ANNEX IV

Sustainability and legacy of major sports events in the Alpine region

Mission note

Decision paper

EUSALP General Assembly • 22 October 2026 • Lindau

Vision

The Alpine region is one of the world's leading destinations for major mountain sporting events. From Olympic and Paralympic Games to World Championships and recurring international competitions, these events shape economic development, territorial planning, international attractiveness and social cohesion across Alpine territories

The proposed EUSALP Mission aims to establish a **high-level political framework for Alpine cooperation on the sustainability and legacy of major sporting events**, ensuring that such events become drivers of ecological transition, territorial resilience and long-term benefits for citizens and territories.

The Mission intends to provide a strategic political platform enabling Alpine regions, states, event organizers and stakeholders to jointly define common ambitions, share experiences, influence policy and produce practical solutions capable of improving the sustainability and societal value of future events across the macro-region.

Strategic objective

To position the Alpine Region as the European reference territory for sustainable major sporting events by developing common approaches, policy recommendations and concrete tools that maximize environmental, social and economic legacy while minimizing negative impacts.

Political ambition

Under Slovenian Presidency, the EUSALP General Assembly, held on 14th November 2024 in Brdo pri Kranju, recognised that “major sport events, such as the upcoming Winter 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”. Building on the expertise of the EUSALP action groups, the support of the Alpine Convention and the European Commission, and the strong and sustained political commitment of the 7 states and 48 regions of the EUSALP, the benefits of major Alpine sporting events can be significantly enhanced and accelerated, contributing to greater environmental protection and social transitions that will benefit the mountain regions for the future.

Major sporting events provide a unique opportunity to test and accelerate solutions that can subsequently benefit Alpine communities on a permanent basis. Investments, governance models and innovations developed for major events should therefore be considered as instruments for long-term territorial transformation rather than temporary event-related measures.

The Mission will seek to:

- Promote a shared Alpine political vision on sustainable major sporting events.
- Strengthen cooperation between Alpine regions and states on common challenges related to the organization of major sporting events
- Contribute to European discussions on the future of major sporting events in mountain areas.
- Produce policy recommendations that can influence development of sustainable sportive alpine events and public investment decisions.
- Act concretely for hosting major sporting events involved in waste reduction, increase of sustainable mobility and ambitious social dialogue
- Demonstrate how major sporting events can become engines of climate adaptation, social cohesion and sustainable economic development in mountain territories.
- Take into account the potential impacts of major sporting events on biodiversity, in particular in sensitive Alpine ecosystems.
- Identify and promote transferable good practices from major Alpine sporting events, in order to support peer learning between territories and facilitate the replication of successful solutions in sustainability, mobility, infrastructure, governance and legacy planning
- Strengthen the attractiveness of host territories by using major sporting events as showcases for Alpine excellence, international visibility, sustainable tourism and long-term economic opportunities.
- Directly engage Alpine youth in shaping the definition and design of a sustainable model for organizing major sporting events, by mobilizing the EUSALP Youth Council and other youth representative bodies, such as the European Youth Parliament and the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention.

Strategic priorities

To ensure a focused and impactful agenda, the Mission will concentrate on four priority areas of common interest for Alpine territories.

Priority 1 – Circular economy, waste management and biodiversity preservation

Major sporting events generate significant material flows and resource consumption. The Mission will work in close cooperation with action groups 1, 2 and 6, towards:

- reducing waste generation;
- promoting reuse and second-life solutions for equipment and event infrastructure;
- encouraging sustainable procurement practices ;
- sharing innovative circular economy solutions already tested in Alpine territories.
- encouraging sober and efficient use of resources, in particular water, energy and raw materials ;
- promoting the use of local mountain produce and short supply chains, including agricultural products, timber, wool and textiles, and local handicrafts.
- strengthening consideration of biodiversity impacts associated with major sporting events, in close cooperation with the Alpine Convention, in order to preserve sensitive Alpine ecosystems and promote nature-positive event planning.

The objective is to develop a common Alpine approach that combines environmental performance with economic efficiency.

Priority 2 – Sustainable mobility

Mobility is often the main source of greenhouse gas emissions associated with major sporting events. In close cooperation with EUSALP Action Groups 4 and 9 and relevant stakeholders (especially network heads), the Mission will explore:

- rail-based and multimodal access solutions;
- cross-border mobility arrangements ;
- integrated transport and ticketing systems;
- low-carbon logistics ;
- Alternative fuels ;
- long-term mobility benefits for residents.

The ambition is to ensure that event-related investments contribute to a lasting improvement of Alpine connectivity and to its overall sustainability

Priority 3 – Reversible and low-impact infrastructure

Major events increasingly face questions regarding the necessity, cost and long-term usefulness of infrastructure investments considering the impact on natural

ecosystems. The Mission will work in close cooperation with action groups 1, 2, 6 and 7, and promote principles such as:

- prioritisation of existing facilities;
- temporary and modular infrastructures ;
- adaptive reuse of venues ;
- post-event functionality for local communities;
- climate-resilient infrastructure planning.

The objective is to move from an event-based approach towards a legacy-based infrastructure model.

Priority 4 – Citizen acceptance and legacy

The success of major sporting events depends on the support and involvement of local communities. The Mission will address previous to the application and during the ongoing organization stage:

- citizen engagement and consultation mechanisms;
- involvement of local authorities, associations and volunteers;
- assessment of social impacts ;
- community benefits and local ownership;
- governance approaches fostering transparency and inclusiveness.
- impact and legacy components – material and/or immaterial – as an integrated part of the project from its beginning to its end.

This priority aims to strengthen the legitimacy and societal value of major sporting events throughout the Alpine region.

Governance and methodology

The Mission will be driven by Regions Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and French State, and established as a multi-level cooperation framework under EUSALP. It will associate relevant action groups, experts and stakeholders taking into account what already exists and capitalizing on best practices. There will also be strong links with the priorities set out under French presidency 2027.

Its implementation will rely on four complementary pillars:

- *Political Coordination:* Regular exchanges on executive boards and boards of action groups leaders to identify common challenges and formulate shared political messages and recommendations.
- *Alpine expert network:* public authorities, Alpine Convention, event organisers, universities and research centres, mobility and infrastructure experts, environmental organisations, representatives of civil society
- *Capitalisation of existing experiences*: ongoing "COOPJOP" project and related legacy activities, experiences from Milano-Cortina 2026 and more broadly,

major alpine sport events, EUSALP Actions groups' works and contributions, regional and European projects addressing sustainability, mobility and territorial development

- *Development of new cooperation opportunities*: the Mission will facilitate the emergence of joint projects and partnerships under relevant European programmes, including Interreg Alpine Space, LIFE, Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe.

Expected results and deliverables

Result 1 – An alpine political agenda for sustainable major sporting events

The Mission will contribute to the emergence of a shared political vision among Alpine regions and states on the role of major sporting events as drivers of sustainable territorial development. This political agenda will provide a common reference framework for public authorities, event organisers and stakeholders across the Alpine region and will seek to influence the preparation, organisation and legacy of future major events.

Key deliverables:

- An **Alpine Political Declaration on Sustainable and Legacy-Oriented Major Sporting Events** endorsed by participating EUSALP partners;
- A set of **policy recommendations** for Alpine regions, states and event organisers;
- Strategic contributions to EUSALP and European discussions on sustainable sporting events, mountain development and climate transition;
- The establishment of a permanent political dialogue among interested EUSALP delegations and stakeholders on major sporting events.
- The organisation of an Alpine Summit of Sports Ministers and Regional Political Leaders responsible for Sport, bringing together EUSALP States and Regions to discuss common challenges, share strategic orientations and endorse key political messages on the sustainability and legacy of major sporting events

Result 2 – Capitalisation of existing experiences and transferable good practices

The Mission will capitalise on existing experiences from major Alpine sporting events, ongoing projects and EUSALP Action Groups in order to identify transferable good practices and define a practical methodology for their replication across Alpine territories. This work will support public authorities and event organisers in adapting successful solutions to different territorial contexts, with particular attention to:

- Circular economy and waste management;
- Sustainable mobility;
- Reversible and low-impact infrastructure;
- Citizen participation

Key deliverables:

- A Guide to transferable good practices for sustainable major sporting events in the Alpine region, based on existing experiences, projects and lessons learned;
- A replicability methodology to help Alpine territories assess, adapt and implement these good practices according to their own governance, environmental, mobility, infrastructure and legacy challenges;
- A structured collection of case studies from major Alpine sporting events, including Olympic and Paralympic experiences, highlighting success factors, limits and conditions for transfer;
- A network of experts, practitioners and public authorities supporting knowledge exchange and capacity-building across the Alpine region;
- Identification and incubation of transnational cooperation projects contributing to the implementation of the framework.

Expected long-term impact

Together, these two results will help position the Alpine region as a European reference for sustainable, inclusive and legacy-oriented major sporting events, while reinforcing EUSALP's role as a platform for political cooperation and innovation on key territorial challenges.