



**EUSALP** EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION  
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## 9th EUSALP Annual Forum, Side Events and Meetings, and General Assembly

14-15 November 2024



**SLOVENIAN  
PRESIDENCY  
OF THE EU  
STRATEGY FOR  
THE ALPINE  
REGION 2024**



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN  
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS



## 9th EUSALP Annual Forum Minute

14-15 November 2024

The 9th Annual Forum was held in Brdo Pri Kranju, Slovenia, on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. This event provided a significant opportunity to convene high-level representatives, national delegations, Action Group members, Youth Council members, and various stakeholders. The Forum featured a High-

Level Plenary Panel, workshops, and panels addressing Alpine-related issues, as well as Action Group meetings. Additionally, it included the award ceremonies for the Pitch Your Project, Green Infrastructure Goes Business, and EUSALP Energy Award competitions.

### THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024

#### 09:30-12:30, 16:15-18:00 – Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award: Coaching Workshop

*Side event*

The Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award is designed to support innovative ideas, products, and services that contribute to the development of a green economy while promoting sustainable development within the framework of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region. In its third edition in 2024, the award recognized eight winners:

- Optigrün Smart Flow Control (Opti green)
- Pocket Parks – blau-grüne Oasen (Blue-green oases)
- EauRoot (Water root)
- HydroMontania – Irrigation solutions for sustainable agriculture in mountain areas
- BORKY – battle bark beetles better
- Mirage Urbain (Urban mirage)
- Natur ImPuls.e – Reconnect. Experience. Change.
- Building material solutions from annual fibre sources

As part of the 9th EUSALP Annual Forum, the winners were invited to participate in a Coaching Workshop organised by PLANVAL, which provided a platform to assess their businesses, identify challenges, and collaboratively develop strategies for future growth.

#### Coaching Workshop Overview

The camp began with a coaching session emphasizing the importance of identifying problems as the basis for business development. Participants were encouraged to develop solutions tailored to these problems, ensuring they meet market needs. The final stage, "scaling," focuses on refining and expanding the solution to ensure its growth and competitiveness in the market.

Three key challenges were identified in earlier coaching sessions:

1. *Lean Canvas – Key Metrics:* Essential data collection to track progress and assess project viability is often overlooked, despite its role in setting realistic goals.
2. *Customer Awareness:* Many customers lack awareness of the problems being addressed, complicating dialogue about solutions. Differentiating customers from users, identifying and understanding a specific problem, and conduct issue-related interviews is crucial.
3. *Conducting Problem Interviews:* Effective interviews require exploring the problem without proposing solutions and establishing clear methods for collecting and summarizing insights.

The workshop's second segment was a BarCamp, an interactive, participant-driven discussion where attendees proposed discussion topics and formed working groups to explore them.

Among the topics discussed were:

- Determining the best form of organization
- Scientific testing of products
- Funding for public goods
- Raising customer awareness

The discussion on customer awareness focused on promoting urban green spaces and effectively engaging customers. While younger generations were initially considered as a potential target, participants recognized them as users rather than customers and suggested targeting young entrepreneurs. Emphasis was placed on presenting

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solutions that not only address problems but also offer added value to customers and policymakers. When asked how they benefited from the BarCamp, participants highlighted two main takeaways:

- Strategies for demonstrating added value to stakeholders (customers and policymakers).
- Enhanced targeting techniques based on specific customer characteristics.

The final segment of the coaching workshop focused on preparing participants for their business presentations, scheduled for the following day. Moderators provided guidance on crafting compelling presentations, offered feedback during rehearsals, and suggested improvements. This session ensured that participants were well-equipped to successfully present their business concepts and strategies.

### 10:00-12:30 – Youth Vision for Alpine Region & Pitch Your Project Competition

#### Youth Vision for Alpine Region

Moderated by **Dino SUBAŠIĆ** (Slovenian journalist and presenter), the panel featured **Silvia BUZZETTI** (Programme Assistant, DG REGIO, European Commission), **Branislav RAUTER** (Principal, Rudolf Maister Secondary School Kamnik, Slovenia), **Lionel CROISSANT** (Associate Expert at Institut des Hautes Études de l'Éducation et de la Formation, EUSALP Action Group 3, France), **Rafaella RABIČ** (EUSALP Youth Council representative), **Pauline TREISSAC** (European Affairs Officer, Bourgogne-Franche-Comté Region, France).

The panel explored strategies to empower Alpine youth to address future challenges, particularly climate and social change. Key initiatives include the Summer Camp, "Pitch Your Project" Competition, and the Youth Council, which fosters active involvement in the Alpine macro-regional strategy.

Speakers emphasized the importance of youth engagement, skill development, and cultural promotion. The European Year of Skills and the role of Erasmus+ in supporting youth were highlighted by the European Commission. The imperative for environments that enable young people to thrive was also underscored, and Youth Councillor **Rafaella RABIČ** discussed the need for improved public transport and the promotion of Alpine traditions.

The value of soft skills was highlighted through successful initiatives like "Discover Mountain Jobs", advocating for the sustained involvement of the Youth Council. **Pauline TREISSAC** and **Silvia BUZZETTI** emphasized securing funding and enhancing cooperation to meet climate and administrative challenges.

The panel concluded with a focus on preserving Alpine nature, celebrating cultural diversity, and promoting sustainable living, with the European Commission recognizing the growing appeal of the Alpine lifestyle.

#### Pitch Your Project competition

The competition offered a platform for young innovators to present creative and impactful solutions addressing key challenges in the Alpine region. The pitching segment featured five finalist projects, each granted three minutes to present their ideas, followed by a three-minute Q&A session. These projects showcased a diverse range of innovative approaches to sustainability, community development, and education in the Alpine context:

- **Alpaqua:** it addresses the environmental impact of high-performance textiles in the Alpine region, which are primarily made from petrochemical fibres contributing significantly to global microplastic pollution. It proposes developing a bio-based natural fibre for mountain sports to replace synthetic materials.
- **Alps 2.0: Sustainable Paths for the Next Generation:** it envisions a community-focused school in the Alpine agricultural landscape, providing spaces for training and laboratories on circular economy practices. The project aims to engage young people in sustainable activities, fostering appreciation for Alpine heritage.
- **Carbon Wise:** it seeks to educate on sustainability and mobility through an Alpine-themed adaptation of a board game that raises awareness about climate change and sustainable travel in Europe.
- **EU Youth Career Incubator:** it proposes a community-based Wiki with an integrated chatbot to centralize and enhance access to youth initiatives, addressing the uneven distribution of information across Europe.
- **Ville à Joie:** it revitalizes rural Alpine villages by reintroducing essential public services, healthcare and digitalisation through traveling festivals animated by young residents, fostering social connections and accessibility, with plans to expand beyond the French Alpine region.



## 14:00-15:30 – Official Opening of the 9<sup>th</sup> EUSALP Annual Forum: High-Level Plenary Panel “Alpine Region – Competitive, Circular and Smart in Global World?” & Handover Ceremony of the EUSALP Presidency to Austria and Liechtenstein

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum was inaugurated by **Tanja FAJON**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, who extended a warm welcome to all participants. In her address, she underscored the pressing challenges of the green transition in response to climate change, as well as the imperative of maintaining peace and prosperity. The Minister outlined the three key priorities under Slovenia's Presidency in 2024. During its Presidency, Slovenia has advocated for enhanced transnational cooperation in the field of sustainable water management. She went on to stress the importance of young people: *“In Slovenia, we believe that we need to pay special attention to young people and future generations. That is why we have invited EUSALP experts in the field of water management and civil protection to come to Kamnik to address our young people on the consequences of climate change and the solutions for sustainable water management. We must ensure a good quality of life for young people in the Alpine region, and we must listen to them.”* In her address, the Minister also focused on the circular economy, saying that these priorities – water, youth and the circular economy – must remain the focus of the Alpine region in the years to come. She commended Alpine cooperation as a tangible link between European policies and regional stakeholders and advocated for enhanced collaboration within the Alpine region, emphasizing that such cooperation should serve as a model for addressing future challenges. In conclusion, she recommended that the Strategy continue to support flagship initiatives.

EU Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, **Elisa Ferreira**, addressed a video message to the participants of the 9<sup>th</sup> EUSALP Annual Forum. In her remarks, she highlighted the Alpine region as a centre of innovation and competitiveness in Europe, emphasizing the success of the Strategy in fostering cooperation to tackle shared challenges such as climate change, energy efficiency, and skills development.

She expressed gratitude to the Slovenian Presidency for advancing the Strategy's objectives and emphasised the urgent need for sustainable practices, innovative policies, and ecosystem protection. She also underscored the importance of investing in youth, praising the engagement of young people through the Youth Council.

**Commissioner FERREIRA** underscored the Strategy's vital role in linking local initiatives with EU priorities, aligning with Cohesion Policy to promote sustainable development, economic growth, and territorial cohesion.

After the official opening, a High-Level Panel on “Alpine Region – Competitive, Circular and Smart in Global World?” was held with the following panellists: Minister **Tanja FAJON**, **Dominique HASLER**, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Education and Sport of Liechtenstein, **Anton MATTLE**, Regional Governor of Tyrol (Austria), **Fabrice PANNEKOUCKE**, President of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region (France), **Eric BEIßWENGER**, Regional Minister for European and International Affairs, Bavaria (Germany), **Luciano CAVERI**, Regional Councillor for European Affairs, Innovation and National Policies for the Mountains of Valle d'Aosta (Italy), and **Norman GOBBI**, Regional Councillor of the Ticino Region (Switzerland). The panellists agreed that macro-regional strategies are an effective tool for cooperation and exchange of knowledge and experience on challenges that transcend national borders. The High-Level Plenary Panel “Alpine Region – Competitive, Circular and Smart in Global World?” featured distinguished representatives from the seven member countries of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region. Panellists were invited to discuss best practices implemented in their respective countries to address shared challenges and explore tools to enhance cooperation.

All representatives acknowledged the unique characteristics of mountain regions, which, while highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, are also sources of significant resilience. The best practices primarily focused on advancing the green transition through initiatives such as investments in the circular economy, sustainable water management policies, intermodal transportation systems, partnerships between public and private sectors, resource-based local economies, and industrial decarbonization. Achieving climate neutrality was highlighted as the overarching objective. Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of involving young people in various sectors and governance processes as a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Regarding tools to strengthen cooperation, the panellists unanimously underscored the importance of exchanging best practices and practical

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experiences across diverse areas of action. Mountain regions, they noted, are hubs of innovation, as the challenges of alpine living necessitate adaptive and creative solutions. Building on this innovative spirit, panellists proposed fostering a culture of sharing as a means to counteract rising nationalisms. They stressed the need for multilevel cooperation, encompassing both European and national dimensions, and called for the dissemination of positive messages to address public apprehensions about change.

After the panel discussion, Minister **Tanja FAJON** symbolically **handed over the Presidency** of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region to Liechtenstein's Foreign Minister **Dominique HASLER** and the Governor of Tyrol, **Anton MATTLE**, and the Governor of Carinthia, **Peter KAISER**.

*"Slovenia has achieved a lot during its Presidency, but the work is far from over. We are leaving the EUSALP in good shape to the next two Presidencies – Austria and Liechtenstein – and I trust that they will continue to work in the direction we have set out."*



High-Level Panel on "Alpine Region – Competitive, Circular and Smart in Global World?"  
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Handover of the EUSALP Presidency from Slovenia to Liechtenstein and Austria, symbolised by the passing of the Kolo Wheel  
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**16:00-17:30 – Climate Resilient Water Management in The Alpine Region**

The panel was moderated by **Aleš BIZJAK** (Ministry of natural resources and spatial planning, Slovenia) and featured **Lidija GLOBEVNIK** (Director-General, Water Directorate, Ministry for Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Slovenia), **Blaž MOZETIČ** (Director of Planning Office, Slovenian Water Agency, Slovenia), **Florian RUDOLF-MIKLAU** (Head of Unit, Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management, Austria), **Blaž LIPOVŠEK** (Youth Parliament of Sava Commission), **Marco LIPIZER** (Referent for the River Contract, Department of Environmental Protection, Energy and Sustainable Development of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, Italy).

The Alpine region is undergoing significant adverse impacts from climate change, marked by an increased frequency and intensity of extreme

weather-related events such as floods, erosion, landslides, and droughts. These phenomena have not only disrupted livelihoods across the region but have also underscored the urgent need to reconsider the management of one of the planet's most vital resources: water.

This necessity was particularly evident in Slovenia during 2023, when devastating torrential sediment processes and flash floods triggered a widespread public discourse on adopting new approaches to water management in an era of increasingly rapid climate change.

For this reason, water management has been designated as one of the three key priorities of the Slovenian Presidency in 2024 and will continue to be a central area of focus in the years to come.

**16:00-18:00 – EUSALP Energy Conference “Energy Transition in the Economy” & EUSALP Energy Award Ceremony**

*Side event*

The conference commenced with a presentation of Action Group 9's activities within the EUSALP framework: work plan, notable achievements—including the energy survey, energy observatory, and AITA platform—and its current focus on green hydrogen. The cross-sectoral initiative on hydrogen, undertaken in collaboration with Action Groups 2, 4, and 9, was highlighted, alongside key projects such as AMETHYST, CEASAR, and CEASAR 2.

**Conference Discussion**

Moderated by **Etienne VIENOT** (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Énergie Environnement) the first panel featured **Tine SELJAK** (University of Ljubljana), **Vlasta KMERLJ** (Energy and Climate Agency of Podravje), **Manuel AITA** (EUSALP Youth Council), **Sašo SELJAK** (Alpacem Cement), and **Igor STEINER** (INEA). Key topics addressed included:

- Role of Policymakers.
- Disparity Among Enterprises, notably between companies that capitalise energy targets and those struggling to comply with existing regulations, often resulting in competitive disadvantages.
- The importance, for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to be prepared for energy transition.
- The urgent need for political intervention to mitigate the shortage of skilled personnel required for the energy transition. Proposals

included increased investments in education and scholarships targeting energy-related fields. The need for employing a balanced approach of incentives (“carrots”) and penalties (“sticks”) to drive the transition was also underlined.

A second part of the conference was moderated by **Benjamin AUER** (KlimaHaus Agentur) and included contributions from **Marija ČEBULAR ZAJEC** (Ministry of Economy), **Matteo MAZZOLINI** (Energy Agency Friuli Venezia Giulia), **Julia ZOTTER** (Zotter Chocolate Austria), **Sašo SELJAK** (Alpacem Cement), and **Alessandro GARZOTTO** (Arbor Srl). The discussion focused on:

- The role of state-level assistance and EU funding opportunities in fostering energy transition initiatives.
- The establishment of a dedicated Centre for Circular Economy.
- The introduction of voucher schemes for obtaining quality certifications, explored as valuable support.
- The challenges for SMEs: while larger enterprises often recognize the financial and operational benefits of energy efficiency, smaller businesses, particularly micro-enterprises, struggle to perceive immediate advantages. As a result, public support was deemed indispensable for smaller businesses to participate meaningfully in the transition.



- The intersection of Green Transition and Digitalization. In this regard, the importance of integrating digital tools to track and manage energy data effectively was underscored.

### EUSALP Energy Award Winners

The 2024 edition of the award was conducted under the motto “Energy Transition in SMEs” and recognized enterprises for implementing measures, activities, and projects that significantly reduce energy consumption, thereby establishing themselves as pioneers in the energy transition. Four SMEs were selected by an international jury of experts for their exceptional contributions to energy efficiency, renewable energy, circular economy, carbon footprint reduction, mobility, and communication:

- Zotter Schokolade, Austria, Styria
- Winery Bolzano / Bozen, Italy, South Tyrol

- Arbor Chairs, Italy, Friuli-Venezia Giulia
- Cyprianerhof Dolomit Resort, Italy, South Tyrol



Winners of the Energy Award  
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### “Climate and I” Exhibition

The event concluded with a guided tour of the “Climate and I” exhibition, which is available in multiple languages and in PDF.

## FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2024

### 09:30-11:00 – Could the Alpine Region Become a Circular Economy Model Region?

The panel explored the potential of the Alpine region to serve as a leading example of circular economy practices, emphasizing the need for technological integration, collaboration, and innovation. The session featured a keynote speech by **Jernej PINTAR**, Director of the Technology Park of Ljubljana, who underscored three critical imperatives for advancing circular economy in the Alpine region:

1. Engagement in the technological process: technological advancements should be embraced by actively understanding, using, and filtering them.
2. The need for unity, with emphasis on the difference between unity and mere collaboration, as an essential way to overcome fragmentation.
3. The urgency to establish a Circular Hub, a centralized hub for cutting-edge circular technologies. This hub would also facilitate the sharing of best practices and solutions across stakeholders.

The rest of the panel featured **Slobodan ŠEŠUM**, **Robert ODDON**, **Roland MAYER**, **Denis JAHIC**, and **Jan DIEDERICH LÜKEN** as speakers. The discussion delved into the practical and systemic dimensions of circular economy implementation in the Alpine region. Key themes included:

- Daily practices embracing circularity.

- Multilevel cooperation at both local and macro-regional levels, particularly in those fields of production where cross-border collaboration is deemed particularly critical. The importance of networks such as EUSALP was highlighted as a platform for fostering such cooperation.
- Barriers to circularity: despite EU programs designed to promote the green transition, panellists noted a stagnation in circularity rates.
- Role of public incentives: the discussion stressed the need for public policies to incentivize stakeholders to adopt circular practices.
- Problem of overregulation, in other words overly complex regulatory frameworks which constitute a significant barrier, often discouraging innovation and complicating the transition to circular economy practices.
- Producer responsibility models, for example the “CARE” Program in the United States, which encourages producers to take responsibility for waste by the allocation of incentives to integrating it back into production cycles.
- The need to build stronger waste management connections within the Alpine region to improve waste management practices.
- The critical role of young people in driving change.

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### 11:15-12:30 – Award Ceremony for Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award and Pitch Your Project

With its unique geographical and natural features, the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) represents one of the wealthiest and most competitive regions in Europe. However, while Europe is undergoing green and digital transition as well as facing many other challenges, the Alpine region and EUSALP have to respond accordingly.

By inclusion of wide range of relevant stakeholders, the implementation of EUSALP brings about a variety of concrete actions on the ground as well as long-term processes that lead to policy change.

During 2024 the Slovenian EUSALP Presidency was a big promotor of different events, that could be named as "success stories" in order to improve visibility of different initiatives, projects or processes. This year's EUSALP Annual Forum was among other events dedicated to three initiatives: Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award, Energy Award and Pitch Your Project Competition 2024. The panel was the opportunity to present the mission and the aim of the initiatives and the introduction of the winning ideas in 2024.

#### Pitch Your Project Award Ceremony

Held during the EUSALP Annual Forum 2024, the competition brought together innovative young minds aged 16 to 29, all eager to present creative solutions for a sustainable and resilient Alpine region.

These winning projects show the creativity and dedication of young people while tackling key issues in the Alps, such as mobility, water management, circular economy, and youth involvement. Chosen by a panel of stakeholders and audience votes, these young innovators prove that great ideas can shape a better future.

The audience at the Annual Forum cast their votes to determine the results of the competition. The rankings were as follows:

- 5<sup>th</sup> place: Alps 2.0
- 4<sup>th</sup> place: EU Youth Career Incubator
- 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Alpaqua
- 2<sup>nd</sup> place: Carbon Wise
- **Winner: Ville à Joie**

Winners of Pitch Your Project!  
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#### Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award Ceremony

The Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award recognized eight outstanding small businesses for their focus on sustainable water management and climate action through green infrastructure. They all demonstrated a keen focus on sustainable water management and climate action, with green infrastructure solutions resonating strongly within existing and emerging business models. The teams delivered exceptional performances on stage, reflecting the success of the pitching training provided during the Coaching Camp held the day prior. Among the winners, the audience of the EUSALP Annual Forum selected BORKY as their favourite.

The winners were:

- Optigrün Smart Flow Control (Opti green)
- Pocket Parks – blau-grüne Oasen (Blue-green oases)
- EauRoot (Water root)
- HydroMontania - Irrigation solutions for sustainable agriculture in mountain areas
- BORKY - battle bark beetles better
- Mirage Urbain (Urban mirage)
- Natur ImPuls.e - Reconnect. Experience. Change.
- Building material solutions from annual fibre sources.



Winners of Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award  
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## Side Meetings

14-15 November 2024



### Action Group 7 Green infrastructure



### Action Group 9 Energy

#### THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024

#### 09:30-12:00 – EUSALP Action Group 7 meeting

The meeting addressed updates, reflections on ongoing initiatives, and planning for future activities. The key points of discussion included:

- Updates on Slovenian Presidency and EUSALP Activities, with focus on the recent Executive Board meetings and Executive Board-Board of Action Group Leader meetings. Updates were provided on the revision of the Action Plan and developments within the Task Force. Activities related to EUSALP's broader agenda, such as the Macro-regional Strategies Days in Brussels and the Macro-regional Strategies Week in Izola, were highlighted. The Technical Secretariat shared updates on new recruitments, communication and corporate branding.
- Reflections on the Green Infrastructure Goes Business Award. The group analysed the outcomes of this year's edition. While the number of applications was limited to 14—likely due to the tight timeline and a summer deadline—the quality of submissions was notably high. Discussions centred on identifying successful elements and areas for improvement, with a particular focus on strategies to attract more enterprises in future editions. Members emphasized the need for increased outreach efforts by Action Group 7 and proposed making the award more appealing, potentially through the inclusion of a financial incentive.
- Nature Restoration Law status and implications. The law, which came into effect on 18 August

2024, and EU Member States are now required to draft and submit national restoration plans to the European Commission by September 2026. At the EU level, efforts are underway to create a standardized format for these plans. The group discussed coordination opportunities, including an online workshop on nature restoration in the Alpine Region scheduled for 19 November 2024, organized by the Alpine Biodiversity Board. The involvement of Action Group 7 members was envisaged. Coordination with the EU strategy for the Danube Region and other Macro-regional Strategies was deemed essential for effective implementation of the law.

- Database on Nature Restoration Activities. The group was informed about the near completion of the database. Swiss contributions are still pending, and their inclusion will finalize the database. Discussions are ongoing regarding the future use and sharing of this resource.
- Presentations of the following projects: Plan to Connect, Fractal, Forest Ecovalue, and AlpsLife.

Updates on the Task Force on multifunctional forests and sustainable use of timber, as well as on the activities integrated into Action Group 2's subgroup on wood.

FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2024

## 09:30-11:30 – EUSALP Action Group 9 meeting

The meeting addressed key developments, ongoing projects and initiatives aimed at advancing energy transition in the Alpine region, and planning for future activities. The key points of discussion included:

- The Action Plan revision, initiated by the Swiss and Slovenian presidencies, is being carried forward under the supervision of a Task Force composed of Executive Board members. For Action Group 9, the proposed shift from the third Thematic Policy Area ("Environment and Energy") to the first ("Economic Growth and Innovation") did not raise many concerns, except the need for maintaining essential collaborations between the group and public authorities. The revision timeline is demanding, with the first draft due by February 2025 and endorsement of the second draft by March 2025.
- The development of a new Work Plan for the post-2025 period, which will be shaped by the future direction of the "Support EUSALP" project: while fundings through the Alpine Space Programme will be maintained, concrete details will be forthcoming.
- The need to increase awareness on EU Strategy for the Alpine Region among regional and local stakeholders. Suggestions included hosting more localized conventions in multiple languages and leveraging initiatives like the Energy Award to engage businesses and communities. Group members reflected on the outcomes of the Award, identifying areas for improvement such as enhancing the tangible benefits of winning the award (opportunities for partnerships and project funding), overcoming funding challenges posed by budget limitations, and raising awareness. In this sense, it was noted that the "EUSALP" acronym lacks widespread recognition and necessitates greater visibility.
- Energy data collection in the Alpine Region: the "Alpine Energy Data platform" was discussed as a critical tool for monitoring energy consumption and trends. However, data from some regions is missing, particularly in Italy, where regional-level energy monitoring systems are underdeveloped. An additional issue is the inconsistency of data, as there are mismatches between national and regional datasets that complicate the

aggregation and interpretation of information. Support from the Executive Board and national coordinators will be sought to enhance data quality and coverage. In fact, the Action Group aims to update the platform biennially and launch a data collection campaign in 2025.

- AMETHyST project updates. The project continues to advance hydrogen initiatives within the Alpine region. Key updates included the launch of the "SkHyline" platform in October, aimed at consolidating hydrogen knowledge, and plans for publishing a EUSALP Hydrogen Roadmap/Position Paper by 2025, in collaboration with Action Groups 2 and 4. The next meeting will take place in Friuli Venezia Giulia and a final conference will be held in France at the end of 2025, potentially aligned with the 2030 Olympic Games.

Despite progress, significant challenges remain, particularly the high cost of hydrogen, which limits its market viability. The group emphasized the need to identify sectors where hydrogen can offer competitive advantages and to foster a culture of innovation around its use.

- Report from the SmartCommUnity project.
- Overview of the upcoming joint Presidency, whose motto is "Cooperation Empowers Transformation". The presidency will contribute to the transformation in the fields of mobility, circular economy, and energy. In this regard, the need for a balanced energy mix incorporating water, wind, and solar energy was highlighted. Emphasis was placed on addressing conflicts between climate protection and nature conservation to harmonize interests. Notable upcoming events on energy were anticipated: the Annual Conference (27<sup>th</sup> February 2025, in Salzburg) and the Energy Expert Forum (11<sup>th</sup> June 2025).

Additionally, concerns were raised about a complaint regarding the EU's legislation on renewable energy potentially bypassing the obligation for environmental impact assessments stipulated by the Alpine Convention.

## EUSALP General Assembly

14 November 2024



### DECISIONS

- The composition of the EUSALP Youth Council for the 2024-2025 term, which extends from the 1st of July 2024 to the 1st of July 2025, has been unanimously approved by the Assembly.
- The Assembly has unanimously endorsed the Brdo Pri Kranju Political Declaration.

Minister **Tanja FAJON** chaired the General Assembly of the EUSALP and introduced the meeting underscoring the need for a common vision for the Alpine region, which the macro-regional cooperation can help to achieve. The General Assembly was attended by political representatives of EUSALP national and regional governments, the European Commission, EUSALP observers and the EUSALP Youth Council (22 speakers in total), demonstrating the political relevance of the Strategy and the political will to work together effectively to better face common challenges in the Alpine region. Participants also adopted the Brdo Pri Kranju Declaration, which sets out important policy orientations for the implementation of the Strategy and for the revision of its Action Plan. In her concluding remarks, Minister **FAJON** thanked all the participating countries and regions for their support during the Slovenian Presidency.





## **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):

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**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.

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**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.

# WHITE PAPER ON REVISION OF EUSALP ACTION PLAN

1 October 2024

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## BACKGROUND

In 2015, under request of the European Council, the European Commission adopted a Communication and the Action Plan on the EU Strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP). Slovenia, as a first presiding country, organised the EUSALP Launch Conference in January 2016 with the aim to (1) bring together high political representatives from all EUSALP countries, regions and EU institutions with a view to achieving a broad political consensus on the strategic orientation for implementing EUSALP and (2) to demonstrate to different stakeholders and the public the true potential of the cooperation within EUSALP.

The EUSALP Action Plan adopted in 2015 determined the path towards the new relationship between metropolitan, peri-mountain, and mountain areas, focusing on three thematic priorities – (1) Competitiveness and innovation, (2) Environmentally friendly mobility and connectivity and (3) Sustainable management of energy, natural and cultural resources.

Today, the geographical area covered by EUSALP, is home to about 80 million inhabitants. The area is concentrating at the heart of the EU with a strong network of major European metropolises, Alpine cities, villages and mountain resorts, making it one of the wealthiest, most attractive, competitive, innovative and productive regions in Europe. With its unique geographical and natural features, it represents most important water tower and one of the main biodiversity sanctuary of the EU.

Nevertheless, almost a decade since the establishment of the EUSALP, the main challenges remain and are even deepened by climate change, which has dramatically affected economic activities, lifestyles and human settlement. Also Europe is undergoing green and digital transition while facing many other challenges. The Alpine region still calls for balancing its wealth and development with natural conservation and the adoption of innovative approaches in order to further develop the area in a sustainable way and adapt it to climate change. Moreover, it still needs to strengthen solidarity between the territories in order to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the various regions.

For all these reasons, the EUSALP General Assembly Bad Ragaz Declaration of 2023 called for the revision of the EUSALP Action Plan and mandated the Executive Board to set up a specific Task Force to support the Action Plan revision process, under the lead of successive presidencies.

While calling on all Alpine states and regions, as well as on observer organizations and action groups, to actively participate in this process, the EUSALP General Assembly asked the European Commission for a revision of the Action Plan based on the outcomes of the Task Force. An interim progress report is awaited at the General Assembly in 2024 with a view to present the revised Action Plan at the General Assembly in 2025.

Based on the 2023 General Assembly decision, the Task Force for revision of the EUSALP Action Plan was formed by the Executive Board on 29th November 2023 with the mandate to assess the Strategy's mission statement and activities and for adaptation or improvement of the various documents that support these activities in line with the current and future challenges for the Alpine Region which needs to be addressed.



The Task Force met several times in 2024 and regularly informed and consulted the EUSALP Executive Board regarding the progress made.

This White Paper on the revision of the EUSALP Action Plan is the result of discussions by all actors involved – National Coordinators, Executive Board, Board of Action Group Leaders and consultations with the European Commission. It sets the main guidelines that could be followed for the revision of EUSALP Action Plan covering several issues, from the thematic focus of EUSALP, the corresponding actions, to aspects of governance, funding and cooperation, thus ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the strategy.

## **1. POLITICAL STEERING OF THE STRATEGY**

To achieve the ambitious objectives set by the Alpine countries and regions, EUSALP's political engagement at the highest levels is essential.

The GA assumes a decisive role in setting annual and multiannual political priorities based on the recommendation of the incoming presidency, endorses, every three years, the Work Plans of the Action Groups and selects cross-cutting priorities or other joint activities between Action Groups that should focus the strategy and guide the work and cooperation of all EUSALP bodies.

The Trio Presidency coordinates actions to maintain continuity in the priorities of earlier presidencies, thereby facilitating the effective planning and implementation of activities by the involved Action Groups and strengthens the Executive Board as a coordination body.

Furthermore, the GA should regularly review and discuss the progress made on the latest priorities, fostering accountability and ownership, as well as successful implementation.

## **THEMATIC FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES**

It is increasingly clear that the fundamental objectives of EUSALP Strategy can be achieved only by simplifying its policy message in a way that makes it recognizable and appealing to politicians, stakeholders, fund managers, and the general public.

While considering that the Thematic Policy Areas (pillars) listed in the EUSALP Action Plan remain relevant, there is a general agreement that since its adoption, profound changes have occurred in the Alpine region, which make some adjustments necessary.

Three main guidelines are taken into account when defining the thematic focus of the EUSALP Action Plan and the corresponding measures. The thematic pillars (Thematic Policy Areas) and their corresponding actions should focus on topics:

- in which there is a political and strategic interest,
- in which there is an alpine-wide overarching need/interest, and
- that can optimally and realistically be implemented in the EUSALP context.

In line with the approach suggested by the Swiss presidency with the slogan “Less is more” which we endorsed in Bad Ragaz, it is also recognized that the EUSALP Action Plan should be refocus around some main topics/actions that should be more concise and bold.

This is considered compatible with the current distribution and responsibilities of the Action Groups and could be achieved with increased coordination and focus on a reduced number of high-level goals, including through the Cross-Cutting Priorities or similar approaches.

The number of the thematic pillars (Thematic Policy Areas) should remain the same as in the current Action Plan, with only some minor adjustments in the way their objectives are formulated:

1. A competitive, innovative, circular and climate neutral economy in the Alpine region.
2. A more accessible and interconnected Alpine region that fosters sustainable transports and mobility solutions and takes full advantage of digitalization and new technologies.
3. An ecologically connected, environmentally sustainable Alpine Region that fosters climate adaptation

This thematic focus lays a clear long-term view paving the way towards an ambitious mission of the EUSALP and vision for the Alpine region, embedded in strategic priorities of the European Union.

The actions within the revised Action Plan shall support the newly proposed objectives in the most effective way. To that respect, the Task Force has considered the possibility to review the actions that are indicated in the Action Plan and implement a number of possible changes. While discussion continue among the members of the Task Force in view to reach a common position on the matter, the following changes are considered, subject to possible adjustments after further steering of the thematic orientations of the Strategy:

- The action dealing with energy (Action 9 in the current Action Plan) could be included under thematic pillar 1, given that low carbon and renewable energies are key tools for accompanying the process of greening business and markets and that production of green energy and related products is an important strategic economic factor. In fact, since energy transition measures are not only relevant for the economic sector, but they embrace additional key stakeholders, such as municipalities, regions and households that also support the energy transition, this could be also be taken into account for a final positioning of Action 9 of the current Plan.
- The action on research and innovation (Action 1 in the current Action Plan) to become a cross-cutting action relevant for all other actions;
- The focus of the action on labour market, education and training in strategic sectors (Action 3 in the current Action Plan) to become more integrated with the innovation system and strategic economic sectors in order to support the availability of skilled labour force in the strategic sectors of the Alpine Region's economic system;
- The focus of the action on natural resources, ecological connectivity as well as risk management (Actions 6, 7 and 8 in the current Action Plan) with a regard to protecting biodiversity and restoring nature shall be closely aligned with the current legal provisions.

The revision of the actions to be considered in the Action Plan for each objective is still going-on and need to be completed as soon as possible with a view to reach a consensus on the matter.

This debate is inevitably linked to the question of whether the Action Groups that are entrusted with the implementation of the EUSALP thematic objectives and actions should adapt their functioning as discussed in the following section.



## 2. IMPLEMENTING THE ACTION PLAN

The implementation requires a multi-level-governance approach, which must combine leadership from the top with the initiatives and expertise at the implementation level in a multi-stakeholder involvement. In order to ensure such policy coherence between the strategy's objectives and its outcomes, there is a need for strong coordination between process coordination and thematic coordination. To this end, the implementation of the Action Plan and its objectives needs to be supported by an efficient and robust structure as well as adequate financial and human resources.

For more detailed description of the role of each governance body and the relationships among them, the revised Action Plan should refer to a **Governance Architecture Paper**, a revised version of the existing EUSALP "Vademecum".

### 3.1 Governance

The existing governance structure and its functioning is crucial for the effective and efficient implementation of the Action Plan. In general, the focus of the EUSALP governance should be on the interface between implementation (represented by the Action Groups in the current Action Plan) and coordination level (represented by the Executive Board in the current Action Plan). This interface is crucial for the successful and effective implementation of the EUSALP; it is where the objectives meet the implementation. New effective ways of working together at this interface should be considered, including communication methods. In the revised Action Plan, different bodies of the governance structure should only be briefly described.

Action Groups and their Leaders hold an important role in implementation of the strategy as coordinators of Actions. Nevertheless, it has been observed that their structure and working method is very diverse and *partly* requires improvements or even re-shaping of their mission. To ensure the steering and quality of the Action Groups, their members should be appointed by each EUSALP National Coordinator.

Civil society organisations, which operate on an alpine-wide level, shall also be given an opportunity to get directly involved in the implementation of the strategy. This involvement shall be attained through information activities by the EUSALP Secretariat, or under conditions which will be defined, through direct participation into the work of Action Groups as observers.

The **Action Group Leader (AGL)** is the person, appointed by the institution entrusted with the Action Group Lead in charge of implementing the Action Group objectives. The implementation within each Action Group should be guided by the EUSALP Action Plan and, which should be – along with interpreting directions by the General Assembly - the basis for the development of the Action Group Work Plan. The aim of the Work Plan is to operationalize the main objectives stated in the EUSALP Action Plan through actions and initiatives that aim to achieve desired policy impact in the respective Action Group. The Action Group Work Plan play a decisive role in ensuring policy coherence between the Action Plan on the one side, and the implementation and deliverables by the Action Groups on the other side. The Work Plans are means to focus the Action Groups' operations to the directions given by the General Assembly and/or the Executive Board on the implementation of the Action Plan.

In order to have result-oriented Action Group Work Plans that reflect the ambition of EUSALP, the Work Plan should be realistic (in terms of timing and resources), focused and macro-regionally oriented; there



should be a shared understanding of the contribution of the Action Group activities to the realisation of the EUSALP Action Plan; they should ensure monitoring of the progress of the respective Action Group.

The "**Objective coordinator**" in the existing Action Plan, responsible for the thematic/pillar coordination among the Action Groups of the same priority, has in practice never really been implemented, hence should be abandoned. In order to ensure a transversal way of cooperation between different Action Groups, other instruments shall be applied and explored, such as Cross-Cutting Priorities and (annual) joint thematic pillar commission meetings or similar.

The revised Action Plan should take up two new active structures, which have developed over time: EUSALP Secretariat and EUSALP Youth Council. While a more detailed description of their responsibilities and functioning will be indicated in the updated version of the Vademecum/GAP, it is suggested that a short description of their role should be added to the Action Plan along the following lines:

The **EUSALP Secretariat** provides technical and content related assistance to the implementation of the EUSALP Action Plan, easing the communication and cooperation among the governance bodies, notably the Presidency, the Executive Board, the Board of Actions Group Leaders, the General Assembly and the Youth Council. It has a role in facilitating the implementations of the three pillars of the strategy, assisting the Action Groups, fostering capacity building measures for Action Groups, promoting collaboration and transversal cooperation between Action Groups, encouraging the involvement of the youth, supporting project development, and fostering access to funding opportunities (embedding) e.g. by animation of the financial dialogue between Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies of EU funding programmes. Moreover, the EUSALP Secretariat shall support and ease the collaboration with other Alpine entities and Macro-regional Strategies.

To ensure the visibility and the effectiveness of the EUSALP, the EUSALP Secretariat engages in dissemination and awareness-raising activities, ensuring that information about EUSALP reaches relevant stakeholders, and is committed to assist Executive Board in the monitoring of the operability and the progress of the strategy.

The **EUSALP Youth Council** provides a platform for institutional involvement of young people in all EUSALP bodies to make sure that their ideas and viewpoints are heard and duly considered. Its mission is build a bridge between youth of the different Alpine Regions and the EUSALP governance structures.

### **3.1.1 Cooperation with other governance structures and entities in the Alpine Region**

Furthermore, references to the cooperation with the Interreg Alpine Space Programme and the Alpine Convention should be made in the governance chapter of the revised EUSALP Action Plan. The following aspects have been suggested:

Closer cooperation between **Alpine Convention** implementing bodies and EUSALP bodies is crucial in order to comply with the existing legal framework, to avoid contradictory actions and decisions and to work effectively by finding synergies and enhancing collaboration between those two structures and their working formats while avoiding unnecessary duplication.

The **Interreg Alpine Space Programme** and EUSALP share similar objectives and cover the same geographical perimeter. The Alpine Space Programme supports the vision and objectives for the Alpine region developed by EUSALP within the EU regulatory framework given for transnational Interreg programmes. Not being a governance body in the stricter sense, the Alpine Space Programme is of

strategic significance for the implementation of EUSALP as it supports the development of strategic projects and initiatives, be it topic – or governance-wise. Close coordination and collaboration between EUSALP and the Programme is therefore crucial for the success of both - attaining strategically meaningful projects for the programme whose results are acknowledged and taken up by the relevant stakeholders and which are spending the programmes funds efficiently and effectively for the implementation of the Strategy.

### **3.2 Financing**

Since EUSALP, like other macro-regional strategies, does not have own funding, it has to employ the available funding mechanisms to finance the implementation of projects, which contribute to reaching its strategic objectives. EUSALP is a territorial Strategy; hence, all funding instruments with a clear territorial dimension should be taken into consideration for its implementation as well as other thematic instruments, which could be better used, in a coordinated territorial approach.

National, regional funding sources and, if applicable, EU fundings shall be directed towards the objectives and implementation of the Strategy. The situation of non-member states, which have varying degrees of access to the various European programmes, must be taken into account by these states themselves and by the Action Groups. In order to attain a strategic and significant use of public funds for the Strategy's implementation, funding instruments and the Strategy need to be better harmonized.

Since the identified strategic objectives comply broadly with the goals of the EU Cohesion policy, these instruments play a key role for the EUSALP implementation: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF - including INTERREG), European Social Fund (ESF), Cohesion Fund (where applicable). In addition, the Rural Development Funds of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as well as EU-managed Programmes and Partnership on Environment, Climate Change, Transport and Mobility, Research and human resources development have a significant role for territorial development and for EUSALP in particular. The private sector holds an important role in complementing and leveraging public funding and therefore shall be addressed as well. For major investments, support by the European Investment Bank and their instruments shall be taken into consideration as well.

Main partners of EUSALP stakeholders in these important tasks are the Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies of different programmes. Therefore, a “financial dialogue” between EUSALP implementers and Programme/Fund administrators is crucial to understand and align with each other’s needs. During the programming of the future funding periods, stakeholders on all governance levels shall ensure consistency between programming and allocation of funds with the Strategy to the highest possible extent, supported by the European Commission.

## **3. SYNERGIES WITH OTHER MACRO-REGIONAL STRATEGIES**

Cooperation with other macro-regional strategies (MRS) is important for EUSALP. This allows exchange of experiences and good practices with different MRS' stakeholders, allowing creating a possibility to find synergies and share a common MRS vision. The revised Action Plan should have references to the possible modes of cooperation with other EU MRS, as EUSALP stakeholders are regularly involved in different MRS events, such as events organised by the Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (and the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries), High-level group meetings, 4 Trio Presidency meetings and MRS [and Sea Basins] events and conferences organised by other MRSs.

These events offer opportunities to discuss common MRS topics, like governance, monitoring, funding, and exchanges on upcoming political and strategic challenges. The use of these frameworks of cooperation should be further encouraged to ensure cross MRS synergies on a content related level.

The INTERACT programme also plays a central role in ensuring coherence and synergy among the MRSs through the organisation of regular coordination meetings between the MRS stakeholders on subjects of common interest.





## **APPOINTMENT OF EUSALP YOUTH COUNCIL 2024-2025**

### **DECISION PAPER**

**EUSALP General Assembly, Brdo Pri Kranj**

#### **Preamble**

In July 2024, the selection process for the new Youth Council members for the upcoming year was successfully completed. The Executive Board endorsed the members by written procedure.

#### **Decision**

The General Assembly confirms the Youth Council members for the new mandate and welcomes them within the EUSALP bodies.

#### **Annex**

List of the 2024-2025 Youth Council members.



**COSIMA RUDIGIER**  
Vorarlberg



**NIKLAS GRAF**  
Niederösterreich



**SANDRA PASARICEK**  
Kärnten



**AMELIE RIEDL**  
Niederösterreich



**KILIAN BÜCHEL**  
Liechtenstein



**KILLIAN FOLOPPE**  
Bourgogne-Franche-Comté



**CLAIRE MORRIER**  
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes



**IMEN LEGRINI**  
Grand-Est



**PIERRE-JEAN CLAUSSE**  
Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur



**FLORIN KONRAD**  
Liechtenstein



**MICHAEL JUNG**  
Bayern



**ANNA KÜHN**  
Bayern



**ROBIN MANNHORST**  
Baden-Württemberg



**YANNICK WERNER**  
Baden-Württemberg



**JEANNE CAVERZASIO**  
Fribourg



**MAXIMILIAN KALLENBACH**  
Zürich



**MIRIAM STUHLMÜELLER**  
Graubünden



**PAULINA PATRUSCHEWA**  
Bern



**MANUEL AITA**  
Lombardia



**MATTIA LEGO**  
Lombardia



**CHIARA CORTIANA**  
Veneto



**ALESSANDRA CORDIANO**  
Trentino Alto Adige



**TINE ŠTEGER**  
Slovenia



**RAFAELA RABIČ**  
Slovenia



**GAŠPER LESKOVEC**  
Slovenia



**BLAŽ ISTENIČ URH**  
Slovenia



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**EUSALP**



**ALPINE YOUTH**



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