

The sustainable and resilient Alpine region is preparing in EUSALP Action Groups

Meeting Report, Thursday 10 December 2020

The seminar “*The sustainable and resilient Alpine region is preparing in EUSALP action groups*”, held last Thursday 10 December by videoconference in the occasion of 2020 **EUSALP Annual Forum**, has been the occasion for Action Group leaders and co-leaders, coordinated by Lombardy Region, to present the activities carried out during 2020 and the ones they intend to develop in 2021. Here a short overview of the presentations:

- **AG1 Research and Innovation, Anna Giorgi**

Main goal is fostering the dialogue among the quadruple helix actors (public authorities, business sector, academia, civic society) and tracking R&I topics of relevance for the next EU Programming period in line with the EU Green Deal.

Achievement:

- In 2020 AG2 developed several projects like ARPAF IMPULS4ACTION, Interreg alpine space A-RING, Interreg Alpine Space ALPGOV 2

Activities planned for 2021:

- Main goal will be establishing a University alliance/network to promote academic collaboration on shared topics related to the Alpine Region
- Organise a series of webinars on R&I topics in the Alpine Region
- Promote, in collaboration with AG3, Lifelong Learning initiatives and educational activities related to the alpine area across different regions

- **AG2 Economic development, Sylvain Guetaz**

Achievement:

- Meeting AG2: 25 June e 10 November 2020
- Ag2 is working on the strategic implementation initiative “innovation Hub for green business models” focused on three transversal topics: wood and timber chain, Tourism, Production and supply chain sustainability & resilience

Activities planned for 2021:

- Study about SMEs resilience in AS, circular economy in alpine SMEs (Led by Digital Industry Sub Group)
- Assessment of sustainability and resilience potential of supply chains, and Implementation of a secretariat to support Alpine Regions in setting up cross-regional funding schemes (Led by Bioeconomy Sub Group),

- ALPGOV 2 projects on wood labelling and creation of a network of mountain resort (Led by Health tourism Sub Group)
- AG2 is developing cross sectoral initiatives on hydrogen with AG4 and AG9. The goal is to build a great European hydrogen project in the Alpine region.

- **AG3 Labour Market, Education and Training, Mauro Casotto.**

AG3 mission is to improve the adequacy of the labour market; the aim is to enhance the quality of dual education and facilitate mobility of people. Strategic themes are dual training, skills and competences and labour market

Activities planned for 2021:

- Intersectoral initiatives - AG 3 joins 4 of the Strategic priority areas: A Carbon neutral Alpine Region, Smart Villages, Innovation Hub for Green Business, EIF: EUSALP Innovation Facility
- 28 January 2021 annual forum of AG3 focused on digital job and green job, jobs of the future, education of students and entry into the labour market, upskilling and reskilling of the adult workers

- **AG4 Mobility, Patrick Skonieczki**

The mission of AG4 is to promote intermobility and passengers freight transport in the EUSALP area.

Achievement:

- Finalisation of an assessment methodology
- They have 14 projects submitted in the alpine regions
- They launched the platform of knowledge for mobility and transport
- 2 position papers published, secondary networks, alternative propulsion system
- Interreg alpine space project LinkingAlps

Activities planned for 2021:

- 2 round of projects assessment for Eusalp
- Endorsement of AG4 Political Statement “Facing the Transport Challenge”
- Sectoral initiative on policy measures to support modal shift from road to rail
- Study on alternative propulsion systems
- Eusalp mobility conference 2021 (to be defined)

- **AG5 Connectivity and Accessibility, Carlo Vigna**

Strategic topics are digital alps, smart villages, cross border mobility, building digital infrastructures

Achievement:

- In 2020 AG5 developed numerous initiatives concerning following topics: Digital Alps, smart villages, cross-border mobility, SGI, Big Data and Open Data
- Development of smart villages cross sectoral initiative which will launch the alpine smart villages network
- Digital infrastructures roadmap

Activities planned for 2021:

- During the Digital Alps Conference on 27-28 May 2021 in Trieste will be launch the Network Alpine Smart Villages

- **AG6 Resources, Hemut Serro**

Strategic topics are protection and valorisation of alpine natural landscape, Alpine food heritage and Transversal activities (multifunctional forests etc.)

Achievement:

- AG 6 Partner Meeting 24 August 2020: workplan discussion
- AG 6 Partner Meeting 18 November 2020: Finalizing workplan
- EUSALP Relanche Task Force “Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber” on 19 November 2020

Activities planned for 2021:

- Cooperating for landscapes in times of climate crisis: study on valorisation of Alpine landscape, map of natural and cultural landscapes, landscape conference, promotion of Alpine Food Heritage

- **AG7 Green Infrastructures, Michaela Künzl**

Main goal is to make alpine region a model region for green infrastructures including rural and urban areas

Achievement:

- implementation of “star” initiatives using different funding sources
- Project «Impuls4Action - Peatland»: Mapping, Regional workshops in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Slovenia and France

Activities planned for 2021:

- Elaborating a roadmap peatland (mid-2021)
- Implementation of strategic initiatives with LUIGI Project (Alpine cities network) to create a green business model (in collaboration with AG7)

- **AG8 Risk Governance and Climate Change, Kilian Heil**

Risk governance, adaption to climate change impact and mainstreaming climate adaptation and risk management

Achievement:

- White paper on forest fire in the alps in Austria
- Development and application of the tool Natural hazard check for municipalities
- Enhancement of the climate adaptation platform for the alps
- Natural hazard models
- Preparation of concept start of the cross sectoral initiative Climate resilient spatial planning

Activities planned for 2021:

- In 2021-22 they intend to transfer the applicability of natural hazard check for municipalities from Austria to Bavaria

- Further development, implementation and dissemination of CAPA
- Roadshow on 13 October 2021 in Rosenheim (Bavaria)
- Stakeholder workshop in Vorarlberg (Austria) on 15 October 2021

- **AG9 Energy, Benjamin Auer**

AG9 mission is to make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy

Achievement

- 3 meetings of AG9 in 2020 organised into sub-groups: energy strategies, energy efficiency in strategic sector renewable energy, smart grids and smart villages
- Coordination of the actions with the EU Commission and with partner organisations (Alpine Climate Board.
- Organisation of EUSALP Energy Conference in Chamonix.
- Implementing Cross-Sectoral Policy Area “A carbon neutral Alpine region” (AG 1-5 + AG 9)

Activities planned for 2021:

- Next AG 9 meeting on 11th March 2021
- autumn 2021: energy conference focused on topic of energy community
- They are working on some projects like CAESAR and REDIAFOR.
- Projects ALPGRIDS and SMART VILLAGES ongoing.
- 2021 will be a central year for strengthening the development of the cross sectoral strategic initiatives

Policy dialogues: triple helix approach for a sustainable and resilient Alpine region

1. INNOVATION AS A KEY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Philip Pfaller, Bavarian Research Alliance (AG1 expert)

Maria Grazia Pedrana: *How to develop a sustainable effective research and innovation area in the alpine region?*

Philip Pfaller: the sustainable research can foster innovation increasing the impact of Smart Specialization Strategies (S3), implementing the Green Deal objectives in a cross-sectoral challenge perspective, making better use of funding Programmes and supporting strategic Partnerships (such as those established in S3-4AlpClusters, ArdiaNet and A-Ring projects)

Luca Mion, HIT Trentino Hub Innovation (AG2 Member)

Maria Grazia Pedrana: *What does it mean innovation for sustainable development for the enterprises on the alpine regions which are mainly S&M enterprises?*

Luca Mion: the current development model is bringing us to an ecological disaster because of gas emission, lack of resources and the fact that especially the developing countries are suffering the consequences of the global warming. The innovation model that we have today is mostly focused on economic growth and not on

sustainable development, the aim is monetary wealth and not sustainability. Recent data show that the patent activity in green technologies is growing always faster so it is clear that from an industrial point of view the digital industry can provide useful tools to help fostering the transition to a sustainable model. It is not possible for a company to reduce pollution without digital technology. The idea of bringing digital and sustainable development together should represent the core of the strategic thinking for the future business. Sustainability is a key driver for innovation

Thomas Egger, SAB Swiss Center for Mountain Regions (AG5 Co-Leader)

Maria Grazia Pedrana: *What we can do to strength the resilience of mountain villages? What about social innovation?*

Thomas Egger: Social innovation is the key word. Smart villages topic is not only about technological solutions and digitalization, but also much more about social innovation. During the Covid-19 emergency the smart villages have reacted better to the crisis because they were able to easier communicate with their population. This proximity between population and territory helps to strength the resilience of the mountain area. So, the idea is to talk to people to better match needs and solutions.

We need to create a network of smart villages in the alpine area to increase the opportunity of transforming this development model into concrete policies.

2. SPEAKERS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE EUSALP

Tina Trampuš, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation (AG7 Co-Leader)

Maria Grazia Pedrana: *Which is the contribution of nature to tackle climate change?*

Tina Trampuš: Nature is playing a big role in everyday life; we all now the development is not possible without conservation. It would be important to introduce in the Alpine countries a joint ministry for environment, agriculture, and economy.

Wolfgang Lexer, Environment Agency Austria (AG8 Member)

Maria Grazia Pedrana: *Are there other crucial policy areas into which we need to mainstream climate change?*

Wolfgang Lexer: Yes, basically all sectors and their policies are affected by climate change impact. The goal is to mainstream adaptation measures into policies, extending them to different sectors.

The initiative for green infrastructures is truly relevant, ecological connectivity is the main adaptation strategy to conserve biodiversity in the face of climate change, green spaces are essential

AG8 offers the climate adaptation platform CAPA to support the mainstreaming process through the provision of knowledge and information.

Etienne Vienot, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Energy Environment Agency (AG9 Co-Leader)

Maria Grazia Pedrana: *Energy and climate change are closely related. Which particularly action may be targeted at local and regional austerities in the alpine territories?*

Etienne Vienot: AG9 held in late September a conference about climate risk and energy. They usually focused the annual conference about energy, but this year they introduced the climate risk because they are aware that these two topics are strictly connected.

Local authorities need to consider the 3 topics (energy, risk and climate adaptation) at the same time in order to develop effective policies. Transversality is a key issue for energy.