

**Thematic conference on Mobility and Transport
organised by EUSALP Swiss Presidency**

On September 1st, the third and last conference of the EUSALP Swiss Presidency on Mobility and Transport in the Alps was held in Lugano Arte and Cultura under the moderation of Tomas Miglierina (RSI, Radioelevisione Svizzera).

The conference was opened by **Raffaele de Rosa**, President of the State Council of the Canton of Ticino, who, after recalling the importance of mobility in the economic development and region's history, questioned how Alpine regions will have to face the challenges regarding mobility across borders and the development of modal shift towards less polluting transport modes.

Markus Dieth, State Councilor from the Canton of Aargau and President of the Conference of Cantonal Governments (*video statement*), stressed the importance of modernising infrastructures to strengthen Alpine communication axes. New energy sources, technological innovations, digital management, and rail transport could be part of new development trends. He insisted on the disturbance caused by traffic in the daily life of the villages as a major challenge, adding that everybody needs to be able to move and think about sustainability.

Following this political opening, the participants heard **Davide Marconi**, who is one of the directors of consultancy firm Mobitrends. He gave an overview of the state-of-the-art on mobility in the canton of Ticino, its challenges, and ways to overcome them. Municipalities need to invest and launch incentives to regulate traffic and mobility and build the new infrastructures for a major expansion for public transport services (+50%). Cross-border railway networks connecting the main centres become significant for Swiss inhabitants and beyond. Mr. Marconi presented a study showing that mobility choices are influenced by the flexibility and availability of means of transport and very little by ecological conviction. The development of remote work reduced the need to commute every day. He pointed out the importance of combining means of transport with financial incentives to meet demand and develop new mobility trends, especially a change in public transport habits.

The first-round table focused on today's mobility challenges and gathered government representatives Mirco Moser, Canton of Ticino, Division of Spatial Development and Mobility, Niklas Joos, Canton of Uri, Office for Environment, Sylvie Vigneron, ANCT, Avenir Montagne Mobilité and Ulrich Santa, Director General, Agency for Energy South Tirol Climate House.

The participants discussed the current transport and mobility issues and agreed on the need to focus on efficiency and resilience. **Mirco Moser** began by explaining that it was counterproductive to try to limit mobility. However, efforts must be made by encouraging the modal shift of freight. He suggested not to ban certain means of transport radically but rather to invest in new and innovative infrastructures to gradually change transport habits in the Alps. Mr. Moser also valued how providing EU funding for cross-border-projects is an efficient and relevant way to tackle trans-national challenges.

Sylvie Vigneron highlighted last-kilometer mobility. A coordination with the EUSALP AG4 in charge of Transports and Mobility could help to go a step forward in optimising transport and resilience in the Alps. She pointed out that it was vital to meet demand in the last few kilometers (from the train station to



home), especially in the Alps, where risk factors are numerous such as topography, sparsely populated areas, and remote dwellings.

Niklas Joos stressed the importance of resilience in contemporary societies. He argued that spatial planning and the improvement of infrastructures would streamline the emergency transport system roadways and enhance better security conditions.

Ulrich Santa added that we need to change the general approach in everyone's mind to new mobility as the overall decarbonisation of society in different fields of activities (industry, mobility, etc.) was reckoned as a necessary change. Policies should consider sustainable development in the sector of mobility and innovative solutions need to be found. Individual transport needs to be reduced and rely on renewable energy to electrify the public and railway mobility to contribute to a neutral carbon footprint by 2035. Such a growing demand will request new infrastructure of storage for electricity.

All the round table panelists underlined the importance of EUSALP as a platform to share experiences, exchange good practices and guarantee a governance framework.

In front of 130 participants in Lugano, the meeting pursued with individual initiatives and companies' presentations linked to sustainability in the Alps with TILO - Denis Rossi, General Director, iMonitraf! - Markus Maibach, Coordination Point, EMMI Mobil application - Dr. Sabine Rödel, Mayor of Bad Hindelang and Max Hillmeier, Tourism Bad Hindelang, Etrasporti Nice-Ventimille-Cuneo-Line - Xavier Garcia from Region Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, EUSALP AG4, and 31days challenge coordinator Jessica Schmid from 42Hacks.

Denis Rossi presented his company, which offers cross-border transport between Italy and Switzerland. He explained that the challenge for his company is to reduce the duration of journeys. To achieve this, TILO is focusing on training staff capable of driving Swiss and Italian trains, as signage is not yet standardized.

Markus Maibach presented the iMonitraf! project, which focuses on modal shift, particularly in the Gotthard and Brenner tunnels. Like many other speakers, he pointed out that the Swiss rail system was a model for efficiency.

Sabine Rödel and **Max Hillmeier** presented the EMMI-Mobil project, an application to encourage new on-demand service, mobility solution of carpooling for the last miles of a journey to complete the public transportation offer. This electric bus meets the mobility needs of the last few kilometers. This solution is a service of best practices that can be duplicated in other regions that share the same need for complementary means of transport.

Xavier Garcia presented the Etrasporti Nice-Ventimille-Cuneo rail project from the coastline to the mountains. The aim is to relaunch a regular and reliable rail link following the storm "Alex" in 2019, demonstrating the train's importance and reliability. This project received the EUSALP Action Group 4 label.

Finally, participants received a presentation of the 31days initiative by **Jessica Schmid** from 42 Hacks. The idea is to encourage drivers to avoid systematical use of individual vehicles for 31 days. In exchange, drivers receive free access to public transport.



After the presentations of concrete solutions, experts were invited to talk about how existing solutions can be transferred to the Alpine region. Roberta Cattaneo, President of the Arcobaleno tariff network, Gery Balmer, Vice Director of the Swiss Federal Office for Transport (FOT), José Antonio Sebastián Ruiz, Commissioner for the Atlantic Corridor from the Spanish Government and Maren Meyer Energy Agency South Tyrol – CasaClima and EUSALP AG9 co-leader explored the opportunities and possibilities to a better international and regional coordination.

In the last expert panel, **Roberta Cattaneo**, saw the need for a common European platform with fluctuating tariffs to increase the choice and the transparency for European consumers. **Gery Balmer**, Vice Director of the Swiss Federal Office for Transport (FOT) supported this proposal and stressed the importance of international cooperation to change current legislative tools regarding CO2 emission allowances.

José Antonio Sebastián Ruiz, and **Maren Meyer** both linked the mobility issue with the energy issue. EUSALP has demonstrated its added value by tackling these cross-cutting issues. According to these panelists, the initiatives to reduce emissions of CO2 could be a shift to non-fossil fuel or getting fast trains to better connect people and regions.

Eventually, a round table to discuss the future of Alpine Mobility and explore EUSALP as a platform for concrete solutions gathered Johan Magnusson, European Commission, Team Leader DG Regio, Ulrich Seewer, Vice Director of the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) and Giulio Bernasconi, Member of the EUSALP Youth Council.

Johan Magnusson praised the participation of non-EU countries to the EUSALP and took inspiration from Ukraine 's commitment to the EU Strategy for the Danube Region which took over the Presidency in 2022. He is convinced by the importance of EUSALP in initiating dialogue on these issues, as the Alpine arc is fragile and preventive actions and resilience are needed. He also recalled the decisive role played by citizens in bringing about necessary behavioral changes.

Ulrich Seewer, expressed optimism for the future, pointing out that we now know what the solutions are (some of which have been presented), and that it is urgent to implement them.

Finally, **Giulio Bernasconi**, after mentioning the AlpTick project, a CIPRA Youth Council initiative providing one single ticket to travel by public transports throughout the Alps, recalled that for many citizens, the question of mobility depends on purchasing power, bearing in mind the cross-cutting nature of this problem should not be ignored.