



Manifesto of the States and Regions involved in the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

12th June 2020

"Together to shape a sustainable and resilient Alpine region."

1. We, representatives of the States and Regions involved in the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP), are fully aware of the global climate change and human damage to the environment affecting the Alpine region, which requires a substantive effort and resolved action from all generations and territories to face these challenges.
2. The current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic which has heavily affected our territory has impressively demonstrated how valuable cooperation in the Alpine region is and which reliable ties exist between the participating states and regions. Solidarity is the imperative of the moment - in this serious situation we have to stand together as partners in Europe. This solidarity and support between the states and regions in the Alpine region has to be further strengthened after the crisis in preparation of future such situations of crisis.
3. We are therefore fully aware of the challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic to health, welfare and development of the Alpine region which have dramatically highlighted vulnerabilities and weaknesses of our current development model which even more urge us to shape a more sustainable and resilient one for the Alpine region.
4. We have the responsibility to pass on to our children the legacy of a preserved and protected environment, rich in biodiversity and landscape diversity, where living and prosperity are in harmony with a respected nature. The Alpine region, with a population of almost 80 million inhabitants, is united by a common natural wealth and a rich cultural heritage; it is the water reservoir and the lung of Europe which we must preserve.
5. We are conscious that the immediate Covid-19 pandemic management focuses all attention. However we keep firmly committed not only to face these new challenges but to act towards a prosperous, sustainable and resilient Alpine region.
6. In this respect, we welcome the ambition of the French presidency of EUSALP in 2020 to accelerate the fight against climate change, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to anticipate and mitigate its negative effects, to accompany the territories in their adaptation and to never stop innovating in order to find new solutions for the sustainable development of the Alpine region.

7. For a sustainable Alpine region, we believe in the positive and innovating impact of ecology and project ecology. We will strive to tap the full potential that lies in a truly sustainable approach towards the fields of energy, mobility, spatial planning, water management, mountain and valleys organic agriculture and multifunctional forestry, bio-economy, circular economy, regional value chains, eco and health sustainable tourism, biodiversity, digital transformation of manufacturing and industry 4.0, silver economy, social economy as well as research and innovation for all Alpine territories and their inhabitants while granting their social well-being and economic prosperity.
8. To this end, by reaffirming the priorities recommended by the General Assembly in Milan on November 28, 2019, we undertake to deploy, under the French Presidency, several series of complementary structuring actions on which to base the work of the Strategy, as a contribution to develop the resolutions that would be submitted for adoption to the General Assembly by the end of 2020.

Accelerating the implementation of the UN Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and of the Paris Agreement

9. We support:
 - a. The capitalization on the exceptional potential of the EUSALP territory composed of 48 Regions and the 7 States which collectively have an outstanding institutional capacity and attract a quarter of the R&D EU investment;
 - b. The pioneering culture of the Alpine population to become the frontrunner for the implementation of the ambitious commitments taken on 15 September 2015 at the United Nations General Assembly (2030 Agenda) and on 12 December 2015 at the UNFCCC COP 21 (Paris Agreement);
 - c. The building on the innovative model of governance of EUSALP and its democratic legitimacy to galvanize the collective effort of the States and Regions to become the frontrunner in the implementation of the European Green Deal;
 - d. The view that the European Green Deal should be central to a resilient recovery after Covid-19 pandemic, as it constitutes a new sustainable and inclusive growth strategy, which is able to deliver on the twin benefits of stimulating economies and creating jobs while accelerating the green transition in a cost efficient way;

Preserving Alpine biodiversity and preventing exposure to natural risks related to climate change

10. We support:

- a. The development of multifunctional green infrastructures linking natural and semi-natural areas to establish true ecological continuums connecting urban and rural areas in the mountains, in valleys and plains in the Alpine region;
- b. The experimentation with governance mechanisms for the extension, preservation and coordination of the Alpine segments of a European Green Infrastructure network;
- c. A comprehensive, balanced, sustainable and integrated water management at the level of river basins, in order to reduce tensions on water resources and the degradation of wetlands and aquatic biodiversity;
- d. The effective continuation or implementation of sustainable land use and soil protection, as soil functions are essential components of ecosystem services;
- e. Territories to adopt integrated and regionally coordinated natural risk management mechanisms that give priority to nature-based solutions where possible;
- f. Taking into account and close monitoring of climate change and the increase in risks in regional planning;
- g. The promotion of sustainable forest management, the only one capable of ensuring all the multiple functions of forests to mountain and lowland populations, from economy to biodiversity to risk reduction.

Accelerating the energy transition in the Alpine region

11. We support:

- a. The reduction of energy consumption utilizing innovation and new materials, also through particular policies;
- b. The stimulation of investments in the renovation and energy efficiency of buildings in the Alpine region, without neglecting the issue of thermal comfort in summer, inter alia by supporting sub-regional authorities, companies and individuals in this respect and for the improvement of indoor air quality;
- c. The promotion of the construction of passive-energy and low tech buildings using local and renewable materials such as wood from the Alpine region mountains and valleys;
- d. Research and innovation as well as the development of advanced products by local companies (including start-ups and SMEs) to facilitate this transition;
- e. The environmentally friendly production of decentralized renewable energies, regarding the electricity supply as well as the heat supply, and involve sub-regional authorities and citizens in their management;
- f. The initiation of territorial cooperation on hydrogen and its necessary infrastructure in order to be able to create a coordinated prioritisation for the use of this resource, to ensure a climate-neutral and sustainable hydrogen strategy to be able to answer together to the upcoming related EU calls for projects typically related to mobility and transport;
- g. The gradual provision of the Alpine region with a transnational tool for observing and stimulating the energy transition.

Developing sustainable transport and mobility solutions

12. We support:

- a. The modal shift to rail, inland waterways and sea by taking the necessary integrated and sustainable measures for the transnational and cross-border transit of goods and working to enhance the existing potential for co-ordination and regulation;
- b. The implementation of a coordinated strategy of the Alpine Region and the convergence of policies for decarbonized and clean mobility, both in passenger and freight transport, by supporting the promotion of alternative fuels as well as stimulating investments and projects for climate neutral conversion like the “Zero Emission Valley” across the Alpine region;
- c. The continuation of the establishment of a transnational information system for passenger mobility, respecting, integrating and building on the information systems that already exist and are well-used by passengers and taking into consideration the large value of mobility data and the necessity to avoid a data monopoly or domination of private enterprises and/or non-EU enterprises;
- d. The stimulation of investments in expanding public transport and smart mobility services in cross-border regions for enhanced connectivity and a more sustainable mobility system;
- e. The identification of and discussion on sustainable solutions for a better connected mobility system including peripheral areas with a view to the revision of the TEN-T comprehensive network in 2023, taking into account the role of sustainable infrastructure networks and cross-border public transport as drivers for development, under full observance of the Alpine Convention;
- f. The realization of a better connected mobility system (passengers and freight) including peripheral areas through integrated, innovative services and ICT apps and the provision at cross-border level interoperability and harmonization of procedures and standards;
- g. The exploration, where relevant and ecologically justifiable of cable transport linking valleys to mountain sites, as well as in urban areas, if suitable, cost-efficient and superior to conventional public transport, complementing local public transport, respecting the local environment and the landscape.

Stimulating transition to sustainable year-round tourism

13. We support:

- a. The view that tourism is both structurally affected by climate change and also affected by pandemic such as Covid-19;
- b. A part of the European Green Deal dedicated to the Alpine tourism sector in order to accompany it in a green recovery and boost its transition to a sustainable year-round tourism;
- c. The launch of a cooperation network with the tourism destinations of the Alpine region to accompany them in their necessary transition towards sustainable tourism;
- d. Sustainable tourism which is climate-neutral and climate resilient, respects the environment and landscape, contributes to quality of life of local residents and is diversified throughout the seasons of the year, including by ensuring a sustainable practice of major sporting events, the quality of seasonal jobs and the maintenance and development of affordable tourism offer and by developing environmentally friendly outdoor activities, and enhancing territorial resources such as agritourism;
- e. The development of health tourism, wellness tourism, cultural tourism and local scale tourism;
- f. The systematical link of public funding to sustainability criteria in order to make this transition a success;
- g. The strengthening of the value of cultural landscapes as important assets for sustainable tourism activities.

Stimulating the production, processing and consumption of local mountain goods from the Alpine region in short supply chains

14. We support:

- a. The view that Covid-19 crisis has dramatically enlightened the need for local productions and short supply chains, already justified in order to mitigate climate change;
- b. The work to facilitate and encourage the local use of mountain wood and the consumption of local mountain agricultural and food products from the Alpine region while respecting the concept of sustainability in their use, production and consumption;
- c. The initiation of the creation of an Alpine platform, tool or label to guarantee use, production, processing and consumption of local mountain wood;
- d. The promotion and support of sustainable agro-pastoral production methods, allowing the valorization of the natural resources of the Alpine territories, while ensuring high carbon storage, conservation of good soil condition, maintenance of biodiversity and risk reduction;
- e. The development of territorial approaches to sustainable food production aimed at the local consumption of mountain food products in short and fair supply chains;
- f. The use of territorial brands and geographical indications by improving value chains linking producers and consumers in the Alpine Region as an important element for keeping sustainable Alpine land use alive;
- g. The procedures for the inclusion of the Alpine Food Heritage in the Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity;

- h. Valorization and promotion of mountain products in order to develop territorialized sector projects with multipartite contracts that guarantee a better distribution of added value, in order to improve competitiveness in mountain areas;
- i. Efforts of cooperation in order to achieve increased independence in the regional production of health devices and pharmaceutical products;
- j. The reinforcement of cooperation in order to bring back production of goods for public resilience to the Alpine region, in a way which complies with the objectives of climate neutral economy and environmental protection;
- k. The promotion, in order to positively influence the sustainable and resilient development of the whole macro-region, of short supply chains on the territories of the Alpine region. This is needed to encourage the effective use, the diversity and redundancy of resources, to invest in digitalization and connectivity, to provide paths and training and information tools, to encourage the creation of cross-sectoral governance systems, and strengthen macro-regional value chains.

Educating young people in mountain culture and enable them to participate in the sustainable development of the Alpine region

15. We support:

- a. That the young people are the future of the Alpine region and in these regards key actors for the EUSALP implementation;
- b. The increase of the participation of young people in EUSALP cooperation, to systemically integrate the ideas and proposals of young people into the EUSALP governance in particular, by taking full advantage of the opportunities offered by digital technology and by proceeding with our efforts;
- c. The stimulation of the mobility of young people, both school pupils, students, vocational and technical school pupils and apprentices, particularly in connection with mountain professions, and in the context of non-formal education, in particular by making full use of the possibilities offered by the Erasmus+ programme;
- d. The relaunch of school trips and summer camps for the young to discover the natural and cultural heritage of the mountains in all seasons and to launch annual summer camps for young people, notably in the framework of youth.shaping.eusalp;
- e. The encouragement of mutual learning of Alpine languages by young people in the Alpine region;
- f. The increase of the time spent by schoolchildren, persons in vocational education and students discovering mountain businesses, professions and green jobs;
- g. The promotion of dual education among young people, with a special focus to those job sectors that offer future job opportunities in the Alpine region;
- h. The use of the extraordinary potential of our schools, universities, universities of applied science and research organizations to lead in this education process and connect with society to involve them in citizen-science type projects thereby increasing the engagement with the Alpine Region and its challenges;
- i. The exploration, together with young people living in cities, on how to learn about the mountain culture;

- j. The promotion of a common policy for the recognition of educational qualifications and the enhancement of key competences in the Alpine region;
- k. Any sustainable policy, program, action and activity to reduce the depopulation of the internal and peripheral areas and in reverse to increase the revitalization of them.

Making the Alpine region a model laboratory for multi-level governance

16. We support:

- a. The reinforcement of the political leadership and ownership of EUSALP, by undertaking to consider and test solutions of permanent operational support to EUSALP;
- b. Its efficient and continuous operation from one Presidency to the next, with the support of the General Assembly, the Executive Board and the Action Groups;
- c. The improvement of the effectiveness of the governance, also facilitating the participation of the political representatives at each level of government and also the participation of citizens including the young people;
- d. The increase of synergies with the Alpine Convention to join forces towards the protection and sustainable development of the Alpine region;
- e. The reinforcement of the coordination of EU funding programmes, including the European Territorial Cooperation programmes, further national and integrated EU funding programmes and sub-regional cooperation in European research and rural development;
- f. The strengthening of the city-valleys-mountain cooperation, which is an important way to successfully address common challenges and find mutually suitable solutions;
- g. The encouragement, where relevant and appropriate, of the integration of the EU funding programmes implemented in the framework of shared and direct management with the priorities affirmed in this Manifesto into funding;
- h. The empowerment of local and regional actors to cope with challenges and find sustainable solutions, e.g. in CLLD (Community-Led Local Development) approaches;
- i. The reinforcement of the territorial dimensions of policies at all governance levels under the strategic orientation of the EU Territorial Agenda;
- j. The implementation of the Smart-Villages-approach in the Alpine region, to ensure digital connectivity as well as balanced living and economic development opportunities between rural and metropolitan areas, in order to support the development and the competitiveness of the Region and to better attain the sustainability targets and a green economy in the Alpine region.

17. We commit to work together to develop and carry out proposals for meeting the challenges raised by the Covid-19 pandemic and other major issues to the specific needs of the Alpine region.

18. We call on sub-regional authorities and civil society to continue their efforts towards the achievement of a successful fight against climate change of the Alpine region.