

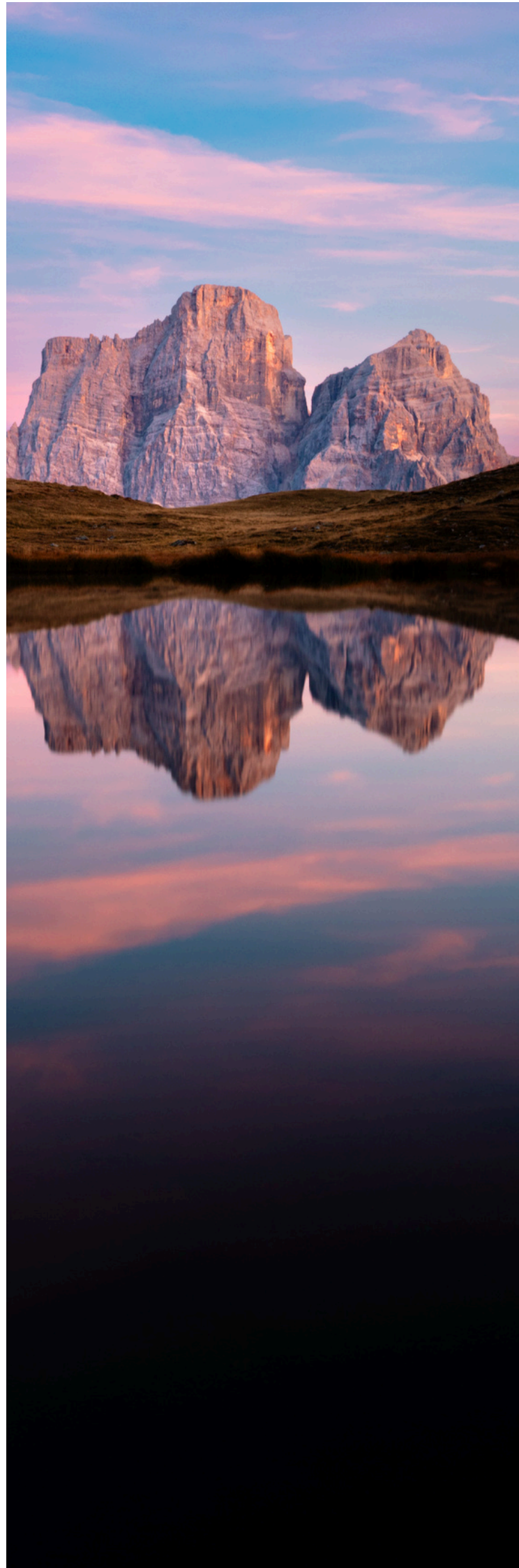
20

25

ACTIVITY REPORT

OF THE PERMANENT
SECRETARIAT OF THE
ALPINE CONVENTION

Submitted to the 83rd meeting of
the Permanent Committee of the
Alpine Conference



WORKING TOGETHER TO PROGRESS ALPINE GOALS

The year 2025 put mountains, and, in particular, glaciers, in the spotlight. Designated by the United Nations as the International Year of Glaciers' Preservation, it also saw the celebration of the first World Glacier Day on 25 March, a second dialogue on mountains and climate change approved by the UNFCCC COP30 for 2026, and, most recently, a resolution on preserving glaciers, especially in mountain regions, adopted at the 7th United Nations Environment Assembly.

These developments have accompanied the Alpine Convention's own work and activities this past year. With many events and meetings dedicated to glaciers and work progressing on the 11th Report on the State of the Alps on Alpine glaciers, we have taken important steps forward on the topic. In 2025, the biggest change was the transition of the Presidency of the Alpine Convention from Slovenia to Italy. This Activity Report marks the halfway point of the Italian Presidency, looking back at a year full of productive meetings, successful exchanges, and interesting events. The Permanent Committee has been following the progress of the Italian Presidency programme and, more broadly, the implementation of our Multi-Annual Work Programme (2023-2030). Our Thematic Working Bodies have also been contributing to these activities while fulfilling the objectives of their mandates. And at the centre of this ecosystem is the Permanent Secretariat and its small but dedicated team striving for the achievement of the Alpine Convention's goals in close cooperation with the Contracting Parties, Observers, and our many other partners.

The challenges we face in the Alps continue to grow due to climate change, biodiversity loss, depopulation, and other pressures.

These are not challenges that stop at borders, which is why the Alpine Convention has such an important role to play. We must neither overlook nor downplay the value of talking to each other and trying to find solutions together. It is only through sharing knowledge, best practices and expertise, and supporting each other that we can hope to mitigate as far as possible and adapt to the changes happening in our living environment.

Alenka Smerkolj

Secretary General of the Alpine Convention

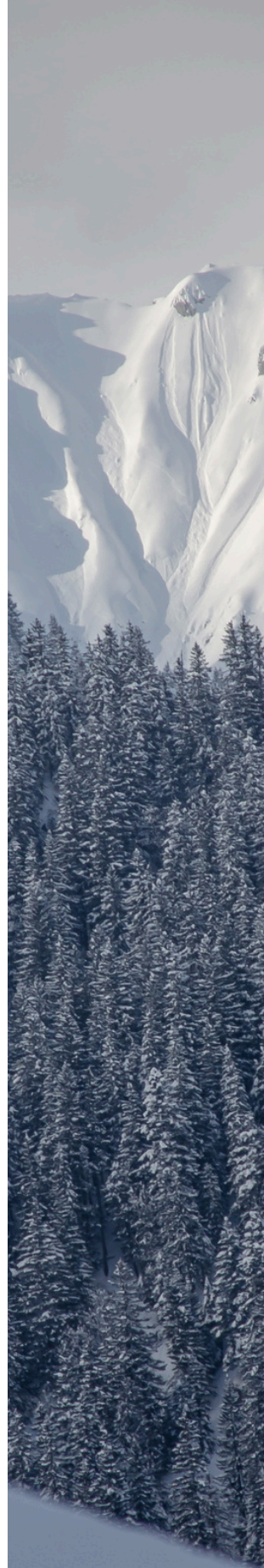




TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

Support to the Alpine Convention bodies

Slovenian Presidency and Alpine Conference	05
Italian Presidency	06
German Presidency preparation	07
Permanent Committee	07
Compliance Committee	09
Thematic Working Bodies	10

02

Networking

Contracting Parties	17
Observers	18
Infopoints	19
EUSALP	20
Further Alpine cooperation	24
International cooperation	27

03

SOIA

Reports on the State of the Alps	31
Alpine Convention Atlas	33
Research and education networking	36

04

Projects

Reading Mountains Festival	36
Young Academics Award	39
Photo Contest	40

05

Communication

Communication cooperation	42
Online presence	43
Bringing the Alpine Convention closer to the people	44

06

Permanent Secretariat team

.....	45
-------	----



SUPPORT TO THE BODIES OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION

The year 2025 marked the transition between the two-year Alpine Convention presidencies of Slovenia and Italy. It started with the XVIII Alpine Conference in Slovenia and continued with the unfolding of the Italian Presidency programme across all bodies and workflows of the Convention. Not only the management team and the respective Presidency officers, but also all other staff members of the Permanent Secretariat continuously supported both presidencies in terms of contents, logistics, and communication.



Alpine
Conference



Permanent
Committee
meetings



Compliance
Committee
meetings



Thematic
Working
Bodies
meetings



Slovenian Presidency and Alpine Conference

The year began with final preparations for the XVIII Alpine Conference, which took place at the end of January in Brdo pri Kranju and marked the conclusion of the fourth Slovenian Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

Under the motto 'Quality of life in the Alps for all', the 2023-2024 Presidency yielded outcomes in each of the three priority areas of the Alpine Convention's Multi-Annual Work Programme 2023-2030 (MAP):

- The Tenth Report on the State of the Alps dealing with quality of life in the Alps (more details are provided in the SOIA chapter)
- Recommendations on climate change education in the Alps, illustrated by good practice examples
- Policy brief on biodiversity providing strategic guidance for the process of translating the global biodiversity goals to the Alpine level.

At the Conference, the political debate focused on how to prevent natural disasters from affecting the quality of life in the Alps.

The winners of the Young Academics Award were announced during the Ministers' reception, concluding a joint project between the Presidency, the Permanent Secretariat, and ISCAR (cf. SOIA chapter).

The Secretary General – as well as the Chair of the Alpine Climate Board – also attended the final event of the Slovenian Presidency in early April, the traditional Alpine Convention Day, which was structured as a workshop on climate change and natural risks.

Finally, the Secretariat prepared all required financial and content reports to conclude the management of the fund it was entrusted with to finance most Presidency activities as well as the position of the Presidency Support Officer at the Secretariat.



Italian Presidency

Italy developed the programme of its 2025–2026 Presidency in continuity with both the implementation of the MAP and the results of the Slovenian Presidency, focusing on the following thematic areas: **biodiversity, climate change, and Alpine population and culture**.

Regarding the first priority, **biodiversity**, Italy, through the Alpine Biodiversity Board (ABB – see dedicated section), is working on the elaboration of an Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan based on the policy brief prepared by the Slovenian Presidency. This process is supported by the Interreg Alpine Space AlpsLife project on the monitoring of Alpine biodiversity.

Within the second priority area, **climate change**, the Italian Presidency has chosen the topic of ‘Alpine glaciers, permafrost, and the water cycle’ for the Eleventh Report on the State of the Alps (RSA 11). One milestone besides the meetings of the dedicated working group was the organisation of an expert workshop on ‘Alpine glaciers in a changing climate’ (more information is provided in the SOIA chapter).

Still within the scope of climate change, the Presidency is carrying out an Alpine-wide collection of local climate change adaptation initiatives as the basis for a meta-analysis aimed at supporting the transfer of good practices.

Finally, the Presidency foresees the organisation of a conference on sustainable tourism mobility, for which the Permanent Secretariat supported consultations with Parties, Observers, and the Transport Working Group.

Already in 2024, Italy started gathering demographic, social, and economic data on the Alpine population to update the findings of the RSA 5 on ‘Demographic changes in the Alps’ and guide sustainable development policies. The Permanent Secretariat acts as an observer in the corresponding agreement signed between the Italian coordinating institutions and is supporting the exchange and dissemination of information.

Furthermore, the Presidency, with support from the Secretariat, invited all Parties and Observers to join a Task Force dedicated to Alpine culture, which held first exchanges with the aim of promoting initiatives in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

The Permanent Secretariat also participated in this year’s two meetings of the Italian National Coordination Board, aimed at consolidating the involvement of the Italian territory in the Presidency activities.

Finally, the Secretariat is managing a fund entrusted to it by the Presidency to finance most of the programme’s activities.

The Permanent Secretariat acknowledges the support of the Italian Presidency for its outreach projects, such as the 2025 editions of the Reading Mountains Festival and Photo Contest as well as the 2026 Young Academics Award.

The Secretary General signed a framework agreement for the support to the Presidency with the Director-General for European, International Affairs and Sustainable Finance of the Italian Ministry, also Chair of the Permanent Committee, in Rome in June.

All activities are being developed in close coordination between the Presidency and the Secretariat, initiated by a joint staff retreat organised in Bolzano/Bozen as the first official event in early March and continuing with daily exchanges especially through the Bolzano/Bozen operational branch office, whose staff is front line for supporting the Presidency.



German Presidency preparation



The German delegation began preparing their upcoming 2027-2028 Presidency during this year. The Secretariat supported the definition of a tentative programme and schedule through meetings of the Secretary General with the delegation in Berlin in April and in Munich in October, as well as participating in a networking event with the Observers in Berlin in November and numerous online exchanges.

Permanent Committee

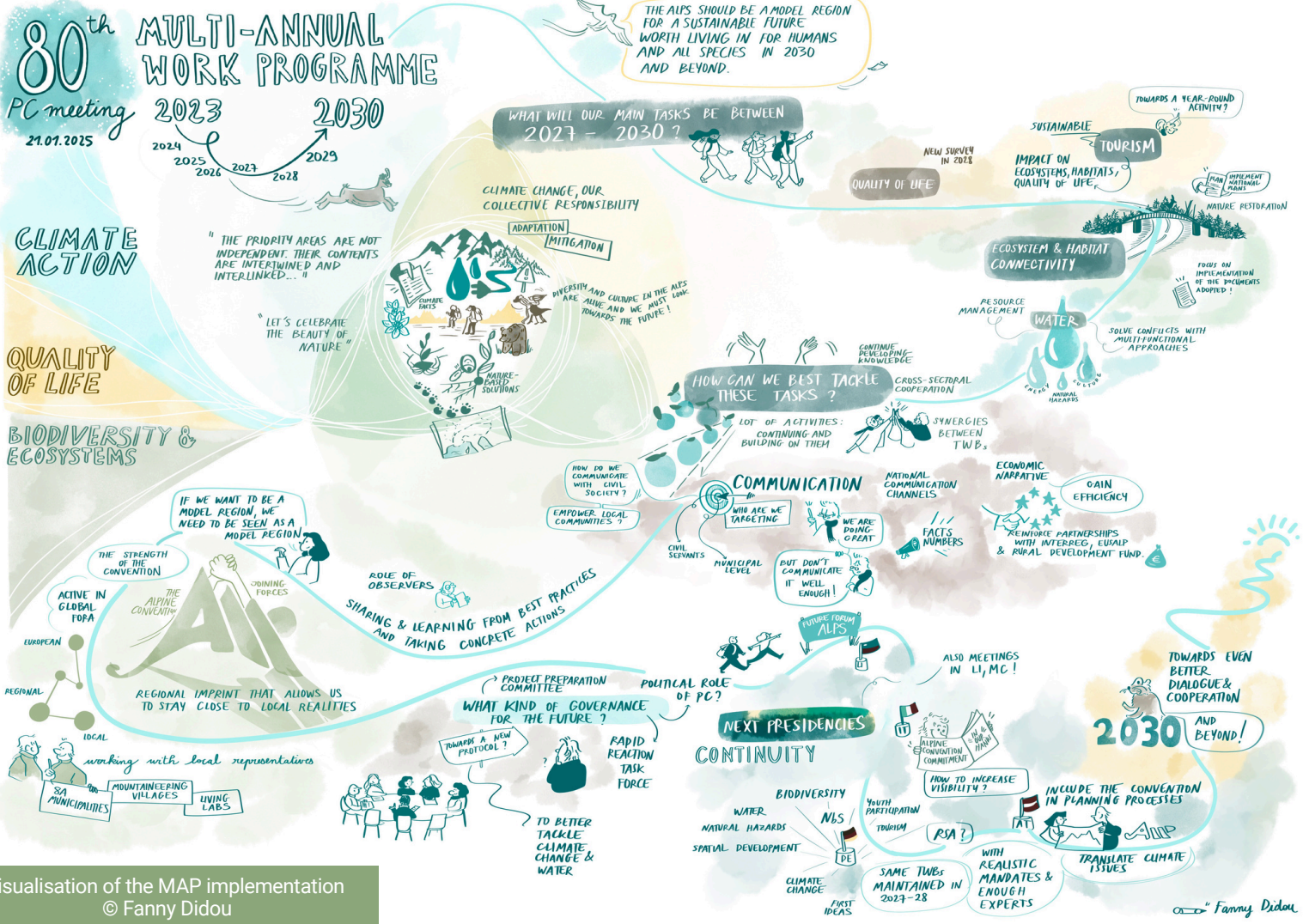
Still under the Slovenian Presidency, the Alpine Conference was immediately preceded by the 80th meeting of the Permanent Committee (PC), dedicated to a review of the implementation of the MAP 2023-2030.

The Permanent Secretariat organised for a graphic facilitator to support the discussions. She had produced a poster clustering the activities already carried out or planned by all Alpine Convention bodies in 2023-2026, and visually recorded the inputs provided in the meeting for the second half of the MAP.

The Secretariat also supported the organisation of the two PC meetings under the Italian Presidency: PC81 in Rome in March, and PC82 in Milan in October.

Both sessions allowed exchanges on ongoing activities in the three topic areas of the Presidency programme.

At the PC82, the Permanent Secretariat contributed to the debates with a joint report with the Presidency on the opportunities to promote mountain biodiversity in the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as with an overview of the participation of Observers in meetings.



The Permanent Secretariat also presented the report on the execution of its budget for the period 2023-2024 and corresponding audit, and the completed budget for 2025-2026 was approved.

During the PC81 in Rome, the Presidency showcased cooperation initiatives in the field of biodiversity with a side event on 'LIFE projects for the Alps'.

Briefings with Heads of Delegation were regularly organised in person and online while exchanges between the Presidency and the Observers took place ahead of each PC meeting.



Compliance Committee

The Permanent Secretariat collected inputs from the Parties and Observers and elaborated the final reports on the 'Extraordinary compliance procedure regarding deregulation measures to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy' and on the verification of the 'Implementation of the recommendations from the final report 'Economical use of soil' of the Compliance Committee to the XV Alpine Conference'. Both reports were adopted at the first meeting of the Compliance Committee (CC) under the Italian Presidency in mid-May in Rome. Due to its topicality, the first report was published on the Alpine Convention website, without recommendations, ahead of its formal approval at the XIX Alpine Conference. The Secretariat produced first drafts of the translations in all four Alpine languages, which will be submitted to the Contracting Parties for editorial comments.

Additionally, the Secretariat prepared the final report regarding the in-depth review on the 'Conservation of soil in wetlands and moors', adopted by the CC at its second meeting of the year which was hosted by Monaco. The Secretariat is also preparing translations of this report in all four Alpine languages.

Finally, the Secretariat prepared the discussion on the selection of a new topic for the next in-depth review. In this context, it has been tasked with drafting a set of questions on the selected topic. It will also analyse the compliance mechanism with regard to the Committee's discretion in selecting topics for the next in-depth reviews.

Organisational preparations for the next meeting, to be held in Rome at the end of April 2026, also started.



**Final report on the
'Extraordinary compliance
procedure regarding
deregulation measures to
accelerate the deployment
of renewable energy'**

**Implementing
recommendations from
the final report
'Economical use of soil'**

**In-depth review on the
'Conservation of soil in
wetlands and moors'**

Thematic Working Bodies

2

Meetings of
the Chairs

43

Meetings of the
Thematic
Working Bodies

6

Public
workshops

1

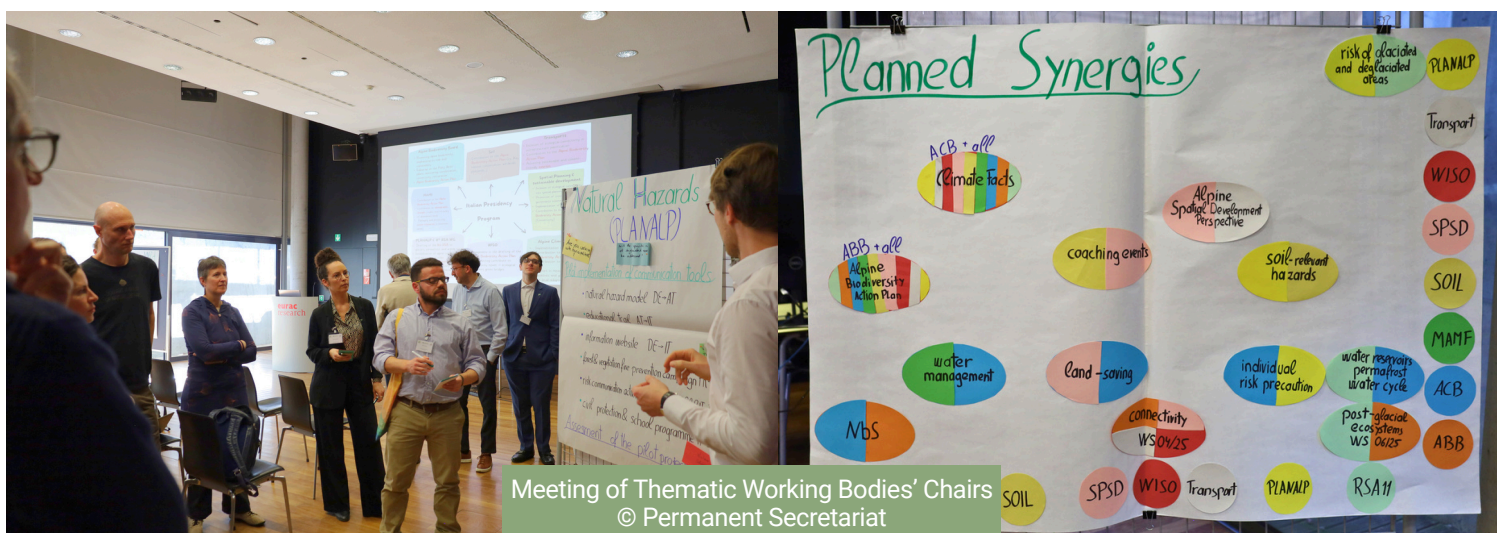
Public
webinar

At the XVIII Alpine Conference, the products of all eight Thematic Working Bodies (TWBs) were approved and their mandates for the new biennium adopted. A new ad-hoc Working Group (WG) dedicated to the elaboration the RSA 11 was established and the activities of the RSA 10 WG concluded – the activities of both these groups are reported in the SOIA chapter.

The first Alpine-wide event of the Italian Presidency was a meeting of the Chairs of the nine TWBs held in Bolzano/Bozen in early March. The cross-sectoral exchange continued bilaterally and in an online meeting held in mid-October, both moderated by the Permanent Secretariat.

Each TWB is supported by a member of the Permanent Secretariat's team in terms of logistics, administration, and for some contents. The Secretariat helps the Chairs mobilise the TWB members and regularly informs members, together with the Presidency, about the relevant ongoing activities within the Convention, supporting synergies between the TWBs, as well as with other stakeholders such as EUSALP Action Groups and projects funded by the Interreg Alpine Space Programme (ASP).

The Permanent Secretariat also continued its social media campaign giving insights into the work of the TWBs with attractive visuals: in 2025, the new chairpersons and their expectations for their group were showcased. In 2026, highlights of the results adopted by the XVIII Alpine Conference will be presented.



The Alpine Biodiversity Board's new mandate is fully focused on the preparation of the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan. The Action Plan is structured around four pillars identified in the policy brief 'Biodiversity in the Alps': conservation, connectivity, restoration, and monitoring.

To facilitate this work, the Secretariat supported the Chair in establishing four core groups based on voluntary participation by ABB members. Their specific objectives were validated during the first ABB plenary meeting held in early spring in Rome.

The Secretariat actively participated in the numerous meetings of each core group.

Activities included:

- The drafting of an Alpine list of species and habitats and a scoring system to assess their priority levels by the conservation core group (led by France and Monaco)
- Two workshops by the connectivity core group (led by Slovenia) together with the SPSPD WG and in cooperation with the PlanToConnect ASP project
- A workshop by the restoration core group (led by Germany)
- A joint workshop of all core groups on monitoring organised by the monitoring group (led by Italy), as well as regular exchanges of the latter with the AlpsLife ASP project.



The Secretariat also represented the ABB in a meeting dedicated to the preparation of restoration plans organised by the European Commission. It demonstrated how the Alpine Convention had successfully suggested the inclusion of a dedicated question on transnational aspects in the EU template and prepared elements for a coordinated response by all Alpine countries emphasising the role of the Alpine Convention.

The second ABB meeting was hosted by Liechtenstein in Ruggell in July. During this meeting, and at the last plenary meeting held online, members validated the core groups' work programmes, reviewed progress, assessed the overall timetable, and initiated the drafting of the Action Plan. The Chair was also involved in the Italian Presidency's workshop on glaciers (see RSA 11 section). The Secretariat accompanied the change of Chair during the summer, together with the Presidency team, and presented and discussed the upcoming Action Plan in meetings of the WISO, Soil Protection, Spatial Planning, and Sustainable Development and Transport WGs.



Alpine Climate Board (ACB)

The 2025-2026 mandate of the Alpine Climate Board is a direct continuation of the previous one, focusing on the three cross-sectoral 'hotspots' of energy, nature-based solutions, and lifestyles. This work was mostly developed during the three Board meetings held in the reporting period (one in presence in Vienna and two online).

A webinar was organised to disseminate the results on energy governance from the previous mandate, and the ACB provided inputs to the ASP 'HumanFactor' project, led by the Chair, which is developing tools to support multipliers in promoting climate-responsible lifestyles. The Secretariat is also an observer in this project and attended one of its workshops.

In addition, the ACB is supporting knowledge dissemination in the Alps: the elaboration of

sectoral Climate Fact Sheets was initiated with inputs from all other TWBs and their respective supporting officers in the Secretariat (including dedicated sessions in the first meetings of the TWB Chairs and of the Soil Protection WG).

The ACB also cooperated with the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) in a joint workshop to connect the data needs and the possibilities offered by C3S. The Board will also pursue its regular stock-taking of climate action in the Alps, investigating overall alignment with the Climate Action Plan 2.0.

In addition, the Permanent Secretariat published three new datasets in the Alpine Convention Atlas visualising the good practices from the recent ACB publications.



© Angelo Segalla

Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates and Society Working Group (WISO)

Under the new mandate, the WISO group is building on its previous work while also developing new areas of focus. Two meetings were organised during the reporting period: the first online just before summer and the second, hosted by Germany in Augsburg, in October.

The ongoing exchanges on derogation regimes are particularly valuable in light of the recent downgrading of the wolf's protection status. Based on the experiences and discussions within the group, a dedicated analytical note will be drafted.

To better understand the human dimension of large carnivore issues and societal attitudes towards their presence, WISO members are developing a questionnaire addressing these topics at the Alpine level, which could provide guidance for a potential future study.



WISO meeting Augsburg
© Permanent Secretariat

Mountain Agriculture and Mountain Forestry Working Group (MAMF)

The MAMF group continues working in the same direction as during its previous mandate, focusing on generational renewal and innovations by practitioners in agriculture and forestry. This mandate also places particular emphasis on water and its management in these sectors.

Two online meetings were held by the group: the first, in spring, reviewed the various topics of the mandate, the expectations of the members, and their future involvement in the upcoming workshops. The second, in September, brainstormed in more depth about the possible formats and contents for the workshops on innovation and generation renewal. The group decided to link them to emphasise the role of innovation as a bridge between environmental, production, and social challenges. It is envisaged to open these workshops to other European mountain areas in order to build an interregional dialogue and broaden the basis for comparison and cooperation.

The workshop on water was co-organised with the EUSALP Task Force on Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber in the framework of the EUSALP Landscape Conference held by Action Group 6 in October in Bolzano/Bozen. It explored how mountain forestry and agriculture can jointly contribute to a water resilience strategy for the Alps. Discussions highlighted the need for closer integration of forestry and agricultural policies, as well as the recognition of the multifunctional value of Alpine landscapes.



Natural Hazards Working Group (PLANALP)

Germany took over as Chair of the Natural Hazards WG (PLANALP) from Austria after the XVIII Alpine Conference. Two WG meetings were held in the reporting period: in person in Munich in spring, back-to-back with a meeting of EUSALP Action Group 8, and online at the end of November

Building on the collection and transfer of successful risk communication tools between countries initiated during the previous mandates, the members continued working closely together to improve and further develop the tools and adapt them to the specific legal and social conditions of each country.

In addition, the design of a process to evaluate the success of the various pilot projects was completed. The Chair presented the collection of communication tools at the online Communication Jour Fixe organised by the Permanent Secretariat in September. As usual, particular attention was also paid to exchanges on past and current events related to natural hazards in individual countries and regions.

The group has also been actively contributing to the Italian Presidency's collection of local adaptation good practices and the drafting of the RSA 11. Following a workshop on preventive natural hazard and disaster management organised by ARGE ALP, the Secretary General exchanged with the Chair on potential cooperation opportunities between both institutions.



Soil Protection Working Group

In this mandate, The group is focusing on technical exchange and awareness raising.

During construction work, large volumes of soil are often excavated, moved, and stored before being reused. Based on the experiences in Alpine countries, especially Switzerland, the WG is elaborating technical recommendations for soil protection on construction sites in Alpine environments, taking into account the mountainous topography and harsh climate.

The relevance for the Alps of developments around the EU Soil Monitoring Law that was adopted in October 2025 and of soil relevant aspects of the EU-Nature Restoration Law are also being discussed.

Furthermore, the group is updating and shortening its 2022 strategic document for soil protection in the Alps, which will be renamed the 'Alpine Soil Action Plan'. The WG's statement on 'Preserving moors in the Alps' was translated into the Alpine languages and is being actively disseminated.

Together with the Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development WG, the successful organisation of events bringing soil protection and spatial planning together continues through the support of further national workshops and a planned international exchange (also including the ACB).

The cooperation with the ABB also intensified in view of synergies between the action plans in both fields. Exchange and synergies are fostered with other relevant partners such as the ASP project SOIL:OurInvisibleAlly (where the Secretariat acts as an observer) or the Alpine and Pyrenean Soil Partnerships.

While Austria continues to chair the group, the chairperson has changed. Meetings are organised partly online and partly on-site as hybrid meetings (this year: one in Innsbruck and one in Bolzano/Bozen), ensuring additional value for on-site participants e.g. by including site visits.

Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development Working Group (SPSD)

The 2025-2026 mandate of the Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development (SPSD) WG is mostly focusing on the continuation of long-term activities, building on the results of the previous years.

The WG maintained good cooperation with other TWBs as well as external stakeholders, supported by the Permanent Secretariat.

One of its main activities is the second phase of the elaboration of the Alpine Spatial Development Perspective (ASDP). The Secretariat supported this activity, in particular in the stakeholder participation process, including liaising with EUSALP.

The WG also continues to implement the Climate Action Plan 2.0 pathways and to cooperate with the Soil Protection WG as mentioned above. Newly established in 2025 was the collaboration with the Alpine Biodiversity Board, with the SPSP WG contributing to the efforts of the connectivity core group (see more details under ABB).

Three WG meetings were held in 2025, with the only in-presence one hosted by the Permanent Secretariat in Innsbruck.



Transport Working Group

The Transport WG met twice in 2025 and worked towards completing the activities of its current mandate with the support of the Secretariat. The 57th meeting took place in Berlin in June, back-to-back with the German National Cycling Congress, followed by a meeting in Innsbruck in November. The latter was held in the same week as the EUSALP Annual Forum and Mobility Conference and was an opportunity for closer cooperation between the WG and EUSALP Action Group 4, which deals with mobility. In the same week, the WG also organised a workshop on sustainable tourism during which many initiatives related to sustainable tourism mobility across the Alps were presented.

Preparations are in progress for the group's next workshop focused on decarbonising access to higher altitudes with an emphasis on local needs, to be held in France in spring 2026, and the mobility conference planned by the Italian Presidency later that year.

The WG meetings are actively used by the Contracting Parties and Observers to exchange information on the latest projects and strategies related to mobility, and often include guest presentations and technical visits.



NETWORKING

Maintaining and developing links with the Contracting Parties and Observers, as well as other partners beyond the framework of the Alpine Convention's bodies is essential to reinforce the mutual interest in cooperation. The main bilateral encounters and activities in 2025 are presented in the following chapter. Furthermore, numerous informal exchanges took place with the Secretary General, the dedicated contacts for each of the main partners within the Secretariat, and further team members.

Contracting Parties

In addition to the cooperation with the outgoing, current, and incoming Presidencies outlined in the previous chapter, the Secretariat exchanged with Contracting Parties on the following occasions.

During an inaugural visit to meet Carsten Schneider, the new **German** Federal Minister for the Environment, Climate Action, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety in the beginning of September, the Secretary General highlighted current developments and priorities. Discussions also looked ahead to the 2027-2028 German Presidency.

The Secretary General exchanged with the Deputy Prime Minister of **Liechtenstein**, Sabine Monauni, at the EUSALP General Assembly in Innsbruck in November.

The Secretary General was invited by the Federal Chancellor of **Austria**, Christian Stocker, to a reception of ambassadors in Vienna in June. On this occasion, she met the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs, Beate Meisl-Reisinger.

The Secretariat also participated in the meetings of the Austrian National Alpine Convention Committee in Vienna in spring and autumn. This was also the case for the online national coordination meeting of the **French** delegation in October.

At the meeting of the Compliance Committee hosted by **Monaco** in November, the Secretary General had the opportunity to exchange with Isabelle Rosabrunetto, Director General of the Department of External Relations and Cooperation.

The Secretary General also met with the Director General of the Spatial Planning and Construction directorate of the **Slovenian** Ministry of Natural Resources and Spatial Planning, Nataša Bratina, at the end of November in Ljubljana, as well as with the Slovenian delegation members from the ministry to discuss current issues and upcoming changes in the delegation.



Meeting with the German Environment Minister
© Bundesumweltministerium



Austrian National Alpine Convention Committee
© Permanent Secretariat



Meeting at the Slovenian Ministry
© Permanent Secretariat

Observers

The Permanent Secretariat conveyed the support of the Alpine Convention for many of the implementation activities led by Observers.

The Secretary General participated in the **Alparc** General Assembly in January in the Swiss National Park in Scuol and welcomed participants of the 29th Danilo Re Memorial at the ranger seminar during which the Secretariat also gave a presentation. Two teams from the Secretariat participated in the networking and sports competition of the Alpine protected areas. The Secretariat is also an observer in Alparc's ASP project LiveAlpsNature.

The Secretary General exchanged with the new President of **CIPRA International**, its Vice-President, and its Director in Innsbruck in January. The Secretary General also joined the launch of CIPRA's YOALIN project in Poschiavo in June and the Secretariat was present at the closing event. The Secretariat also attended the retirement event for CIPRA's Director.

The **Club Arc Alpin (CAA)** as well as some of its member associations continue to actively collaborate with the Secretariat. This includes sharing information on projects such as 'Understanding the Alpine Convention'(ÖAV) or AVadapt (DAV/CAA).

Regular exchanges took place with the **Alpine Town of the Year Association**, especially during their second General Assembly in summer in Chamonix (FR) as well as with the association's President and the General Manager in Sonthofen (DE) at the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the town's membership.

Active cooperation also continued with the **Alliance in the Alps** association, even though the Secretariat had to cancel its participation at the annual conference in the Krumm region (AT) due to illness.

Both municipality networks jointly organised a webinar series to bring the Convention's priorities closer to the municipalities, which the Secretariat supported and attended. Following an invitation by **ISCAR** (the International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps), the Permanent Secretariat nominated a representative as an observer in the Committee in early January. The Secretariat was present at the ISCAR meetings at the end of January in Munich and end of May online. This formalised reciprocal cooperation is already showing benefits in joint activities such as the Young Academics Award and co-convening a session at the 2025 International Mountain Conference.

Furthermore, according to instructions given by the Permanent Committee in January, the Secretariat began reviewing the engagement of Observers in the Convention. A synthetic overview of the participation of Observer organisations in the bodies and meetings of the Convention was discussed at PC82. Over the course of the winter (2025-2026), the Secretariat is holding bilateral exchanges with each organisation to discuss their respective roles and possible reinforcement.

Infopoints

1

New Infopoint
in 2025

10

Infopoints

5

Alpine
countries

The Permanent Secretariat is in regular exchange with all the Infopoints, who are an important link between the Alpine Convention and the territory. In October the number of established Infopoints rose to ten.



The town of **Sonthofen** became the newest Alpine Convention Infopoint and the first one in Germany during a festive celebration. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, broadly attended, was framed by speeches – including by the Secretary General – music, food, and the unveiling of the first ‘Alpine Convention bench’. The Infopoint is located in the tourist office, where staff members have been trained to communicate the Convention. The Secretariat supported the establishment of the Infopoint and the implementation of its first activities.

In early April, the Secretariat participated in the event organised by the **Domodossola** Infopoint in Val Vigezzo to reward secondary school pupils from the Verbano Cusio Ossola

area who had participated in the 2024 edition of the Reading Mountain Festival literary prize promoted and organised by the Infopoint. The Secretariat also provided inputs and support to several of the Infopoint’s other projects and events.

In November, the Municipality of **Morbegno** renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with the Permanent Secretariat. In this context, the Infopoint was moved to a more prominent location in the central square of the town.

The Permanent Secretariat also supported the 28th edition of the Gran Paradiso Film Festival, organised by the **Gran Paradiso** Infopoint, and met the new staff members of the **Chamonix** Infopoint in summer.

Most Infopoints organised events for the 2025 edition of the Reading Mountains Festival and are offering special prizes for the upcoming edition of the Young Academics Award as reported in the corresponding sections below.



Infopoints networking workshop



On the initiative of the **Ötscher-Tormäuer** Infopoint, and with the support of the Secretariat, preparations for a networking meeting with all Infopoints started in 2025. The meeting is scheduled for May 2026 when the Ötscher-Tormäuer Infopoint will host its colleagues and other guests in the nature park centre. The exchange aims to strengthen collaboration across the Alpine Convention Infopoint network and it is planned to include thematic sessions such as on the Dark Sky initiative.

EUSALP

Throughout 2025, the Permanent Secretariat continued its strong commitment and efforts to contribute to EUSALP – the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region – at all levels: by representing the Alpine Convention in the General Assembly as well as in the Executive Board (EB), co-leading EUSALP Action Group 6 (AG6) together with the Region of Carinthia, participating as an active project partner in the ASP project ‘Support EUSALP’, and finally, as an observer in EUSALP Action Groups 4, 7, and 9. However, at its meeting in March, the Permanent Committee decided that the Secretariat would not renew its engagement as AG6 Co-Lead for the next period to allow a regional entity to take over and the Alpine Convention to concentrate on its role as an observer.

Representing the Alpine Convention in the EUSALP process

During this first Co-Presidency shared by Austria and Liechtenstein, the Secretariat participated in the joint sessions with the Board of Action Group Leaders (BAGL) as Co-Lead of AG6 and as an observer in all meetings of the EB.

The EB meetings were mostly dedicated to discussing the revision of the 2015 EUSALP Action Plan, which was initiated by the Swiss (2023) and Slovenian Presidencies (2024). The Permanent Secretariat actively contributed to the revision process in close exchange with the Heads of Delegation. The new document is more thematic and strategic, with clearer references to and a stronger focus on EU

priorities, strategies, and legislation. It also establishes the basis for the new work plans of the AGs (2026-2028) which were being drafted at the end of 2025.



At the Annual Forum and General Assembly in November in Innsbruck, the Secretariat seized opportunities to get involved in different ways. The Secretary General represented the Alpine Convention in the General Assembly and in a panel discussion on 'The Alpine Region 2035', and the Permanent Secretariat was an exhibitor with a stand in the EUSALP Networking village, a space to exchange ideas and connect with dedicated stakeholders from across the Alps.

Furthermore, the Secretary General represented the Alpine Convention and AG6 in a welcome address at the Annual Forum workshop on 'BrokeringSpaces: Optimising local Alpine land use', and the Secretariat participated in several other thematic workshops.



Panel discussion at the Annual Forum
© Permanent Secretariat

Activities of EUSALP Action Group 6

During the reporting period, the Permanent Secretariat organised five AG6 meetings, of which four were online and one was in person, back-to-back with the 2nd EUSALP Landscape Conference. These meetings were mainly dedicated to discussing contributions to the ongoing Action Plan revision process, the organisation of the Landscape Conference, AG6's contribution to the EUSALP cross-cutting priorities on the topics of circular economy and water, as well as to the Task Force on Multifunctional Forests and Sustainable Use of Timber. Beyond this, AG6 members were continuously informed about the 'Support EUSALP' project as well as the

priorities and opportunities for cooperation with the ASP 2021-2027 and about upcoming calls for the submission of project proposals.

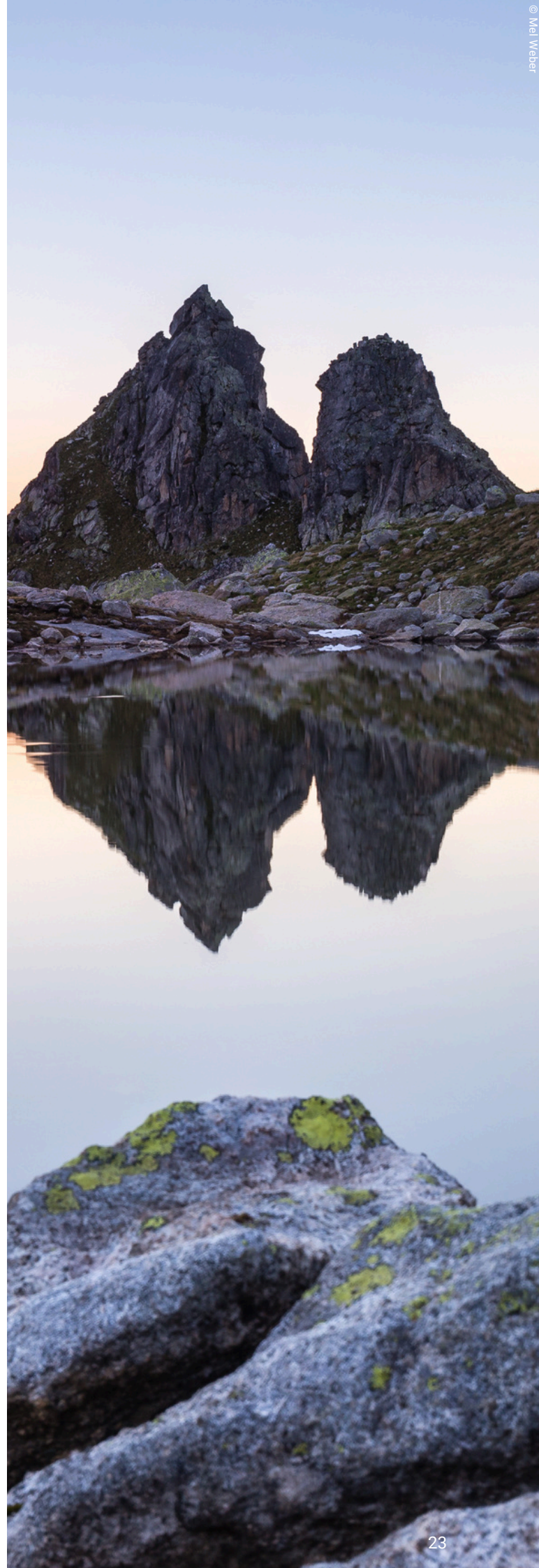
Furthermore, the Permanent Secretariat developed the programme and took care of logistics for the 2nd EUSALP Landscape Conference, organised in September in Bolzano/Bozen. In the framework of this conference, AG6 also collaborated with the Alpine Convention's Mountain Agriculture and Mountain Forestry WG, which organised a workshop as reported above.

Regarding the outreach and dissemination of topics, AG6 started a new webinar series in 2025: the AG6 'Resource Talks'. Between June and November, four short webinars were organised. These talks, open to the public, were moderated by the Permanent Secretariat with a presentation of a specific topic organised by or with the assistance of a member. The topics tackled a broad range of the main AG6 topics, namely pastoralism, textile heritage, Alpine biodiversity governance, and public participation processes.

As coordinator of the EUSALP Taskforce on Water Management Transition, the Secretariat initiated, coordinated, and contributed to the input paper 'Mind the gap in water management', which is the main output of the third EUSALP cross-cutting priority. The input paper is a qualitative evaluation of gaps and needs in the implementation of the EU Water Framework and Floods Directives at project scale in the Alpine macro-region.

Further events the Secretariat participated in as AG6 coordinator were:

- The Adige Water Fair in May in Italy and the FutureForumAlps in Liechtenstein in June, also on the topic of water
- The final event 'living experience: Patterns of change' of the 'AlpTextyles' ASP project in August in Škofja Loka and Nova Gorica (SI), where the Secretariat, as an observer to the project, participated in a roundtable
- The policy forum of the ASP project 'Forest Ecovalue' online in October
- The 'Circular Solutions in Textile & Food: Bridging Sectors, Borders and Strategies' conference in Salzburg in October
- The TWB Chairs' exchange in March in Bolzano/Bozen.



The current developments in EUSALP were presented and discussed during the 81st meeting of the Permanent Committee in Rome. After the PC's decision to withdraw from the AG6 Co-Lead, the Land of Carinthia also withdrew and a new Leader for AG6 was only confirmed by the General Assembly in November. Afterwards, the Permanent Secretariat organised several meetings for an effective transition of the duties to the Edmund Mach Foundation.

Participation in the 'Support EUSALP' project

The Permanent Secretariat was a project partner in the ASP governance project 'Support EUSALP' from January 2023 until its conclusion this December.

Four project partner meetings took place between February and November to discuss the progress of different work packages and the finalisation of the project. Together with AG6 members, the Secretariat elaborated policy recommendations on 'Current issues of Alpine water management' as a project output.

Moreover, the Secretariat participated in all communication workshops organised by or in cooperation with the Technical Support Structure and contributed to the content of the new EUSALP website and the 'Support EUSALP' project exhibition presented at the 25th anniversary celebration of the ASP.

Observer role in Action Groups 4, 7, and 9

The Permanent Secretariat participated as an observer in meetings of EUSALP AG 4 (mobility), 7 (connectivity), and 9 (energy), aiming in particular to coordinate their work with that of the Alpine Convention's Transport WG, ABB, and ACB, respectively.

Besides the reciprocal inputs in all bodies, this led to the Transport WG collaborating with AG4 to organise a workshop at the Annual Forum (see TWBs section).

In 2025, the AGs focused mainly on the revision of the EUSALP Action Plan for 2027, the elaboration of the AG work plans, and the finalisation of policy recommendations.



Further Alpine cooperation

Host cities and institutions

Innsbruck



Goldenes Dachl, housing the Innsbruck office
© Permanent Secretariat

The Permanent Secretariat is regularly exchanging with the Land of Tyrol. The Secretary General met Governor Anton Mattle at different occasions, such as the EUSALP Annual Forum, and several operational exchanges were held with the provincial administration.

The strong relationship with the municipality was maintained as well in the margins of various local events during the year, and a meeting of the Secretary General with the mayor Johannes Anzengruber is scheduled for January 2026.

Bolzano/Bozen

In early December, the Secretary General and the staff of the operational branch office met with the new mayor of Bolzano/Bozen, Claudio Corrarati, elected in spring 2025 as well as his Environment Councillor. During the meeting the Secretary General highlighted the numerous activities that the Alpine Convention carries out and promotes, including within the municipal territory of Bolzano/Bozen, and presented the main themes of the Italian Presidency programme. The mayor expressed his interest in cooperating in the organisation of institutional, thematic, and public events taking place in the city. The Secretary General also exchanged with the President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen, Arno Kompatscher, at the Conference of the Heads of Government of ARGE ALP in October.

The Secretariat maintained its strategic relationship with Eurac Research as the hosting institution of the operational branch office through regular meetings of the Secretary General with its President, Roland Psenner, and Director, Stephan Ortner. Both entities pursued their technical and scientific cooperation such as on the Alpine Convention Atlas, hosted by Eurac, with the GLOMOS programme, and within the AlpsLife ASP project, initiated by the ABB and led by Eurac. Eurac also provided the venue for many meetings of the Convention's bodies.

The Permanent Secretariat also acted as an observer to the BeyondSnow ASP project and collaborated with the PlanToConnect (ASP) and Central Mountains (Interreg Central Europe) projects, all led by Eurac, and provided letters of support to several ongoing project applications for different funding schemes.



Meeting with the new Mayor of Bozen/
Bolzano
© Permanent Secretariat

ARGE ALP

The Permanent Secretariat continued in its role as an observer in the ARGE ALP, participating in all formal meetings under the 2025 presidency by the Province of Trento, which provided excellent opportunities for networking and, bilateral meetings. The Secretariat attended the three meetings of the Steering Committee and the Conference of the Heads of Government in October in Trento. At the latter, two resolutions were adopted, one on strategies for harmonised large carnivore management, and one on strategies for the young mountain generation. Possible synergies with PLANALP on the topic of natural hazards were also discussed.



Alpine Space Programme

During the reporting period, the Permanent Secretariat maintained its role as an active observer in the Interreg Alpine Space Programme (ASP) 2021-2027. The Secretariat contributed to the definition of calls and the selection of projects during a workshop, the three meetings of the Programme Committee, and in a bilateral exchange with the Joint Secretariat (JS).

A further highlight was the 25th anniversary celebration of the programme in May. The Secretary General spoke in a panel discussion and further staff members participated in various workshops, including two sessions dedicated to the exchange between the Alpine Convention, EUSALP, and ASP project promoters.

Cooperation continues with the projects supported by the Permanent Secretariat as detailed in the relevant sections of the report. Further synergies are also being explored, supported by an analysis of the interconnections between the TWBs and existing Alpine Space projects provided by the JS at the TWB Chairs' meeting in March.

The Permanent Secretariat also granted support to three projects which successfully passed the first step of applications for the third call for classic projects, launched in April. These requests were reviewed based on potential synergies with the Alpine Convention's work, particularly of the TWBs, as well as available resources for participation in events and support for networking and communication.

Celebration of 25 years of the Interreg Alpine Space Programme
© Interreg Alpine Space Programme



Mountaineering Villages

The active collaboration with the Mountaineering Villages continued throughout the year. Besides the usual exchanges, the Secretariat also held a presentation about the project at a scientific webinar.

The Secretary General contributed a video greeting to the annual meeting, which focused on the topic 'contemporary mountaineering' and was held in Gschnitztal (AT), in late summer – despite the severe mud slides which had hit the valley a few months earlier. In 2025, three more villages joined the Mountaineering Villages network: Baška grapa in Slovenia and Campo Vallemaggia and Lauenen in Switzerland.



Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention



In March, young people from ten schools from the Alpine region came together to discuss sustainable life in the Alps with a focus on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. This 19th session of the Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention (YPAC) took place in Rosenheim (DE) with the General Assembly hosted in the Bavarian State Parliament in Munich. The Rosenheim YPAC had already been planned for 2020 but had had to be cancelled due to the global pandemic.

The Secretary General gave opening words at the beginning of the YPAC. The Secretariat also supported the content preparation for pupils during a webinar as well as Rosenheim high school's engagement to obtain the Green Event label of the Alpine Convention. As in previous years, the Secretariat also participated in the seminar to evaluate the last YPAC and to plan the next session (in Chamonix in 2026), hosted in autumn in Trogen (CH) for the third time.

International cooperation

The Permanent Secretariat regularly exchanges with UNEP, the Mountain Partnership, regional cooperation mechanisms in different mountain ranges, and scientific organisations. The purpose of these interactions is twofold: first, to benefit from each other's experiences in strengthening cooperation for sustainable development within mountain ranges – where the expertise of the Alpine Convention, as the first legal mechanism dedicated to this purpose, is very much sought after. And second, to explore how to jointly support an appropriate consideration of mountains at global level.

One of this year's highlights was when the Secretariat took advantage of the opportunity of the presence of many of its closest global partners at the International Mountain Conference in Innsbruck in September and invited them for an informal exchange at its offices to discuss the global mountain agenda and current and future cooperation. Many bilateral meetings were also held during that week, including with the Carpathian Convention, UNEP, the FAO's Mountain Partnership Secretariat, the University of the Free State (South Africa), GLOMOS, and the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment.



Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD launched a strategic review of its eight Programmes of Work (PoWs), which cover different ecosystems and topics. This includes the PoW on Mountain Biological Diversity, adopted in 2004.

The Permanent Committee was informed ahead of the November meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA27) about the opportunity to support the continuation of the PoW on Mountain Biological Diversity and to promote the use of regional mechanisms such as the Alpine Convention to implement the global biodiversity agenda. The Permanent Secretariat, while not itself participating, supported the CBD Secretariat and UNEP in the preparation of a thematic event titled 'Mountains at the Heart of the Climate-Biodiversity Nexus' during the SBSTTA meeting as well as a preparatory online roundtable.



United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

While not attending any UNFCCC meeting this year, the Permanent Secretariat learned that mountains gained some prominence at the UNFCCC COP30 in November, where the Brazilian COP Presidency convened consultations which led to conclusions on mountains and climate change in the plenary. A second dialogue on the topic (after the first one attended by the Secretariat in 2024) is expected to be convened at the sessions of the subsidiary bodies in June 2026, where the need for a yearly recurrence of such a dialogue is to be examined.

Carpathian Convention and UNEP

The Secretary General and the Head of the UNEP Vienna office, Harald Egerer, together with their respective teams held two exchanges this year, online in March and at the Secretariat in Innsbruck in September. They reviewed the many ongoing activities in each organisation as well as at global level.

For the first time, the Permanent Secretariat participated in the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in December at the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. At UNEP's invitation, the Secretariat represented the Alpine Convention and presented its work on glaciers during an associated event aiming to promote a global resolution on the protection of glaciers, later adopted by the Assembly.

Furthermore, the Secretariat attended the meeting of the Carpathian Convention's WG on Biodiversity to reinforce synergies with the related TWBs and continued giving input to the Central Mountains Interreg Project dealing with governance models for the sustainable development of the Alps and the Carpathians.

Mountain Partnership

The Secretary General exchanged with Noelia Souque Caldato, Andorra's Ambassador for cross-border cooperation, and representing Europe in the Mountain Partnership's Steering Committee, online in July. Further discussions occurred on the margins of the Sagarmatha Dialogue and the International Mountain Conference (see below).

Meeting with the Carpathian Convention/UNEP
© Permanent Secretariat



Hindu Kush Himalaya and ICIMOD

The Secretary General joined the 'Sagarmatha Sambaad' forum on Climate Change, Mountains, and the Future of Humanity organised in May in Kathmandu, Nepal. She intervened in two panels as well as during a high-level meeting of HKH ministers and a session on 'Connecting highlands to islands'. This provided many opportunities to exchange with the ministers and further high-ranking representatives from different HKH countries. She also reviewed the bilateral cooperation with ICIMOD in a meeting with Director General Pema Gyamtsho.

Andean Mountain Initiative

The Permanent Secretariat, together with other mountain partners, provided inputs to a policy brief on 'Mountain Ecosystems for a Resilient Future: Policy Pathways under the CBD and UNFCCC', elaborated by the Andean Mountain Initiative in the framework of the Adaptation at Altitude project.

The document aims to link the climate and biodiversity COPs, drawing attention to the impacts of climate change on mountain biodiversity and its ecosystem services. It was presented during a side event at UNFCCC COP30.

Southern African Mountain Conference

At the invitation of GLOMOS, the Secretariat joined the 2nd Southern African Mountain Conference in South Africa in March. The Secretariat co-moderated a special session entitled "Towards a multilateral "Southern African Mountain Treaty/Convention"". Since then, the Secretariat has engaged with the Afromontane Research Unit to publish a paper on the potential of a Southern African Mountain Treaty under the framework of the Southern African Development Community and is supporting the inclusion of South African actors in exchanges with other mountain regions.



Southern African Mountain Conference
© SAMC



SYSTEM FOR THE OBSERVATION AND INFORMATION ON THE ALPS (SOIA)

In order to further the development and dissemination of knowledge about the Alps, the Permanent Secretariat supported the promotion of the Tenth Report on the State of the Alps as well as the elaboration of the Eleventh Report. It pursued the development of the Alpine Convention Atlas, provided input to several educational courses, and seized opportunities to maintain and widen the network of research actors in the Alpine area.

Reports on the State of the Alps

Tenth Report on the State of the Alps on quality of life

After the adoption of the RSA 10 at the XVIII Alpine Conference, where printed copies of the report in English were distributed, the Permanent Secretariat continued the post-production as well as the communication and dissemination activities throughout the year. The Secretariat coordinated the translation of the report into the four Alpine languages and conducted the harmonisation of the individual language versions. The report was printed and distributed to the Contracting Parties, Infopoints, Observers, and other partners as well as prepared for online publication, together with the background study.

In parallel, a communication toolbox was prepared to ease communication efforts for all Alpine Convention stakeholders. This included the elaboration of a presentation template, social media cards, and a flyer, which was also printed. All materials are available in all Alpine languages and English. An animated video is also in preparation (see Communication chapter).

The Secretariat also co-organised or contributed to various events that presented the results of the RSA 10. As with the RSA 9 in 2023, the Secretariat co-organised an event at the 'Journalismusfest Innsbruck' in May dedicated to the report. The event featured a discussion between the Alpine Convention Focal Point of Liechtenstein, the vice-mayor of the municipality of Moosburg (AT), and a researcher from the Carinthian University of Applied Sciences.

Representatives of the Permanent Secretariat themselves held numerous presentations on the report:

- In the scope of an Alpine Convention Communication Jour Fixe
- The webinar on Quality of Life organised for municipalities by Alliance in the Alps and the Alpine Town of the Year associations in March
- The AlpPlan Summer Course 'Transformation of rural mountain areas in the Alps' in Entlebuch (CH) in June
- The international summer school on 'Quality of life in a changing world' in Maribor (SI) in August
- At the meeting of the French Committee of the Alps in Embrun (FR) in September

In cooperation with the Austrian delegation, a presentation was also held in the scope of the workshop on 'Climate and Health' organised by CIPRA Austria in Linz in June, which also resulted in the preparation of a paper on the workshop proceedings (to be published in 2026).

Finally, the Secretariat continued the exchanges on the RSA 10 topic as an observer of the GOV QoL ASP project.



Eleventh Report on the State of the Alps on glaciers, permafrost and the water cycle

The work on the RSA 11 started with the first meeting of the ad hoc WG in early March.

During six meetings (two in Bolzano/Bozen, one in Grenoble, one in the Fort de Bard (IT), and the remaining two online), the WG first developed the structure of the report then elaborated the contents of the first chapters. The Permanent Secretariat supported the coordination of the elaboration process and provided logistical support for the meetings in Bolzano/Bozen and Grenoble.

In addition, the Secretariat together with the Italian Presidency and the French authorities coordinated the thematic and logistical organisation of the joint workshop of the RSA 11 WG and the Alpine Biodiversity Board on 'Alpine glaciers in a changing climate: Effects, challenges and solutions' in Grenoble (FR) in June. With expert contributions on climate change, the cryosphere, the water cycle, and biodiversity, the workshop explored the nexus of the focus topics. The outcomes of the discussions are providing valuable inputs for the elaboration of both the RSA 11 and the Alpine Biodiversity Action Plan.



Glacier workshop Grenoble
© Permanent Secretariat

Alpine Convention Atlas

460

Average
monthly visits

265

Registered users

97

Datasets

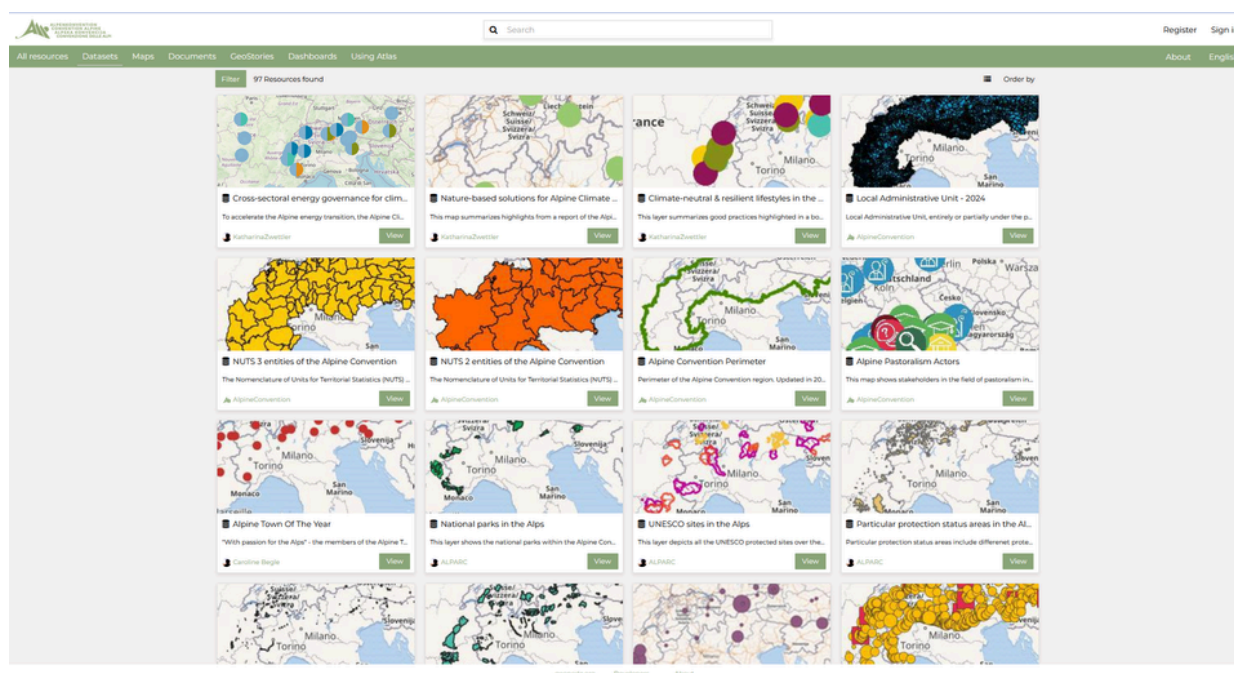
In 2025, the Permanent Secretariat worked on several developments of the Atlas. This was done in close cooperation with Eurac Research, which also hosts the platform, maintaining a good partnership and regular exchanges with the department in charge.

Several existing datasets were updated, including the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, which was adjusted to align with the latest available datasets of administrative borders. In addition to this, three datasets presenting good practices of climate action in the fields of energy, nature-based solutions, and lifestyles, were published in cooperation with the ACB, as well as a dataset with the route of the Via Alpina in cooperation with CIPRA. Lastly, 42 datasets used in the RSA 10 were prepared for upload to the platform in early 2026, which will increase the available datasets by almost half.

Finally, the platform was upgraded to a newer version of the GeoNode software, giving the Atlas a fresh look and new functionalities.

The Permanent Secretariat also prepared different cartographic materials and calculations of spatial data for internal needs.

The Atlas had over 5.000 unique visitors throughout the year, with about 460 visits per month on average, mainly from the Alpine countries, but also the USA and the United Kingdom.



Research and education networking

The Permanent Secretariat fosters regular contact and exchange with different partners from research, science, and education. As an official observer, the Secretariat attended the 7th Symposium of the Virtual Alpine Observatory (VAO), which took place in April in Kaprun (AT). The Secretariat presented the current developments within the Alpine Convention, identified potential synergies between scientific research and policymaking in the Alps, and participated in a panel discussion on the future of the VAO. Several concrete cooperation activities were identified and later developed: contributions to the elaboration of the RSA 11, the international workshop in Grenoble, and the provision of a special prize by the VAO to the 2026 edition of the Young Academics Award (see below).

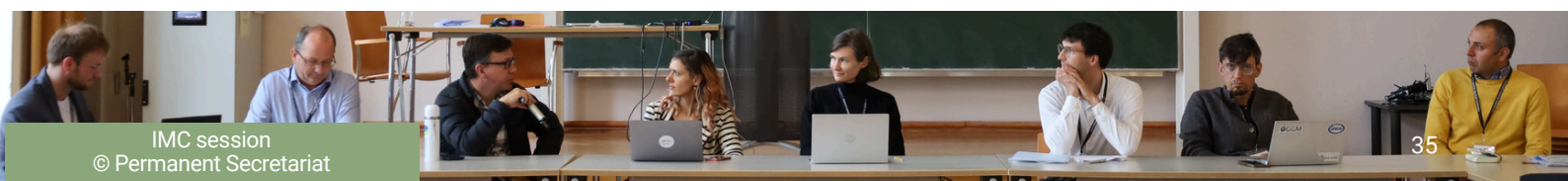


One of the key outreach activities is ad hoc cooperation with different educational institutions and programmes. In 2025, the Permanent Secretariat held presentations and lectures on a variety of topics related to the Alpine Convention for students at the Universities of Ljubljana and Maribor (SI), of Eastern Piedmont (IT), and participants of the AlpPlan Summer Course, the Summer School of the University of Maribor on Quality of Life, and the University of New Orleans-Innsbruck International Summer School. Altogether, the presentations reached about 130 young individuals across the Alps and beyond.

The Secretariat also joined the Mountain Competence Centre (MCC), a cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary cooperation platform established by the University of Innsbruck to strengthen the cooperation of different actors involved in mountain-related issues in the Alps. In this scope, the Secretary General attended the public launch of the 'Goodbye Glaciers!?' project, which aims to raise awareness about the status and future developments of Alpine glaciers through visual 3D models. The Secretariat is also a partner in the organisation of the Regional Mountain Conference (RMC), an Alpine-focused younger sister of the International Mountain Conference that will take place in July 2026 in Obergurgl (AT).

International Mountain Conference

Several staff members of the Permanent Secretariat were involved in the International Mountain Conference, organised by the University of Innsbruck in mid-September. The conference provided many opportunities for exchange with numerous mountain experts and international partners of the Alpine Convention. The Secretariat hosted an information stand for the duration of the Conference to raise awareness about the Convention's work and specific Alpine topics. The Secretariat also convened an IMC workshop session on 'The science-policy interface for regional mountain governance', with contributions from the Andean Mountain Initiative, UNEP, the Carpathian Convention, ICIMOD, ISCAR, the Mountain Research Initiative, the ARCOS Network, and the University of Graz – with speakers representing both the research and governance sides and covering many of the world's most important mountain chains.





PROJECTS

The Permanent Secretariat's recurring projects are an important part of its mission. They are a popular complement to the regular communication activities in terms of outreach to the general public and also help to reinforce the Alpine Convention's network.

Reading Mountains Festival

Since its initiation in 2015, the Reading Mountains Festival has been celebrating Alpine literature and the diverse cultural heritage of the Alps by bringing together those who love mountains and books. The eleventh edition was made possible by voluntary contributions from the Italian Presidency, Monaco, France, and Austria. On and around 11 December, 111 events celebrating Alpine culture and literature as well as many topics relevant to the Alpine region were organised across the Alps and beyond under the umbrella of the festival: readings, film screenings, crafting workshops, panel discussions, and many more.

The Secretariat collaborated with old and new partners, providing them with printed materials and communicating in social media campaigns. The Alpine Convention provided financial support to the eight participating Infopoints as well as a select few other partners. Officers from the Secretariat participated in the Infopoint events in Mojstrana, Villach, and Domodossola and in several events in and around Innsbruck.

At the Mojstrana Infopoint, the Reading Mountains event concluded the year-long book club on mountain literature. Following a short greeting by the Secretariat, Slovenian mountaineer and author Matevž Lenarčič led a discussion, followed by a screening of the documentary 'Temni pokrov sveta' (The dark cover of the world) on black carbon emissions. The evening culminated in the opening of the traditional photo exhibition in cooperation with the Slovenian Alpine Association and the presentation of awards to selected photographers.

The Villach Infopoint hosted Austrian author Reinhard Kaiser-Mühlecker, who read excerpts from 'Brennende Felder' (Burning fields) after introductory words about the Alpine Convention and the importance of the Infopoint. Accompanied by local music and a small reception, the evening focused on traditions and regional identity.

In Domodossola, in addition to the annual 'Reading Mountains Infopoint Award' for pupils from the Verbano Cusio Ossola province, this year's International Mountain Day featured a guided visit to the Museo del Paesaggio for secondary school pupils. They gained insights into historical mountain communities, their evolving relationship with the Alps, and visible signs of climate change, and heard a book presentation by Alessandro Zucca on the link between rural architecture and territory.

The Reading Mountains Festival provided an international framework for the 2nd edition of the 'Morbegno Alps Festival'. The four-day programme included the presentation of books on mountaineering (by Marco Majori and Matteo Della Bordella) and skiing (by Chicco Cotelli) as well as two guidebooks. There were also several exhibitions – 'La Valle che viviamo' (The valley we live in) with photographs by local students and 'Neve e identità' (Snow and identity) on the history of winter sports – as well as a documentary film on transhumance and a spherical cinema for children.

Two Infopoints offered readings specifically for children: as part of the 'Advent am See' event, the nature park Ötscher-Tormäuer hosted a presentation of the book 'Was tun, wenn...' (What to do if...), which broaches the topic of correct behaviour when facing dangers in the mountains. As in previous years, the Chamonix Infopoint, with the help of volunteers from the association Lire et faire lire, held short readings focusing on mountain topics for pupils from the local school in Argentière.

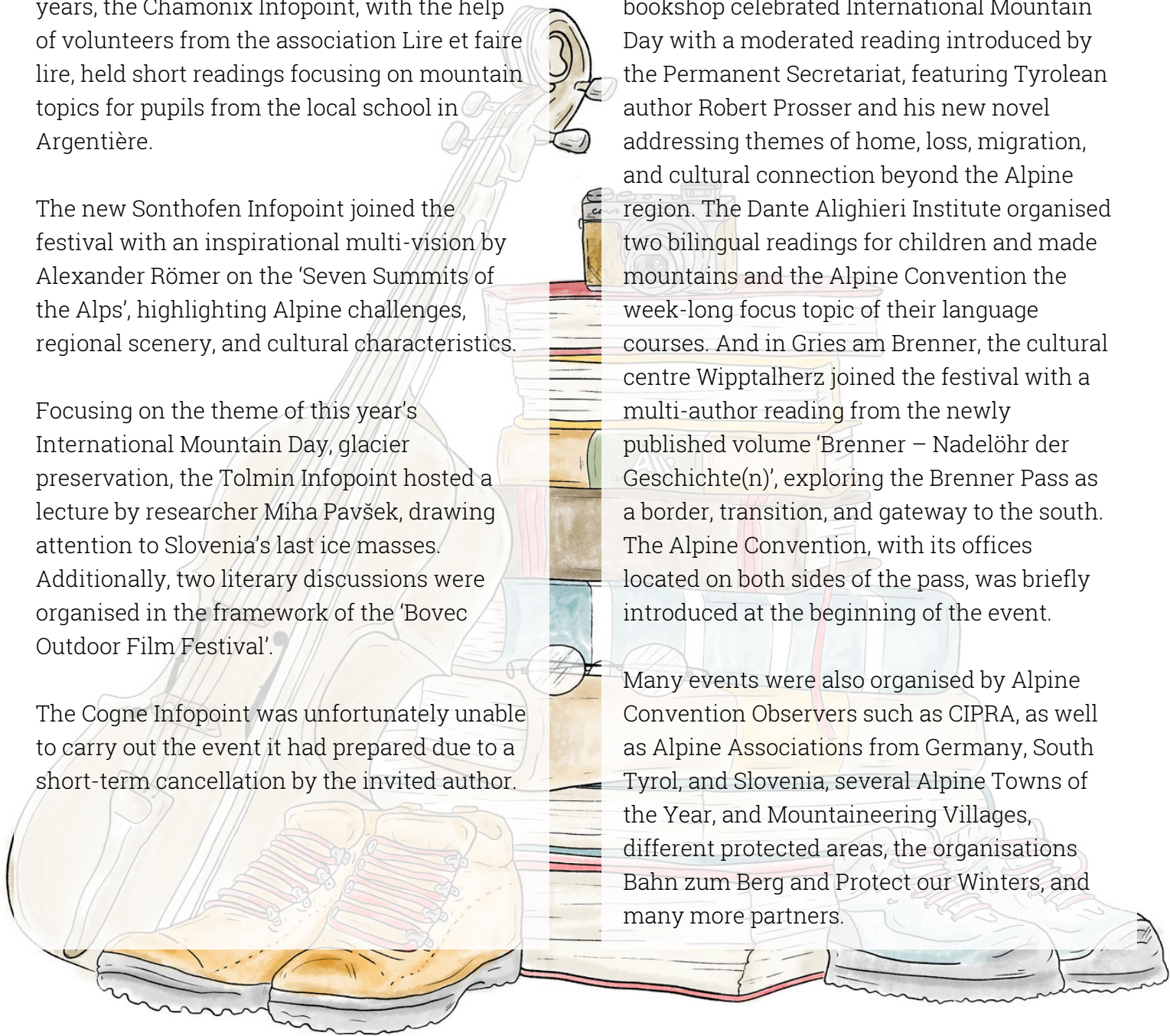
The new Sonthofen Infopoint joined the festival with an inspirational multi-vision by Alexander Römer on the 'Seven Summits of the Alps', highlighting Alpine challenges, regional scenery, and cultural characteristics.

Focusing on the theme of this year's International Mountain Day, glacier preservation, the Tolmin Infopoint hosted a lecture by researcher Miha Pavšek, drawing attention to Slovenia's last ice masses. Additionally, two literary discussions were organised in the framework of the 'Bovec Outdoor Film Festival'.

The Cogne Infopoint was unfortunately unable to carry out the event it had prepared due to a short-term cancellation by the invited author.

In Innsbruck, long-standing festival partners hosted readings for diverse audiences. At the Tyrolia bookshop, journalist and author Georg Bayerle presented his analysis on concerning developments in the Alps, followed by an intense panel discussion with representatives of the tourism sector. The Wagner'sche bookshop celebrated International Mountain Day with a moderated reading introduced by the Permanent Secretariat, featuring Tyrolean author Robert Prosser and his new novel addressing themes of home, loss, migration, and cultural connection beyond the Alpine region. The Dante Alighieri Institute organised two bilingual readings for children and made mountains and the Alpine Convention the week-long focus topic of their language courses. And in Gries am Brenner, the cultural centre Wipptalherz joined the festival with a multi-author reading from the newly published volume 'Brenner – Nadelöhr der Geschichte(n)', exploring the Brenner Pass as a border, transition, and gateway to the south. The Alpine Convention, with its offices located on both sides of the pass, was briefly introduced at the beginning of the event.

Many events were also organised by Alpine Convention Observers such as CIPRA, as well as Alpine Associations from Germany, South Tyrol, and Slovenia, several Alpine Towns of the Year, and Mountaineering Villages, different protected areas, the organisations Bahn zum Berg and Protect our Winters, and many more partners.





Domodossola Infopoint event
© Permanent Secretariat



Wipptal event
© Permanent Secretariat



Mojstrana Infopoint event
© Permanent Secretariat



Chamonix Infopoint event
© Infopoint Chamonix



Villach Infopoint event
© Permanent Secretariat



Tyrolia event Innsbruck
© Permanent Secretariat

Young Academics Award

2024 edition

The 2024 edition of the Young Academics Award for exceptional master's theses concluded in January. Organised by the Permanent Secretariat with the support of the Slovenian Presidency and ISCAR, this edition was dedicated to the topic 'Responding to environmental change and maintaining a high quality of life in the Alps'.

The final event took place on the eve of the XVIII Alpine Conference in Brdo pri Kranju. Seven finalists for the main prize as well as six recipients of the special Infopoint prizes had the opportunity to present their work to an international expert jury and their peers.

The awards were conferred by the Slovenian Minister Jože Novak together with Alenka Smerkolj and the then president of ISCAR Janez Nared. The three main prizes were handed over by high-level representatives of the three countries of the finalists – Deputy Minister Vannia Gava for Italy, Minister Steffi Lemke for Germany, and Vice-Director Ulrich Seewer for Switzerland.

The winners of the Young Academics Award 2024 were:

1. **Agnese Moroni** (University of Amsterdam) for her thesis on snowmaking as maladaptation in the Alps and sustainable water management
2. **Elena Grace Siegrist** (University of Bern) for her thesis on how climate change is impacting landscapes in Switzerland
3. **Christina Dollinger** (Technical University Munich) for her thesis evaluating forest management strategies under climate change in the Berchtesgaden National Park

In addition to the three main prizes, six special prizes were awarded in cooperation with the Alpine Convention Infopoints to master's theses with special relevance to the territory and thematic scope of each Infopoint.

In the scope of the final event, the participants also had the opportunity to take part in a workshop with editors of scientific journals, which was organised in close cooperation with ISCAR. Young researchers exchanged on the practicalities of and experiences with writing and publishing research papers.



2026 edition

The Permanent Secretariat used the second half of 2025 to make all the necessary preparations for the publication and promotion of the call for the next edition of the Young Academics Award in early 2026, including overall coordination with partners, elaboration of the topic, and the call and preparation of communication materials.

This edition will also be organised in close cooperation with and with the support of ISCAR, especially its Italian Presidency, and the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

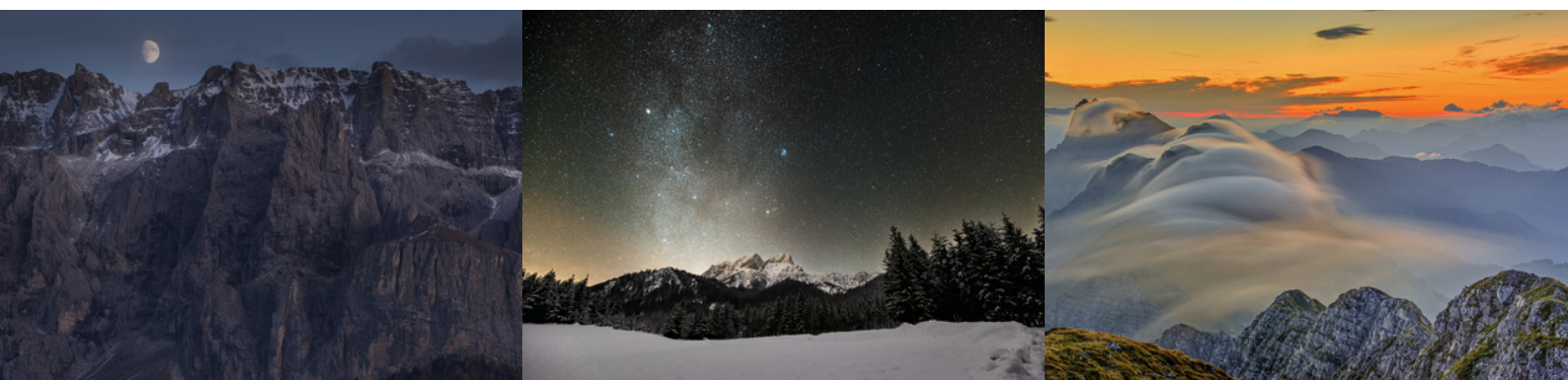
In synergy with the topic of the RSA 11, the 2026 edition of the award will be dedicated to 'The Alpine water cycle and cryosphere in a changing climate: dynamics, impacts, and responses'. In addition to the main prizes, special prizes will again be offered by several of the Alpine Convention's Infopoints (Chamonix, Domodossola, Koroška, Mojstrana, Tolmin, Ötscher-Tormäuer, Villach, and Sonthofen) and for the first time also by the Virtual Alpine Observatory (for theses focusing on measurements and observation). The finalists' workshop and the award ceremony will take place in the scope of the XIX Alpine Conference.



© Antonio Cesaretti

Photo Contest

The 2025 edition of the Alpine Convention Photo Contest, financially supported by the Italian Presidency, was dedicated to the theme 'Moods of the sky'. The Secretariat received more than 700 submissions from 119 photographers from across the Alps and beyond which were evaluated by the team of the Secretariat together with members of the Italian Presidency. The thirteen winning photos – twelve months and one special mention – were transformed into the 2026 calendar, which was sent to all Contracting Parties, Observer organisations, and the Alpine Convention's international and local partners. The winners were also announced on Instagram and Facebook in the run up to Christmas.



Winners of the 2025 Photo Contest (from left to right): Andrea de Giovanni, Simone Weiss, Aleš Frelih



COMMUNICATION

The Alpine Convention is an instrument that works for both people and nature. Raising awareness of and showcasing the important work done by the Alpine countries, Observer organisations, and partners at all levels is one of the main tasks of the Permanent Secretariat. It is therefore in charge of the Alpine Convention's website, social media channels, publications, responding to press requests, and any other public relations activity.

Communication cooperation

Communicating the goals and objectives of the Alpine Convention is a shared responsibility. The Contracting Parties, Observers, Infopoints, members of the Thematic Working Bodies as well as other important 'multipliers' have a key role to play in strengthening and supporting the Convention's communication work.

A regular 'Communication Jour Fixe' is organised to facilitate information sharing between the Permanent Secretariat, the Contracting Parties, and Observers. In 2025, it was decided to also open it to the Infopoints. These online meetings are an opportunity to informally exchange ideas about the diverse communication activities of the Alpine Convention and its bodies and explore synergies for communication activities among the participants. In addition, presentations of several initiatives of interest were included: the results of the 2025 session of the YPAC, the RSA 10 and communication materials, and the collection of risk communication tools by PLANALP.

Multimedia

To reach new audiences and to present the results of the Alpine Convention's work in different formats, the Permanent Secretariat, together with a designer, is preparing a second animated video. After the short video on climate change prepared in 2024, the new video addresses the MAP topic of quality of life. This two-minute-long video makes use of the graphics that were produced for the RSA 10 and includes the key messages from the report. It represents a further tool for disseminating the report and is expected to be finalised by February 2026.



RSA 10 cover illustration
© Studio Podobarna

Online presence

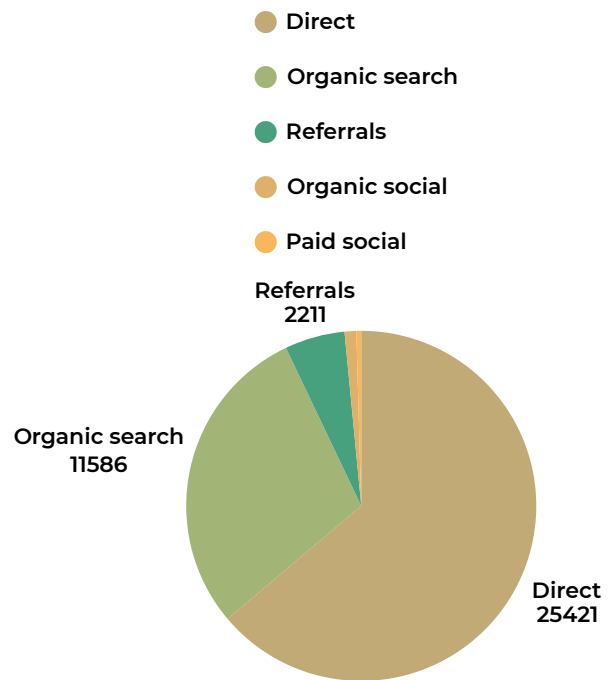
Website

The Alpine Convention website remains the main way to reach the broadest audience. It serves both as source of information about the Convention and its activities for the public, as well as hosting key documents and technical information used by the Contracting Parties and Observers.

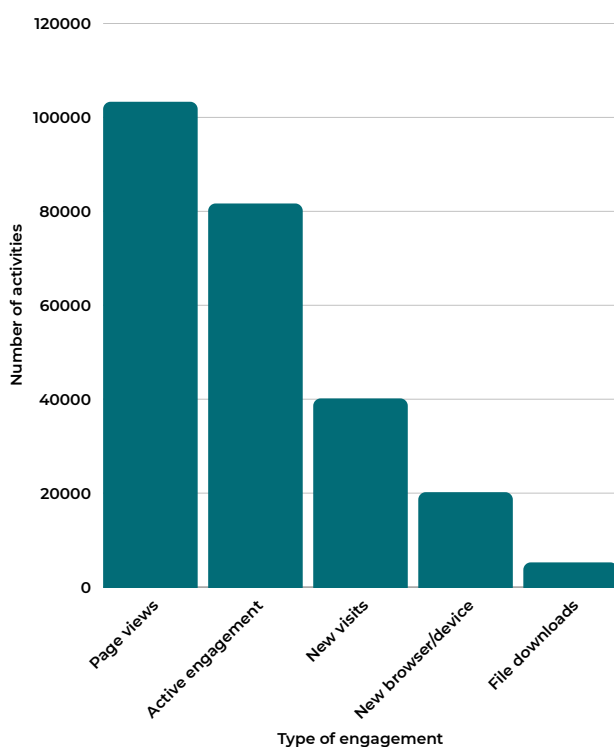
As after each Alpine Conference, the website was updated with the results of the Slovenian Presidency and the 2023-2024 mandates and products of the TWBs, including cross-references to the Topics pages, as well as the programme of the Italian Presidency and the TWBs' new mandates.

The Secretariat strives to make the website as appealing and user-friendly as possible, continuously making improvements to the existing structure and contents. On average, the website receives 2.000 visits and 20.000 engagements, including page views and downloads, a month.

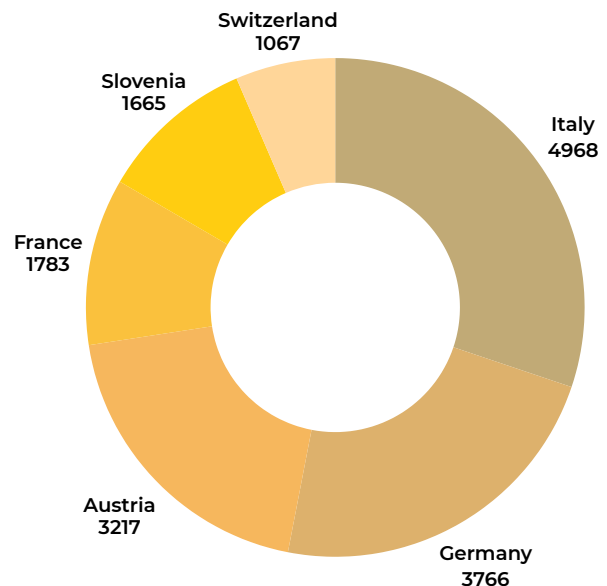
How users find the Alpine Convention's website



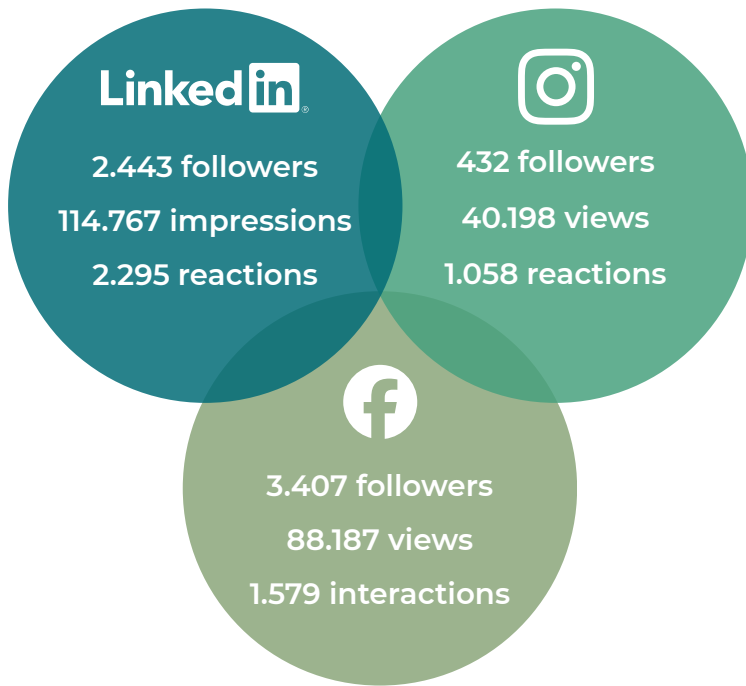
How users engage with the Alpine Convention's website



Website users by Alpine country



Social media



The use of social media has become an integral part of the Alpine Convention's outreach activities. The Secretariat currently manages three social media accounts: Facebook (since November 2010), LinkedIn (since September 2023), and Instagram (since September 2024). Each channel serves a different purpose and reaches a different audience and the Secretariat tailors contents to each platform. These social media channels are used to promote events and interesting and important developments in the Alpine Convention and its network, to showcase the TWBs (as reported above), to communicate Contracting Party, Observer, and partner events, to spread awareness of Alpine issues, and to celebrate International Days.

Bringing the Alpine Convention closer to the people

The Permanent Secretariat also strives to increase visibility among local populations through participating in and supporting various activities.

To this end, it has been a partner to the Innsbruck Nature Film Festival (INFF) for several years. With 6.000 visitors and almost 500 submissions in 2025, the INFF has become Tyrol's largest film festival and is an important event on the scene of international environmental film festivals. For the second year in a row, the Permanent Secretariat sponsored a film prize for 'Best film on quality of life in the Alps', one of the Special Awards at the festival, aimed at shining a light on how special the Alps are. This year the prize was awarded – by an international, independent jury – to the film 'Requiem in Weiß / Requiem for a glacier' by Tyrolean filmmaker Harry Putz.

The Journalism Festival is another important yearly event in Innsbruck and one that the Permanent Secretariat has supported since its inception. This international festival brings together journalists, researchers, experts, NGOs, and other interested individuals to discuss pressing issues over three days. At the 2025 edition of the Festival, the Secretariat organised an event dedicated to the RSA 10, as reported in the corresponding section, which attracted over 100 visitors.





TEAM OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

The team of the Permanent Secretariat has always been changing. In 2025, several familiar faces left the team while new ones joined to make up the new family portrait of the Secretariat.

At the XVIII Alpine Conference, the mandate of the Secretary General was exceptionally extended for a further three years until 2028. This was to avoid a simultaneous change in both highest positions in the Permanent Secretariat as the Deputy Secretary General was retiring in January 2025. The team was grateful that Wolfger Mayrhofer, leaving the Alpine Convention after over 20 years of service, still made himself available for some expert support this year and continues being an ambassador of the Convention in his private capacity!

The call for the Deputy Secretary General was only published in July to decouple the periods of office for both positions. The final decision on the appointment is expected in early 2026, with the start date in the spring.

In the absence of a Deputy and to support the launch of the Italian Presidency's programme, the external consultant previously contracted as Support Officer to the Slovenian Presidency was entrusted with the role of Liaison Officer for the Bolzano/Bozen operational branch office from April to December. The distribution of tasks within the whole team was reorganised so that both Project Officers based in the Bolzano/Bozen office could dedicate most of their time to supporting the Italian Presidency.

In the EUSALP team within the Secretariat, funded by voluntary contributions from Austria, France, Germany, Slovenia, and Monaco, the Project Officer partly assigned to this process in autumn 2024 dedicated all his time to EUSALP this year. A second Project Officer was recruited in February for the rest of the year. Of the two Project Officers previously in charge of EUSALP and on parental leave until autumn 2025, one resigned and one came back to the office in November until her contract also concluded at the end of the year.

After the handover of the co-lead of AG6, human resources for the future involvement of the Alpine Convention in EUSALP processes will have to be provided within the regular budget of the Permanent Secretariat.

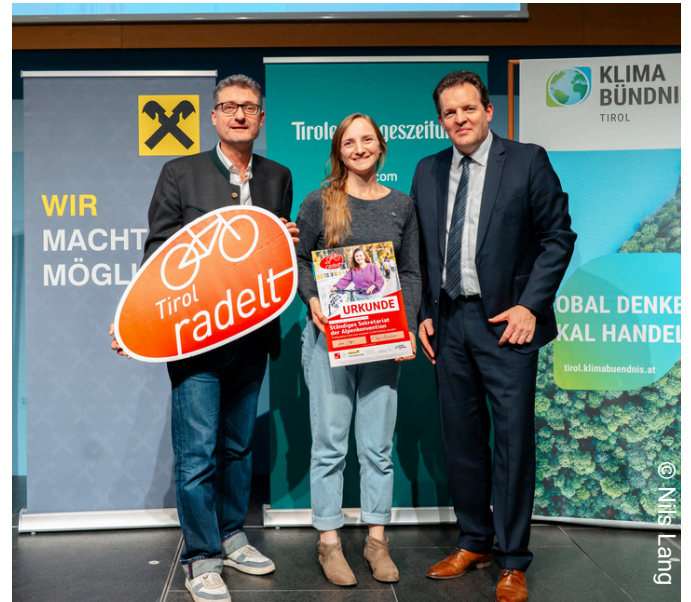
Thanks to voluntary contributions from Monaco and France, a Project Assistant was recruited in August to coordinate the 2025 edition of the Reading Mountains Festival and provide support to the Alpine Convention Atlas.

Finally, the Permanent Secretariat, as usual, successively hosted two interns who learned about and supported the daily work. One of the interns was recruited in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Aosta Valley and the other was selected from unsolicited applications. As the Communications Officer will go on parental leave in 2026, a call was issued and a person selected for her replacement.

Overall, the Permanent Secretariat's team in most of 2025 consisted of the Secretary General plus seven employees, three further colleagues seconded by Italy and France as an in-kind part of their obligatory contributions to the budget, one consultant, four officers funded by voluntary contributions (in addition to the two EUSALP Officers and the Project Assistant funded by various Parties and as mentioned above, Austria continued funding a Project Officer position to support the Soil Working Group), and an intern. Of this team of seventeen, three staff members have been working part-time.

In terms of professional qualification, several colleagues continued taking language classes or IT-related training.

And for healthy minds in healthy bodies, team members participated in the Innsbruck Alpine Trailrun Festival (for the second time) and in the Tirol radelt cycling challenge (for the sixth time). In the latter, for the fourth year in a row, the Permanent Secretariat came first in Tyrol in terms of participation rate among employers with 10-50 employees, with 83%, and once again broke its distance record with 12.564 km, slightly less than the diameter of Earth!



PUBLICATION DETAILS

© Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, 2026

Herzog-Friedrich-Straße 15
6020 Innsbruck
Austria

Operational branch office:
Viale Druso/Drususallee 1
39100 Bolzano/Bozen
Italy

Photos:
Christian Kristler-Pallhuber (cover)
Eliot Elzein (foreword)



<https://www.alpconv.org>



[Alpine Convention](#)



[@alpine.convention](#)



[@Alpine-Convention](#)

Leading the way for
sustainable life
in the Alps.

