGE** enhanced cooperation on climate resilience, adaptation and risk governance. Because water is one of our most precious natural resources in the Alpine region, **CALL** on all relevant EUSALP stakeholders to increase their collective efforts and collaboration on sustainable and climate-resilient water management.

**UNDERLINE** the importance of circular economy as one of the key tools for achieving green and sustainable economy in the Alpine region. **RECOGNIZE** the efforts of Switzerland, Slovenia and Austria & Liechtenstein for keeping circular economy on top of their EUSALP Presidency priorities, thus stressing its key role for the entire Strategy. **INVITE** EUSALP stakeholders to include circular economy as one of their priority actions.



**WELCOME** the progress made by the Action Groups in the implementation of their triannual Work Plans and of the cross-cutting priorities for 2023–2025 on all the three thematic policy areas of the Action Plan.

**RECALL** the mandate given in Bad Ragaz to the Executive Board to start a revision process of the EUSALP Action Plan with a view to strengthening the political relevance of the Strategy and reinforce cooperation within EUSALP by adapting the Strategy to emerging needs and challenges.

**COMMEND** Slovenia for making substantial progress on the revision of the EUSALP Action Plan as the institutional priority of its Presidency. **UNDERLINE** the dedication and work done towards successful EUSALP Action Plan revision process by all key implementers, most notably by the Task Force, supported by the EUSALP Secretariat and in close collaboration with the European Commission.

**WELCOME** the preparation of the White Paper on the Revision of the EUSALP Action Plan and **SUPPORT** the ongoing efforts of the Executive Board to identify the main elements that should guide the revision process.

**UNDERLINE** the importance of political engagement at the highest levels, on both national and regional levels, to achieve the ambitious objectives of the Strategy. **RECOGNIZE** the central role of the General Assembly in setting the annual and multi-annual political priorities, including through the endorsement of work plans for the Action Groups or the selection of cross-cutting priorities or other joint actions that should focus and guide the work and cooperation of EUSALP implementing bodies, also based on the recommendations of the incoming Presidency.

**STRIVE** for good level of continuity of priorities between the Presidencies, in particular through the Trio Presidencies coordination, while also responding to emerging challenges. **STRESS** the need for a regular review by the General Assembly of the progress achieved in the implementation of such priorities, through a regular monitoring of the work performed by the Action Groups, so to foster accountability and improve the overall efficiency of the Strategy.

**INVITE** the Executive Board under the guidance of the upcoming Austria & Liechtenstein Presidency to continue the discussion on better focus and consolidation of the Strategy, started under the Swiss Presidency, and **MANDATE** the Executive Board to elaborate corresponding proposals with a view to reinforcing the strategic focus and improving political steering of EUSALP in order to strengthen its political relevance. **STRIVE** therefore for an enhancement of the competences of the General Assembly as the core element for the political steering of the Strategy, especially in



terms of setting priorities and ensuring overall guidance at the political level. **EMPHASIZE** the need to increase coherence between the political steering, Executive Board and the work of the Action Groups and **RECOGNIZE** the need to translate the political leadership on all levels of governance. **ASK** the upcoming Austria & Liechtenstein Presidency to continue steering the process of revision of the EUSALP Action Plan. **STRIVE** to submit a corresponding declaration at the next General Assembly under the Austria & Liechtenstein Presidency.

**CALL** upon European institutions and EUSALP implementers to strengthen their efforts towards improving visibility, communication and awareness raising about EUSALP objectives and successful macro-regional projects.

**APPRECIATE** the work of the EUSALP Youth Council as the main voice of the Alpine youth in all Strategy's activities and its contribution to the implementation of EUSALP. In particular, **WELCOME** its active engagement in discussions on the quality of life in the Alps and **CALL** on all EUSALP stakeholders to consider the contribution of the EUSALP Youth Council in that domain. **LOOK FORWARD** to the continued active engagement of young people within EUSALP and further **ENCOURAGE** seeking synergies between the EUSALP Youth Council and other bodies representing youth in the Alpine region.

**ACKNOWLEDGE** that the long-standing experience of active cooperation with the Alpine Convention, Interreg Alpine Space Programme and the cooperation within EUSALP are contributing to the sustainability, prosperity and competitiveness of the area and **HIGHLIGHT** the need to further reinforce a joint vision of the Alpine region.

**ENCOURAGE** strong cooperation between EUSALP implementers and the Alpine Convention working bodies on all areas of common interest with a view to developing synergies among them and strengthening the overall efficiency of both.

**ENCOURAGE** the Alpine Space Programme to continue its financial support to EUSALP governance support structures beyond 2025. **ENTRUST** the Trio Presidency and the Executive Board to work towards a seamless continuation through the submission of a follow-up INTERREG Project.

**APPRECIATE** close cooperation with the European Commission, in particular during the process of the EUSALP Action Plan revision. **DEEM** it indispensable that all concerned Commissioners and Directorates-General of the European Commission continue to be involved in the implementation of the Strategy.

**RECOGNISE** that the upcoming Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games offer a unique opportunity for cooperation in the Alpine region as they can contribute to achieving



the objectives of EUSALP, notably in terms of green transition, sustainable mobility, economy and social development.

**CONGRATULATE** Slovenia on its successful Presidency of EUSALP and **WELCOME** contributions at the 9th EUSALP Annual Forum held in Brdo on 14–15 November 2024 by all Alpine stakeholders and partners who actively work on a joint vision and future perspective for the Alpine Region at a time when EUSALP is evolving to meet the present and future challenges.

Finally, **ENTRUST** the EUSALP Presidency 2025 to Austria and Liechtenstein, offering our full support and wishing them every success in their work.