

DECLARATION OF OBSERVERS (LISTED BELOW) ON THE FUTURE OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION ADDRESSED TO THE X. ALPINE CONFERENCE 2009 IN EVIAN (FRANCE)

Observers of the Alpine Convention assembled on March 10, 2009 in Evian, declare:

The Alpine Convention is regarded since the time of its signing in 1991 as a promising frame-work for international cooperation aiming at sustainable development of the European Alps. Since this time, it gives the Alpine territory a unique international legal instrument to cooperate.

But in 2009, the ratification process is still not accomplished. On one hand, administrative concerns are becoming a burden for the Convention, even if the successive Presidencies tried to go ahead; on the other hand, the regional institutional competencies in many topics of the protocols are not often taken into consideration. In the eyes of many citizens, the Convention has to find a balance between socio-economic development, sustainable use of resources, nature and environment conservation. Even if there is willingness for operational actions, concrete results are scarce. It appears that the Alpine Convention based on national policies and delegations has great difficulties to act as a transnational part of Europe and to orientate and adapt the European policies and strategies to the Alpine specificities. That is a common problem for both, the bodies of the Alpine Convention and the Observers. Observers, aware of their transnational dimension, consider that the European context is favourable for a metamorphosis of the Alpine Convention. A) The Territorial Agenda and the political debate on territorial cohesion open an opportunity to an Alpine macro-regional integration. B) The energy-climate package could be thought as a “green New Deal”. C) The urgency to find innovative solutions for maintaining competitiveness and employments valorising the potentialities while preserving the natural heritage and cultural diversity of the Alps.

Therefore, observers of the Alpine Convention call the X. Alpine Conference for the rise of a new vision of the Alpine Convention and to engage concrete accomplishments until the XI. Alpine Conference, including among others:

- An effective implementation of the Convention by the parties integrating regional and local territorial authorities and offering trainings for local authorities and socioeconomic stakeholders (with reference to the deficits pointed out by the Compliance Committee)
- The consideration of Alpine specificities in European policies (e.g. following a macro-regional concept for the Alps and considering recent challenges such as climate change and conservation of biodiversity);
- A better consideration of the socio-economic and cultural dimensions of sustainable development (e.g. by including demographic developments or services of general interest);
- The communication of the Convention’s added value to alpine populations and tourists;
- A restructuration of organs of the Convention with respect of the former points (e.g. by concentrating the work of the Permanent Committee mainly on strategic issues and strengthening instruments for implementation).

The following observers are willing to contribute to such a debate:

AEM, Alliance in the Alps, ALPARC, Arge Alp, CIPRA, CAA, Euromontana, FIANET, IUCN, ISCAR, Pro Mont Blanc.