

Declaration “Population and culture”

The ministers of the parties to the Alpine Convention

regard the socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects mentioned in Article 2, Paragraph 2, Item a., as being central to the implementation of an integrated policy to ensure the protection and sustainable development of the Alpine area. They hold the conviction that the value of the Alpine area lies in its diversity.

They are therefore committed to preserving and promoting cultural diversity in the Alps as well as to building bridges and fostering dialogue between cultures.

The ministers recognise that for the inhabitants of the Alpine area to identify with the Alpine Convention and its protocols, they need to constitute a people-centred, sustainable development policy that focuses on the needs, wishes and opinions of the people who live in the Alpine area.

The ministers recognise the right of the inhabitants of the Alpine areas to live in these areas on a permanent basis and to engage in economic activities there.

They also recognise the right of Alpine residents to equality of opportunity, both within the Alpine region as well as in relation to the residents of non-Alpine areas. These points constitute the essential direction of the ministers' political aims.

The ministers are aware of the effects of demographic change on living and working conditions in the Alpine areas and commit to the following aims and principles which will be implemented through the exemplary measures set out in the annex to this declaration within the framework of the applicable national regulations and based on the available resources.

I. Community Awareness and Cooperation

Community Awareness and Identity

1. Affirmation of the shared responsibility of the Alpine and non-Alpine populations and of political decision-makers at all levels, for the maintenance of the cultural uniqueness of the Alpine environment with a particular view to strengthening community awareness and the identity of the people who live in it.

Cooperation within the Alpine Area and Between Alpine and non-Alpine Areas

2. Facilitation of communication between the various linguistic groups, encouragement of dialogue, of cooperation and of knowledge-sharing within the Alpine area and between inhabitants of the Alpine and the non Alpine areas, as a means of strengthening mutual understanding and respect.
3. Strengthening of sustainable regional development through cooperation and the sharing of experiences between the various cultural groups of the Alps and with people from other mountainous regions throughout the world.

Transparency and Participation

4. Recognition of the significant role of civil society in promoting sustainable development in the Alpine area and in fostering transparency in the relationships between the state authorities and the general population as well as encouraging the participation of the general population in public affairs.

II. Cultural Diversity

Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage

1. Research, maintenance and development of the existing physical and non-physical cultural heritage and traditional knowledge. This applies in particular to traditional methods of landscape management and the architectural and artistic heritage, including traditional methods of working the fields, forestry, handcrafts and industrial production.
2. Support of modern culture and the maintenance and development of local and regional traditions in the areas of expression and representation (customs, literature, music, dance, theatre, various types of communication and so forth).

Linguistic Diversity

3. Improvement of the conditions under which the linguistic diversity of the Alpine area can be maintained and promoted, with particular regard to the traditional cultural and linguistic communities.
4. Recognition of the meaning and value of the toponomastic heritage (particularly place names and field names) in the Alpine area for cultural and historical reasons and also for the sake of their appreciation.

Creative, Artistic Activities

5. Support of artistic creation in all its forms including the artistic expression of Alpine themes.

III. Living environment, Quality of Life and Equal Opportunity

Condition of Settlements and their Structures

1. Maintenance and modernisation of the existing settlements and developing them on the basis of the principle of sustainability and on the basis of the idea of taking the particular characteristics of each site into account.

General Service Provision and Primary Health Care

2. Maintenance, guarantee and development of de-centralised primary health care.

Schools, Job Training, Further Education and Adult Education.

3. Maintaining and developing an up to date school system and job training facilities as well as appropriate adult education programmes on a local and regional level. In all areas of education and training, account will be taken of any factors that relate specifically to the Alpine environment.

Leisure Activities

4. Maintenance of broadly diversified, year-round cultural programmes and, where possible, a suitable programme of leisure activities for local residents.

Communication and Information

5. Maintenance and promotion of the diversity of the media with a view to protecting the cultural characteristics of the Alpine area.
6. Facilitating access of the Alpine population to modern communication technologies.

Community Life

7. Fostering mutual understanding, dialogue and community life in settlements throughout the Alpine area.

IV. Economic Area

Regional Development

1. Implementation of a clear regional policy aimed at a diversified and independent development of the region through the sustainable use of inherent potential and through the use of new socially and environmentally friendly technologies.

Value Chains

2. Strengthening and development of local value chains to promote local and regional products and services.

Employment

3. Putting in place the measures needed to ensure that attractive jobs are on offer and, where necessary, combinations of jobs.

V. The Role of Urban and Rural Areas

Relationships Between the Towns and the Surrounding Countryside

1. Recognition of the significance of Alpine cities, particularly as regards their role as centres of social, cultural and economic activity that interact with the surrounding area.

Relationships Between Alpine and non-Alpine Cities.

2. Building and strengthening relationships between towns within the Alpine area and with towns and cities outside the Alpine area with a view to facilitating the exchange of information between Alpine and non-Alpine people in the areas of business, academia, and culture.

The Role of Rural areas.

3. Recognition of the importance of rural Alpine areas and of their varied, heterogeneous, and discrete economic, natural, and cultural scope. Putting in place integrated strategies that are suited to the particular potential of each area.

Annexe to the “Population and Culture” Declaration¹

I. Community Awareness and Cooperation

Measures to promote **community awareness and identity**

- Support for organisations that promote community values
- Promotion and further development of partnerships between local and regional authorities in the Alps
- Activities that gives the population access to knowledge about the Alpine area that is of historical, economic and environmental interest
- Information and education programmes concerning the Alpine Convention and its protocols

Measures to **Promote Cooperation Between the Alpine area and the non-Alpine areas**

- Establishing, consolidating and developing cross-border and inter-regional cooperation networks
- Activities to promote cultural exchange as well as the sharing of information and experiences concerning specific issues
- Events, exhibitions, publications, film productions and research
- Production and dissemination of multilingual publications in the languages of the Alpine area
- Projects in the context of international partnerships between Alpine areas
- Cross-border exchange programmes within the Alps and with areas outside the Alps

Measures Regarding **Transparency and Participation**

- Promotion of further education and training of decision-makers in the areas of participation and mediation
- Support of local Agenda 21 processes

II. Cultural Diversity

Measures Concerning **Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage**

- Establishment and development of local and regional documentation resource centres for cross-referencing purposes and for the dissemination of information about tangible and intangible natural and cultural heritage
- Preservation and renovation of structures and buildings that have historical and architectural merit
- Availability of training to enable the passing on of skills associated with traditional Alpine crafts
- Supporting innovative forms of cultural creation and expression

¹The measures contained in this section are given as examples

- Programmes and projects in the areas of information and education (courses, competitions, experimental workshops, etc) with a view to imparting inherited knowledge and traditions
- Fostering cooperation among relevant public and private museums, educational establishments and private individuals

Measures Concerning **Linguistic Diversity**

- Targeted support for the languages of the Alpine area, and of regional languages in particular. This includes dialects at school
- Further training of teachers
- Production of the necessary teaching materials
- Fostering linguistic diversity and multilingualism and ensuring the linguistic integration of migrants
- Building partnerships between schools from different linguistic areas
- Cultural products in local languages, particularly music, literature and/or theatrical presentations, language courses and print and electronic media
- Projects to acquire and develop regional knowledge through toponomastic research
- Erection of information boards in towns and villages with the most important and significant place names

Measures Concerning **Creative and Artistic Activities**

- Organising art exhibitions and artistic events
- Invitations to tender for the creation of quality labels, logos, and corporate design for local administrative bodies and businesses in the Alpine area
- Giving art courses and workshops with specifically Alpine themes
- Projects and initiatives to encourage artistic creation using raw materials from the Alpine region

III. Human Habitat, Quality of Life and Equal Opportunity

Measures Concerning **The Condition of Settlements and Buildings**

- Taking sustainability principles into account when planning and building
- Additional training programmes in sustainable construction for building industry professionals and for the authorities responsible for issuing building permits
- Events and initiatives aimed at raising awareness among the general public about sustainable construction and sustainable use of resources

Measures Concerning **General Service Provision and Primary Health Care**

- Measures aimed at a more even distribution of basic service provision
- Maintenance of local service provision via improved availability at multi-purpose centres
- Re-establishment or improvement of existing public transport facilities

Measures Concerning **Schooling, Job Training and Further Education Including Adult Education**

- Ensuring the provision of suitable education facilities including appropriate teaching materials and technologies
- Adult education courses
- Facilitation of school partnerships

Measures Concerning **Leisure Activities**

- Provision of suitable leisure activities and facilities. The needs and wishes of the various regional populations are to be heeded
- Increased support of local cultural and sporting clubs
- Building, maintaining and refurbishing cultural and sporting facilities, social and environmental considerations permitting
- Supporting youth work in the areas of sport and culture

Measures Concerning **Communication and Information**

- Securing the presence of the media in remote Alpine regions through the provision of public media outlets
- Promoting communication and information provision in regional languages
- Putting in place a framework for establishing print media in the regional languages
- Encouraging the coverage of issues concerning the Alpine area

Measures Concerning **Community Living**

- Maintenance and promotion of meeting places
- Promotion of cooperation and exchange programmes
- Valorisation of volunteer work and neighbourhood assistance

IV. Economic Area

Measures Concerning **Regional Development**

- Specific measures for the economic advancement of mountain areas to be included in all sector-based policies
- Reinforcement of initiatives for the promotion of socially, culturally and environmentally friendly tourism
- Fostering regional policies which address the specific needs of mountain areas
- Specific economic support programmes that target young people
- Supporting regional development work which is aimed at increasing cooperation between agriculture, forestry, the trades, tourism and other areas of economic activity

Measures Concerning **Value Chains**

- Establishment and development of regional brands, quality standards and systems of quality labelling for products and services from the Alpine area

- Support for the marketing of local and regional products
- Support for training in this area

Measures Concerning **Employment**

- Support for long term public/private investment for the creation of jobs, particularly for highly qualified people
- Creation of well-paid jobs
- Improving the social security net, especially for seasonal workers

V. Role of Urban and Rural Areas

Measures Concerning **Relationships Between the Towns and the Surrounding Countryside**

- Initiatives to increase awareness of people from urban areas and from the country regarding their joint responsibility to preserve the cultural and natural heritage for future generations
- Cooperation between towns. Cooperation also between towns and the surrounding communities within the context of information exchanges and development projects across communities on a national and international level, involving the pursuit of aims that are in line with the Alpine Convention's environmental, economic and developmental aims
- Communication and information campaigns to avoid and resolve conflicts regarding land use

Measures Concerning **Relationships Between Alpine Towns and Towns Outside the Alps**

- Voluntary agreements between Alpine regional authorities and bodies outside the Alpine area
- Exchange and visiting programmes for young people with particular interests that are pertinent to the urban partnerships between Alpine and non-Alpine towns
- Partnerships between Alpine and non-Alpine towns and communities with a view to sharing information and to demonstrating best practice techniques

Measures Concerning **The Role of Rural Areas**

- Guaranteeing and supporting cooperation and sharing experiences across rural areas
- Development of political strategies to make the most of inherent potential and synergies as well as of creative regional milieu
- Guaranteeing equal access to infrastructure, information and knowledge in order to strengthen the position of rural areas as regards their economic competitiveness