

Youth Council Inputs

Context:

Representatives of the EUSALP Youth Council attended the Scuol conference on water resources (16th June 2023) held by the 2023 Swiss presidency .

The Youth Council members listened to presentations by elected representatives and experts on the subject of water management. During a Youth Council meeting held by the Swiss presidency in Lausanne (9th September 2023) and inspired by their notes from the conference, by group discussions and personal experience, they came up with ideas for concrete solutions applicable to the Alpine region.

Key messages:

- 1. Spatial planning aiming to promote biodiversity, prevent floods and cool down urban areas should be a standard.**
- 2. Environmental concern in tourism should be a priority within EUSALP.**
- 3. Preventing groundwater privatisation is of utmost importance.**
- 4. EUSALP should foster greater involvement of local communities and diverse actors in the decision-making process.**
- 5. We invite EUSALP Action Groups to implement a Green budget focused on environmental actions.**
- 6. We propose to draw up a guideline document setting out the best plastic-saving practices to be implemented at EUSALP events.**

Urbanism, tourism & Water:

1. Spatial planning

As we support the development of Green cities across the Alpine region, we want to promote environmentally friendly spaces in urban areas. Implementing sponge-spaces can have many positive impacts: cooling down urban areas, flood management, and promoting biodiversity. We support [VSA's](#) initiative of implementing criterias and guidelines that could be applicable and made standard in all alpine regions.

2. Economic development, tourism

Since tourism is a great source of income for Alpine regions but also of environmental harm, EUSALP should promote implementation of standards of excellence in the field of environmental responsibility in tourism (e. g. [Green Key](#), [EU Ecolabel](#)). EU Ecolabel should also be adopted to non-EU countries in the Alps (Lichtenstein and Switzerland). EUSALP should also promote the protection of high alpine spaces from tourism (prohibit construction of ski lifts on glaciers).

Resources & Water

3. Balancing Energy Efficiency and Biodiversity:

Prioritize the achievement of a sufficient energy supply for local communities and businesses through the careful equilibrium of energy efficiency and biodiversity preservation.

4. Halting Groundwater Privatization:

Preventing the privatization of groundwater sources is of utmost importance. The goal should remain to ensure a stable water supply in the Alpine Space whilst considering the interests of all stakeholders, including nature.

5. Enhancing Local Engagement:

Foster greater involvement of local communities in the decision-making process regarding river management. Additionally, support the establishment of local energy cooperatives to bolster acceptance of and awareness about the benefits of renewable energy projects among community members.

EUSALP & Water:

6. Green budget dedicated to environmental causes, analysis of its efficiency, monitoring of carbon footprint.

As mentioned in the draft of the declaration of Bad Ragaz, environmental action is one of the top priorities of EUSALP. We think that having parts of the EUSALP budget dedicated to environmentally sustainable measures would help their implementation and show that engagement. In this context, parts of the Action Groups' budgets should be attributed to studies focusing on environmental or water related subjects to capitalize on the work done by the Swiss presidency.

7. Process inclusion of all actors impacted by future policies.

Enable broader political cooperation on water issues (Example: Green New Deal). As mentioned several times during the water conference, EUSALP events often regroup speakers and audiences of similar opinions and engagements. We think that making an active effort to broaden the pool of participants to more diverse profiles would not only make EUSALP more known around the alpine region but also encourage different ideas and easier implementation of policies.

We noticed that external people/ stakeholders are only involved to EUSALP for a short time and then lose connection. Mainly because EUSALP doesn't actively keep and maintain the connection. Technical support structures could be responsible to keep experts and people connected to EUSALP. Especially the respective stakeholders during each presidency. An example for a first step would be using and keeping the network of the Scuol conference experts.

8. Avoiding plastic and other waste - Especially in EUSALP events.

EUSALP could further modernize the organization of events, honoring the tradition of conference hosting while promoting sustainability. Proposition to draw up a guideline document setting out the best plastic-saving practices to be implemented at EUSALP events. Additionally, EUSALP should consider only hotels with environmental certificates as potential accommodation for its events. EUSALP should encourage implementations of evidence based interventions for pro-environmental behavior including water saving (e. g. promote the reuse of towels, skipping room cleaning - for more examples see [Law Harm Hedonism Initiative](#)).