

Youth vision for water-smart region

EUSALP Youth Council vision on smart water management

We - the young people of the Alpine Regions - represent the future of the Alps. From our point of view it is crucial to transform our economy and society towards climate neutrality, so that we do not have to suffer from the decisions we make today.

Water resources are crucial for both human societies and ecosystems, especially in regions like the Alps where snow plays a fundamental role. However, climate change and human activities are posing significant challenges to the availability and quality of these resources. This is why we need to take action now to ensure efficient and sufficient water management in the future.

Current State of Water Resource Protection

The Alpine region, home to many lakes and glaciers but also the source of numerous rivers, plays a significant role in the lives of Central Europe's inhabitants. Water, a crucial renewable energy source, is a substantial part of electricity supply as well as a key factor in the Alpine tourism model, underscoring the importance of smart water management.

However, due to climate change, our glaciers are melting, and scientists predict regional and seasonal water shortages. In about 80 years, almost all glaciers will be gone. Additionally, more intense climate-related disasters are expected due to heavy rainfall in our mountain ranges, as we witnessed during our field visit organized by the EUSALP 2024 Slovenian Presidency to the Savinja Valley near Kamnik. The consequences are far-reaching, not only for the Alpine territories and their populations but also for Europe.

For the following years, members of the EUSALP Youth Council are committed to continuing their collaboration with the work of EUSALP Action Group 6, in line with the efforts and declarations of the Alpine Convention on water management in their Report on the State of the Alps.

Youth Council Recommendations for Smart Water Management

- **Education and Awareness Campaigns:** Educating people about the importance of water footprint of electronics, fast fashion and other daily consumption products through school programs, workshops, and community projects focused on water management.
- **Youth Involvement in Decision-Making:** Creating platforms where young people can participate in local and regional water management decisions, such as youth councils or advisory boards, ensures that their voices are heard and considered.
- **Support for Community-Led Initiatives:** Encouraging and supporting community-led projects that focus on sustainable water use, such as rainwater harvesting, the creation of green spaces, or local reforestation efforts, can provide practical ways for young people to get involved.

