European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

Annual Forum

SUMMARY
December 10, 2020: session 16h35-18h05

WORKSHOP 5 - The sustainable and resilient Alpine region is preparing in EUSALP action groups

What achievements of the nine action groups in 2020? What projects for 2021? From EUSALP action groups to public policies: the five strategic areas of activity for a sustainable and resilient Alpine region

Introduction by Christian BARRET, General Delegate of the French Presidency of the EUSALP, who underlines the driving role of the 9 action groups which are the linchpins of the implementation of the EUSALP and are both thematic centers of expertise, experience transfer platforms and incubators for future European projects.

Maria-Grazia Pedrana, the moderator of the roundtable, thanks Mrs. Barret and gives the floor to Giacomo LUCIANI and David MATZEK-LICHTENSTEIN, Programming Officers at the European Commission-DG REGIO who salute the knowledge transfer work carried out by the EUSALP action groups. This work valuably contributes to a European Green Deal adapted to the realities of the territory. The way in which, under the impetus of the AURA Region, a green hydrogen network of Managing Authorities of ERDF and relevant stakeholders was designed in this respect is exemplary.

Following, Maria-Grazia PEDRANA invites the pilots of the action groups to assess the actions carried out during the past year.

Anna GIORGI, leader of action group 1 (Economic growth and Innovation) mentions 3 actions: the collaborative project around soil conservation; the Alpine Space "A-ring" project (collecting information on priorities for research and innovation in the Alpine region); the *Alpine Space* project with 9 other action groups on strategic priorities falling within the framework of the next programming period. In 2021, there will be the launch of a university alliance and a specific work will be carried out on the needs, in terms of innovation, related to the pandemic.

Sylvain GUETAZ, leader of action group 2 (Economic development) talks about the strategic initiative *Innovation up for green business models* which concerns three cross-

cutting subjects: wood and the wood industry, tourism, production and sustainability of supply chains, as well as resilience, especially in the industrial sector. This activity found its extension in events organized by the French presidency. In 2021, AG2 will carry out a wood labeling activity, a networking of mountain resorts and a study on the resilience of SMEs. There will also be a major focus on hydrogen in connection with GA4 and 9.

Mauro CASOTTO, leader of action group 3 (Training), indicates that the work of the GA has focused on three areas: dual training, skills and labor market. In 2021, as an extension of this work, projects will be developed on the design and testing of new educational formats, the identification of the criteria sought by companies and green and digital jobs. There will also be transversal work carried out on the following themes: the carbon neutral Alpine region, smart villages and innovation hubs.

Patrick SKONIEZKI, representative of action group 4 (Mobility) first reviews the success of the project evaluation process started 3 years ago and which resulted in the EUSALP labeling of 14 projects. In addition, following the organization of a workshop, two documents highlight the key post-2020 priorities: modal shift and secondary networks. AG4 has also underlined the importance of cross-border transport through the ARPAF project.
In 2021, other projects will be assessed for labeling and a political declaration will be proposed. The work on the modal shift and the study on alternative propulsion systems will continue, allowing cooperation with AG9 on hydrogen.

Helmut SERRO, leader of action group 6 (Cultural resources) indicates the main areas of intervention of the AG: the protection and enhancement of natural and cultural Alpine landscapes and the Alpine food heritage. Other activities revolve around multifunctional forests and spatial planning. In 2021, the work of AFG will focus on the climate crisis: cooperation for landscapes; a study on the preservation of the organization of biodiversity; the use of maps of natural and cultural landscapes; conferences on landscapes; actions for the promotion of alpine food or culinary heritage.

Michaela KÜNZL, leader of action group 7 (Green infrastructure): after the adoption of a political declaration which was adopted by 27 states and regions, 2020 has been a year of capitalization, in particular a project of 87 peatland modules very relevant for climate adaptation and which could lead to the LIFE program. The GA worked on another strategic initiative: the LUIGI project which aims to enhance the commercial value of the maintenance of green infrastructure.

Kilian HEIL, leader of action group 8 (Risk management and climate change), says 2020 has seen several achievements. The first is a white paper on forest fires in the Alps. There has also been the development of a tool for controlling natural risks for municipalities. The latter concerned an international study on natural risks which will continue in 2021. A workshop on spatial planning is also planned.

Benjamin AUER, leader of action group 9 (Energy), discusses the main activity of the group in 2020 which concerns green hydrogen mentioned by AURA Region and AG2, as well as climate targeting systems in which AG 1 to 5 are involved. IN 2021, the EUSALP Energy Conference will again take place. Projects benefiting from ARPAF funding will also be continued, namely the CAESAR project on energy efficiency in SMEs and the REDIAFOR project on forests. The AG9 is also involved in a project on cross-sectorial initiatives, a project on alpine energy networks (grid) and another on smart villages already mentioned.

The Q&A session addresses the key importance of research and technological innovation, both economically and in the fight against global warming. Maria-Grazia PEDRANA warmly thanks all the participants and indicates that all the presentations will be broadcast on the website.