



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE

THE ALPINE CONVENTION IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TREATY FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A CROSS-BORDER MOUNTAINOUS REGION
italian presidency 2013-2014
alpine convention

ITALIAN PRESIDENCY Biennial Activity Report 2013 -2014

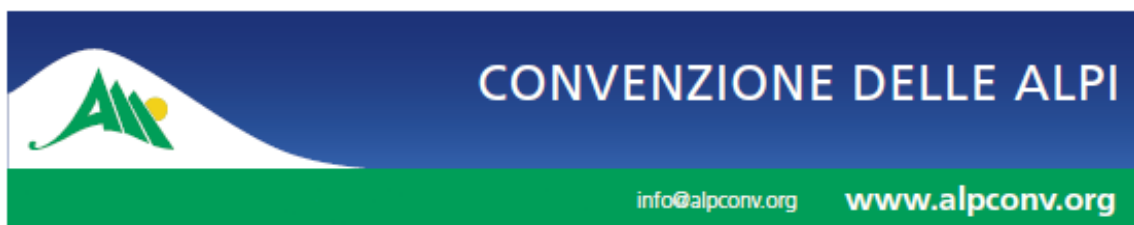
During the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, the Environment Ministry supported the implementation of a program of activities for 2013-2014 aimed at the socio-economic development of the Alpine region and its population, focusing on the Alpine natural and cultural capital. The programme contributed to ensure the continuity and quality of the ecosystem services provided by the region impacting on the surrounding downhill, plain and urban areas.

The planned events involved experts of the Working groups and Platforms, designated by the Contracting Parties and Observers of the Convention, as well as representatives of Italian Alpine regional and local authorities. The latter contributed to the drawing up of the programme of the Italian presidency in the context of the relevant Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2012.

The calendar of activities was confirmed to the delegations of the states parties to the Convention on the occasion of the 52nd Permanent Committee Meeting in Bolzano (7-8 March, 2013) and recently updated, during the 55th Permanent Committee Meeting in Gorizia (20-21 March, 2014).

Here is the report on the activities open to the public promoted by the institutional as well as technical and scientific meetings of the Alpine Convention.

MAP OF EVENTS DURING THE ITALIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION (UPDATED IN OCTOBER 2014)

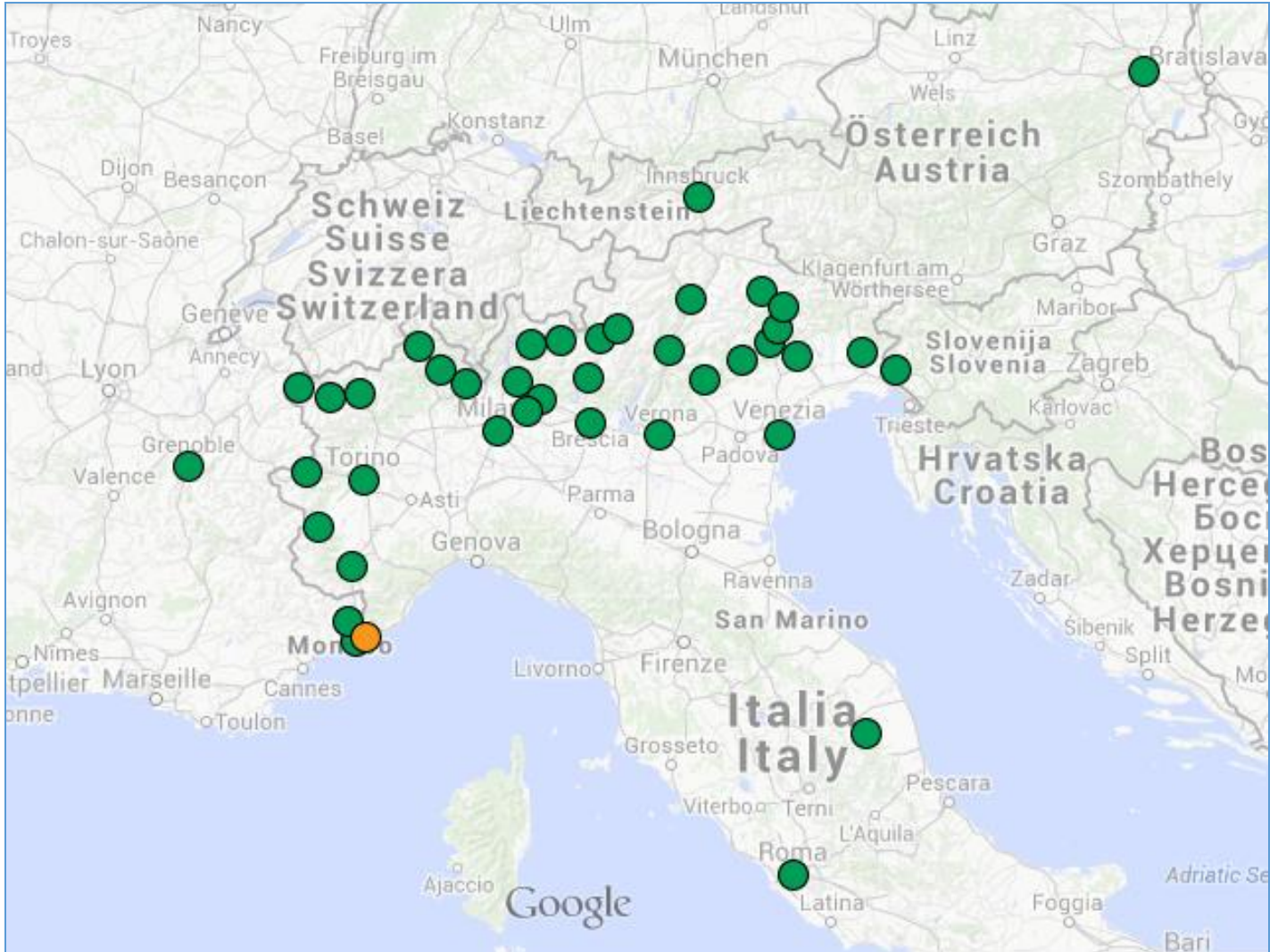




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Explanation:

Milan (5 events already held)

Bolzano (2 events already held, 3 future events)

Not included in the map:

Brussels

Vienna

Sedan

CAPTIONS:



Held events



Planned events (*Mountains of the Mediterranean*)



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March 4-8, 2013, Bolzano/Bozen

Five days of meetings and institutional events devoted to the Alps during the *Alpine Spring Festival*, on the occasion of the official opening of the two-year mandate of the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

The meetings hosted discussions and debates on the scientific issues at the heart of the work programme of the Italian Presidency, i.e. the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps, demographic changes, water management and forestry, ecosystem services and green economy, mountain farming, UNESCO Heritage, energy, Alpine Macro-regional Strategy and Digital Agenda.

Several speakers participated in the *expert meetings* organized by the Presidency, among them the Italian Ministry for the Environment, Corrado Clini, who emphasized energy efficiency and the implementation of innovative technologies for the development of renewable energy sources in the Alps.

The event, hosted by the European Academy of Bolzano (EURAC-Research), featured the meeting of the 52nd Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention. The institutional meeting was opened by Minister Clini, who referred to the Alps as an example and laboratory for sustainable development, especially with respect to energy.

An additional contribution to the success of the event was provided by the preparatory meeting of the National Coordination Board of the Italian Presidency, held on February 6 at the headquarters of ISTAT in Rome.

March 18 – 19, 2013, Aosta

The Expert Group of the Water Management Platform in the Alps convened to discuss the mandate for the 2013-14 biennium and establish working methods and objectives. The participating delegations (Austria, Italy, Germany and Switzerland) made an initial assessment of the issues to be addressed during the Alpine Fifth Water Conference, scheduled in Trent in September 2014 and discussed the possibility of a collaboration with the Natural Hazards Platform (PLANALP) to address common planning and management challenges in the Alpine region. The workshop entitled *Experiences and Paths in the Implementation of the Flood Directive in Alpine areas* focused on the application, in the Alps, of the EU Directive 2007/60 / EC related to the assessment and management of flood hazards. One of the issues raised was the possible creation of a common format for the sharing of hydro-meteorological data, to improve detection and prevention of natural disasters. The event was organized with the support of the Region of Valle d'Aosta.

March 20 – 21, 2013, Courmayeur

The hall of the Mont Blanc Cross-border Museum hosted a public workshop entitled *Environmental and social sustainability of tourism in the Alps*. Experts from ISTAT (Italian Statistical Institute) and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention submitted a plan to draw up a *Strategy for the future of Mont Blanc* devoted to tourism in the Alps. It also described the programme for the preparation of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps, which will deal with demographic changes suggesting correlations between tourism and the said demographic changes.





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The afternoon session was devoted to the work carried out by the Mont-Blanc Observatory, a system of economic and social environmental indicators based on the collection of scientific and statistical data from the three areas of the *Espace Mont-Blanc* (Valle d'Aosta, Valais and Savoy) and the *Strategy for the future of Mont Blanc*, an example of shared cross-border vision for the local development of mountain areas.

On the morning of the 21st, during the first meeting of the Task Force on Sustainable Tourism established by the Italian Presidency, the experts assessed the recent trends of alpine tourism focusing on the local opportunities offered by the promotion of responsible tourism.

The event was supported by the Department of Planning and the Environment of the Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta and the Italian Presidency Task Force on sustainable tourism.

April 9 – 10, 2013, Edolo/Ponte di Legno

The Workshop *Policies for sustainable tourism in the Alps, between local profitability and economical use of the land*, held in Valcamonica saw the participation of experts of the Task Force on Sustainable Tourism promoted by the Italian Presidency. During the meeting, the Italian Presidency launched the Task Force on New Generation for the Alps who will carry out a project to the benefit of young people eager to learn from member countries of the Convention. The project will offer them the opportunity to include issues and topics related to the Alps into their academic and professional paths.

In the same day the Audit Team of the Alpine Convention held its 18th Session for a first evaluation of the work carried out by the Parties to the Convention to fulfil the commitments made during the Ministerial Conference. The event saw a wide participation of representatives of local authorities and organizations and was promoted in collaboration with the Mountain University – the Edolo branch of Milan University - and the Mountain Community of Valcamonica-Park Adamello, with the sponsorship of the Edolo and Ponte di Legno Municipalities.

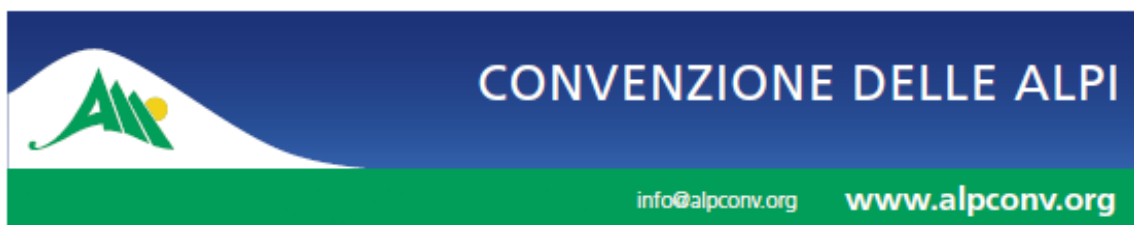
May 16 – 17, 2013, Udine

First meeting of the Working Group Mountain Forests, organized and chaired by Italy. It was attended by delegations from Austria, Germany and Italy. The meeting was aimed at identifying the objectives and working methods for the years 2013 -2014. The following day, the EOS Fair, "Exposition of Sustainability" featured the workshop entitled "The Future of alpine forests in the face of possible effects of climate change: threats and opportunities". "The experts presented to the public an analysis of available data on the status of alpine forests and possible solutions for a better coordination of the Alpine mountain forest monitoring system, as well as the sharing of knowledge, experiences and best practices in the preparation of innovative instruments for cross-border governance.

May 27 – 28, 2013, Verona

The workshop *The natural and cultural capital in the Alps as UNESCO World Heritage* with the participation of experts of the UNESCO Working Group in the Alpine Convention and the representatives of the Verona area to presented the experience of development and integrated management of the natural and cultural heritage. Special emphasis was laid on the enhancement of the Intangible Cultural Heritage as a factor of local development, as suggested by the Verona Innovation in Cultural Capital Counts project (CCC) and developed as part of the EC Central Europe programme.

During the meeting of the working group, chaired by Italy, the delegations of Austria, Italy and Slovenia discussed





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common objectives for the Promotion of the Alps as a UNESCO World Heritage Site during the Italian Presidency. The two-day meeting was hosted by the city of Verona, in collaboration with the Veneto Region, the Superintendence for Architectural Heritage and Landscape of the Verona province, Verona Innovation and CCC Central Europe Project partners.

May 29 – 30, 2013, Domodossola

The experts of the Alpine Convention participated in the public workshop *A Digital Agenda for the quality of life in the Alps: possible solutions in the light of demographic change*. The meeting advocated the dissemination of ICT as a tool for improving the socio-economic conditions of mountain communities, identifying a set of relevant indicators. The speakers specifically addressed the issue of the *Digital Divide* and *Brain Drain* in mountain areas, as well as the prospects, potential business development and co-working opportunities in mountain areas with specific reference to the actions implemented by the local authorities for the implementation of the Digital Agenda.

Domodossola also hosted the Working Group Meeting of the Alpine Convention entrusted with the drafting of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps devoted to demographic changes. The experts identified and analysed a set of common indicators for Alpine countries useful for the preparation of the document and they also discussed correlations between demographic trends in the Alpine region and employment data. In the same days, the Task Force New Generation for the Alps developed a road map and set its future goals.

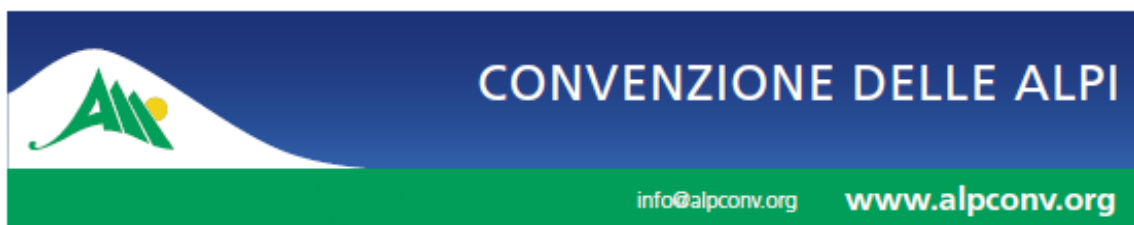
The meeting was promoted by the ARS.UNI.VCO Association, which hosts the ICT service desk of the Permanent Secretariat, in collaboration with the City of Domodossola, the Mountain Union of Ossola Valleys and the Province of Verbania.

June 6 – 7, 2013, Budoia

Meeting of the National Coordination Board of the Italian Presidency in parallel with the first meeting of the *Task Force Mountain Cooperation* promoted by the Italian Presidency. The experts of the Task Force, together with representatives of different mountain areas joined the *International workshop on mountain cooperation*. The meeting highlighted experiences of cross-border cooperation for the protection of mountain areas, with specific reference to the areas of the Alps, the Carpathians, the Dinaric Alps, the Caucasus, South America, Central Asia and Asia - Pacific. The mission of the Italian Presidency Task Force for mountain cooperation, coordinated by UNEP / ROE is to investigate opportunities for international cooperation in mountain areas and the relevant challenges to submit proposals that could contribute to the implementation of the UN "Rio + 20" decisions on sustainable development. The meeting was promoted by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention in cooperation with the Permanent Secretariat, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, the City of Budoia and the *Interim Secretariat* of the Carpathian Convention (UNEP Vienna).

June 26 – 27, 2013, Cortina d'Ampezzo

Delegations and Observers of the Alpine Convention met at the 53rd Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention preceded by a public workshop on *"Sustainable Tourism in the Alpine Green Economy"*. The meeting dealt with sustainable tourism in the Alpine region, accessibility and mobility issues as well as project planning in the context of the green economy. The case of the Dolomites - UNESCO World Heritage Site was emphasised as an interesting





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example of local management of a UNESCO site.

Innovating on the procedure, the 53rd Permanent Committee hosted among the observers a number of young students from different member states who not only followed the proceedings but also led a "question time" on the main themes of the green economy, tourism, energy, and mountain forests and farming. The meetings were supported and hosted by the Veneto Region, the town of Cortina d'Ampezzo, Cortina Tourism and the UNESCO Dolomites Foundation.

September 16, 2013, Trento

Meeting of the Coordination Board of the Italian Presidency of the Convention, preparing the 54th Permanent Committee Meeting in Aosta. Participants shared an update of the activity agenda 2013/2014, co-ordination issues, the appointment of experts to working groups and platforms, as well as the implementation of some major projects promoted by the Presidency, including the "New generation" Project for the promotion of young talents from the Alps and plans to bring the Alps to EXPO 2015.

September 19, 2013, Verbania

In the framework of the activities of the Domodossola Alpine Convention help desk and with the patronage of the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, Ministry of Environment and the Permanent Secretariat, the Association ARS.UNI.VCO held a public seminar entitled *Hydro: a resource for the area*, at the Verbania Technopark. The aim of the seminar was to focus on hydroelectric power as a resource for mountain areas and on the work of the Water Management Platform in the Alps. The outcomes of the latter are published in "Alpine Signals - focus 1, common guidelines for the use of small hydropower plants in the Alpine region" and the document "Water and the management of water resources".

September 27, 2013, Longarone

The Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, in partnership with the organizing committee of "EXPO of the Dolomites", organized a technical workshop entitled *A macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region and its potential value added for the implementation of the EU 2020*. The aim is to involve the stakeholders in the debate on the potential for a European macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy envisaged by the Lisbon agenda.

Conceived as a Community instrument for concerted action on specific geographic areas that share common challenges and opportunities, the macro-regional strategy can be an important tool for promotion at local level and for cooperation and cohesion in Europe, helping to create a sense of shared responsibility to drive local development. The workshop aimed to provide scientific and technical contributions on the opportunities and challenges of the Alpine region, as a further resource to the implementation of Europe 2020; objective of the meeting was to raise awareness and strengthen coordination between all the actors involved.

The working group held a parallel meeting to prepare the event that will promote the Strategy for the Alpine Region in Brussels at the European Institutions.



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September 27, 2013 Bolzano/Bozen

In the framework of the Innovation Festival the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention organized a talk show on the Alpine Space project "AlpInfoNet", with the support of the Italian Presidency and the Institute for Regional Development and Location Management of EURAC. The event was held at the Museum of Bolzano. 13 partners from 5 Alpine countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) took part in the Alpine Space Project - AlpInfoNet, supported by the Transport Working Group of the Alpine Convention, with the Bavarian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation as lead partner of the project. The project aims to provide travellers heading to the Alps detailed information about sustainable transport modes, with a specific focus on improving and connecting information systems implemented in the areas of tourism and transport.

October 1, 2013 Sondrio

The proposal of the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention for EXPO 2015 was presented to the Authorities, the speakers and the delegates of the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention and the Commissioners General of the national Pavilions in Expo 2015. The aim was to assess the contribution of the mountains to the Milan Expo and to launch a task force identifying joint activities of Alpine countries in the framework of the Universal exhibition of 2015. The workshop also provided the members of the Convention the opportunity to learn about other Expo projects sponsored by local authorities in the Alps to promote local culture, traditions and businesses such as: the *Alps Benchmarking* project of the Sondrio Chambers of Commerce (lead partner), Bolzano/Bozen, Trento, Belluno, Aosta and Verbano as well as the *Valtellina Valposchiavo expo* project.

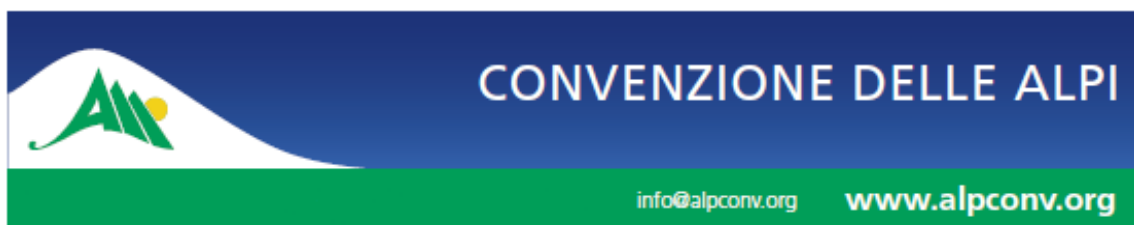
October 9-10, 2013, Brescia

Important workshop on *Water and risk management to tackle climate change: towards local adaptation*, with the aim of opening up the debate on the national and regional implementation of adaptation plans to natural hazards and on river basin management.

The countries of the Alpine Convention first illustrated the current national strategies for water management, presenting the steps to meet the quality requirements of water management adaptation plans as well as monitoring criteria.

The debate was then enriched by an assessment of the Alpine strategies to cope with natural hazards presented by the experts of the Natural Hazards Platform of the Alpine Convention and by a focus on the actions taken by the local authorities.

The workshop built on the Action Plan On Climate Change, adopted by the Alpine Convention in March 2009 to reach excellence in preventing and adapting to climate change in the Alpine region. The workshop also followed on the guidelines of the White Paper of the European Union of 2009 and the subsequent EU Adaptation Strategy





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formulated in April 2013. The latter seeks to encourage Member States to adopt comprehensive and integrated strategies and policies within the European Union, to provide funding to support adaptation actions (LIFE, Cohesion Fund), and bridge the knowledge gap.

October 15-16, 2013, St. Vincent

54th Meeting of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention, which addressed some of the core activities of the Convention: the European macro-regional strategy, promotion of the mountains at EXPO 2015 and evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the Action Plan on climate change.

The institutional meeting was complemented by a public workshop on *Road transport safety in the Alps and risk management with respect to natural hazards: challenges, best practices and possible long-term solutions* addressing the issue of road transport safety in the Alpine region. More than 60 people, including experts, administrators, regional, national and international representatives in the Alps convened to discuss the main management practices and projects to promote road network safety in the Alps and in Alpine tunnels, with particular attention to risks and natural hazards protection in areas with special features and needs such as the mountains. The experts pointed out that the use of the best technologies and the adoption of specific management and communication procedures represent the most effective way to ensure full infrastructural efficiency as well as safe usage by all citizens, but also to ensure environmental quality as a whole, air quality, noise pollution. The second session of the workshop analysed possible long-term strategies for the prevention and integrated management of risks and natural hazards in the Alps.

October 29, 2013, Innsbruck

Working Group meeting on the Macro-regional Strategy to finalize the organization of the Brussels conference, the summit meeting promoted by France and supported by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention. During the meeting the European Council of Ministers will be formally asked to instruct the European Commission to proceed with the definition of a macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region. The meeting in Innsbruck provided the opportunity to define the agenda for the Brussels conference.

November 5, 2013, Trento

Meeting of the Working Group of the Alpine Convention for the drawing up of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps on demographic changes underway in the Alpine areas. Saverio Gazzelloni, ISTAT (Italian Statistical Agency) executive who chairs the Group of Experts of the Convention, presented an update on the progress made in the drawing up of the document that will be released at the end of 2014. The Working Group carried out a preliminary analysis of the demographics of the Alpine region received by the competent institutions of the member countries of the Convention and identified a set of best practices to be included in the report.

November 8, 2013, Milan

Coordination meeting of the Task Force *Protected Areas* of the Italian Presidency, with the involvement of environmental, ecological and planning experts and with the participation of the presidents and managers of national protected areas and the representatives of the autonomous Regions and Provinces in the Alps. The meeting was an important milestone for the Task Force to develop synergies between protected areas and



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management bodies with a view to strengthening their role at a national and cross-border level. The discussion highlighted actions to improve the internal management of protected areas, through the identification of shared monitoring tools and biodiversity management. Reference was made to the relationship with the local authorities responsible for the implementation of European environmental legislation and a greater involvement of protected areas and management bodies within international networks like Alparc.

To cope with the issues mentioned above, Italy considered the possibility of setting up a National Coordination for Ecological Alpine Protected Sites (*Siti Ecologici Protetti Alpini, SEPA*), led by the Ministry for the Environment. The aim is to contribute to the implementation of the Alpine Convention and in particular to the following Protocols of implementation of the Convention: "Nature Protection and Landscape Conservation", "Planning and Sustainable Development", "Mountain Farming" and "Tourism and Leisure Activities."

November 11-18, 2013, Feltre

Autumn School *De-carbonizing planning: the implementation of the Alpine Convention for Climate Protection*, to set guidelines for urban and environmental planning, and adaptation of local communities to climate change in mountain areas, contributing to the training of experts in environmental planning and projects based on the contents of the Alpine Convention. With specific reference to the sections on climate change and land-use planning of the Alpine Convention the Autumn School 2013 verifies their feasibility through the development of guidelines for a strategic plan for the Belluno area from the angle of climate change and land protection.

The Feltre meeting was promoted by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention in collaboration with the Foundation for the University and High Culture in the Province of Belluno, in the framework of co-operation activities between the Ministry for the Environment and Universities in the Alpine regions, planned for the period of the Italian Presidency.

November 18, 2013, Breglio

The French town of Breil-sur-Roya hosted the conference to submit *a nomination proposal for the cross-border area Mercantour Alpes-Maritimes to be inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list*. The event was also supported by the Alpine Convention. The Maritime Alps and Mercantour Parks collaborated since 1986 and received major recognition in Europe. Since 2004 they launched the ambitious project of the nomination for the list of World Heritage Sites. Recently, the need was felt to involve other areas in this initiative to complement and complete the geological and biodiversity range of the two parks in the area including the Marguareis limestone massif and karstification as well as the important areas of endemism in the Ligurian Alps. Thanks to the agreement reached and the collaboration with the Ministry for the Environment in April 2013, the areas of the Maritime Alps and Marguareis Parks, along with the Ligurian Alps Park and Natura 2000 sites in the Province of Imperia, including the protected regional Hanbury Botanical Gardens and the Mercantour National Park, France, were inscribed together, as required by UNESCO for cross-border sites, in the lists of Italy and France as a natural heritage with the evocative name of "the Sea Alps".

November 19, 2013, Brussels

With a view to the development of the EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine region, a coordination meeting was held in Brussels by the promoters and the European Commission - DG Regio (Brussels, DG Regio, November 18). Another meeting was convened by the "ad hoc" Committee composed of members of the Joint Committee of the





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States and Alpine Regions coordinated by DATAR, the Alpine Convention and the Alpine Space Programme (Brussels, Permanent Representation of France to the EU, November 19).

The meeting was intended to finalize the organization of the Joint Conference for the promotion of a EU macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region, scheduled in December 2013 at the headquarters of the French Permanent Representation at the EU headquarters in Brussels. The objective of the meeting is to obtain the go-ahead of the European Council to kick off the procedure for the Strategy Action Plan.

November 26, 2013, Varese

The public workshop "*Experiences and perspectives of territorial cooperation in the Alps: the Alpine Convention and the Alpine Space Programme*" gathered the two international actors working for the preservation and promotion of the Alps.

In the past, also thanks to the scientific results achieved, other projects funded by the Alpine Space Programme enabled the Alpine countries to strengthen national and international policies and measures for the protection and sustainable development of the Alpine region. This created an opportunity to develop a fruitful dialogue between the Alpine Space Programme and the Alpine Convention to achieve common goals for the area.

During the workshop the prospects of cooperation between the Convention and the Alpine Space Programme were discussed in the framework of the Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine region.

The event was organized by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention in collaboration with the Region of Lombardy and the National Contact Point of the Alpine Space Programme.

December 3-4, 2013, Trento

The public workshop "*The ecosystem services of Alpine forests: identification, assessment and potential tools for their development*", saw the participation of experts of the Working Group Mountain Forests of the Alpine Convention. The experts discussed the value of wood products as well as other non-wood products (mushrooms, fruits and so on), offered by the alpine forests, highlighting how these products encourage the production of services benefiting the mountain and valley communities: soil stability, climate protection, biodiversity and natural reserves, landscape, leisure environments. Albeit no direct income is generated for the owners, this can certainly be considered an added value provided by forest areas. International organizations and the European Union are particularly keen on the value of alpine forests, especially in the light of their potential for carbon sequestration policies related to climate change mitigation. Mountain forests are one of the ecosystems that produce some of the most relevant services to the general public and the mountain environment while the maintenance of their various functions rests on sustainable management. The costs involved are high, however, because of the specific difficulties implied by mountain environment.

December 5, 2013, Gorizia

It was held at the Council Chamber of the City of Gorizia. The workshop *The natural and cultural value of karst landscapes: focus on the Classic Karst* was held at the Council Chamber of the City of Gorizia, followed by the meeting of the Alps delegations of the UNESCO Working Group of the Alpine Convention.





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The workshop highlighted two important projects developed within the CBC Programme Italy - Slovenia 2007/2013: the first of the Hydrokarst project activities, focused on the protection and coordinated management of the Reka Timava aquifer through quantitative and qualitative monitoring of underground water and of the Classic Karst area. It was the second activity promoted by the Carso / Kras project, including the feasibility study of a geo-park between Italy and Slovenia.

Mara Cernic, Vice President of the Gorizia Province, presented the project "Karst 2014", aimed at redeveloping the Province of Karst, through the enhancement of existing resources and the promotion of cultural tourism. The final session was opened by Patrizia Rossi, President of the UNESCO Working Group of the Alpine Convention, who briefly summarized the results from 2006 to date. Paolo Colantoni, of the Environment Ministry, pointed out some recent achievements, the most significant of all being the establishment of the Italian-French Monviso Cross-border Biosphere Reserve. Finally, the future prospects of the serial nomination to UNESCO World Heritage of the Dinaric Karst were illustrated. The nomination involves six countries, including Slovenia and Italy, and is also supported by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

The event was organized with the support of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region and hosted by the city of Gorizia, in collaboration with the Slovenian delegation of the UNESCO WG of the Alpine Convention.

December 11, 2013, Vienna

In the framework of the *International Mountain Day* promoted by the United Nations, the city of Vienna hosted the conference to present the *ninth edition of SWOMM -Scientific Workshop on Mountain Mobility-* promoted by the Presidency of the Alpine Convention. The meeting focused on tourism and sustainable mobility with particular attention to the accessibility of mountain areas in the Alps and the Carpathians.

The first working session was devoted to the evaluation of common approaches to sustainable mobility with a focus on the Access2Mountain project, presented in April 2014 as well as to the presentation of experiences and of the outcomes achieved by the Transport Working Group sponsored by the Alpine Convention. The second session was instead devoted to some important initiatives to encourage "car free" tourism in the Alps: the GSEISPUR, AlpInfoNet and Access2mountain projects, aimed at promoting sustainable mobility and tourism in some mountain areas. The event was organized by the Presidency of the Alpine Convention and the University of Camerino in cooperation with the Austrian Agency for the Environment, EURAC and UNEP, Vienna, as the *interim* Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention. The final proposal was to strengthen cooperation between the Alpine and Carpathian Conventions to develop further joint initiatives for sustainable mobility.

December 17, 2013, Brussels

In view of the European Council of December 19 and 20, 2013, the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, together with France, promoted the *Joint Conference for the promotion of EU macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region*. The conference was convened in Brussels at the venue of the EU French Permanent Representation. The objective of the Conference was to promote the EU-wide added value of a EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine region, to get the go-ahead by the European Council to initiate the appropriate procedures for the development of the Strategy Action Plan. It was highlighted that a European Union Strategy for the Alpine region will contribute to achieving the Europe 2020 goals for sustainable, smart and inclusive growth. Thanks to the involvement of different levels of governance, the strategy will also be a useful tool to align political and administrative measures as well as the use of European resources with the existing national and local resources.





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The Conference - divided into two High Level Panels, a technical and a political one - was attended by numerous international and European institutions. The Alpine Convention was represented by a large delegation led by the Italian Presidency representative Marco Flavio Cirillo, Undersecretary for the Environment.

December 19, 2013, Bergamo

International Workshop under the platform WISO-large predators, ungulates and society- entitled "*Arctos & Schengen. From specimens control to population management*". The platform experts analysed wildlife management practices in the Alps in relation to past experiences gained from the LIFE – ARCTOS project, they highlighted past learnings, current criticalities and where to focus future efforts. The event was hosted by the University of Bergamo.

2014

February 17-18, 2014, Ostana.

The Working Group Meeting for V RSA was held in the province of Cuneo. The group consisted of experts appointed by all the States parties to the Convention and was coordinated by PSAC and the Italian Presidency held by ISTAT. The Italian Statistics Agency is working at the report classifying the data provided by authorized national experts or collected with the support of PSAC, based on official database statistics.

The meeting of experts of the Alpine Convention was preceded by a public workshop entitled *The social implications of demographic change in the Alpine region*, during which the speakers discussed and presented to Ostana citizens some demographic trends and their impact on the labour market and on the provision of services of public interest. The speakers also focused on good practices in some mountain communities to cope with the decline of the population: thanks to its demographic developments, the small municipality of Ostana in Piedmont is considered a test laboratory. Its "new" young citizens who chose to live in the mountains, are perfectly integrated with the local community. They left the big cities, with many couples among them, choosing the mountain as a place to work and live, thereby contributing to enlarge the local community.



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February 13, 2014, Milan

The Italian Alpine Club hosted the National Coordination Board of the Italian Presidency discussing the agenda for the 55th Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention and presented an update on the schedule of activities planned for 2014 by the Italian Presidency, with special reference to EUSALP, EXPO 2015 and Climate Change. The President stressed the important outcomes of the joint conference held in Brussels in December 2014, sponsored by France and supported by the Alpine Convention. As a result of it the European Council entrusted the European Commission to initiate the process for the preparation of a EU Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP). The Convention will participate at the Management Committee set up to monitor the work of the European Commission with an observer's status.

The Coordination Board then discussed the contribution of the Mountains to Expo Milan 2015 and the Convention, following the proposal of Italy, initiated a process for the promotion of a week devoted to the mountains in EXPO 2015. Professor Antonio Ballarin Denti, Focal Point of the Italian delegation at the Alpine Convention, finally summarized the activities of the working groups and platforms of 2013, pointing to the kick off of a task force on February 27 in Milan, to draw up a report on local adaptation measures to climate change.

March 6-7 2014, Lecco

In conjunction with the meeting of the Working Group on Mountain Forests, the Italian Presidency of the Convention promoted the workshop *A green infrastructure for growth: the potential role of alpine forests in the Green Economy in Europe*. Experts and representatives of international, national and local institutions and associations involved the local citizens and stakeholders illustrating data and projects for the enhancement of ecosystem services of Alpine mountain forests, a topic currently investigated by the Expert Group of the Alpine Convention. Methodologies, best practices and tools for the development of the multi-functionalities of Alpine forests were also related to the objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set out by the European Union Agenda "2020".

The meeting was held in the picturesque location of the Regional Park Hermitage Monte Barro Galbiate and was organized in collaboration with Cooperativa Eliante and Legambiente Lecco.

March 20-21, 2014, Gorizia

The Conference Centre at the Triest University in Gorizia hosted the 55th session of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention. A wide range of issues were addressed by the Alpine Delegations, together with representatives of organizations and institutions participating as Observers. The meeting focused on the main themes addressed by the working groups and platforms for the implementation of the 2013-2014 biennial mandate, including guidelines for local adaptation to climate change, the enhancement of protected areas and the promotion of alpine areas in the context of Rio + 20. Particular attention was given to the contribution that the Convention is called upon to provide to the European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region.





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The Committee meeting was preceded by a public workshop entitled *Bringing the Alps to EXPO 2015: mountains, food, environment and culture on the way to Milan*, during which experts of the mountain, representatives of international organizations and delegates of the eight Alpine countries met to discuss opportunities for promotion and visibility entailed by the Universal Exhibition for the Alps, through the organization of a "Week for the mountain", to give the appropriate visibility to mountain issues with the involvement of the Pavilions of Alpine Countries. The workshop was sponsored by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention in collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat.

April 11, 2014, Asiago

Hosted by the Reggenza dei Sette Comuni Mountain Community of Asiago the public workshop "*Opportunities of rural tourism to the economy of the Alpine region*" was promoted by the Italian Presidency in collaboration with the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention, the Veneto Region, the City of Asiago and Spettabile Reggenza dei Sette Comuni.

Sustainable tourism is an economic sector of increasing interest in mountain areas and can provide added value to the community, both in terms of economic development and enhancement of traditions and customs. The Asiago workshop was an opportunity to address this issue, with a specific focus on rural tourism. Contributions were provided by the Task Force "Sustainable tourism" of the Alpine Convention as well as the Veneto Region institutions and local authorities involved in the implementation of specific sustainable tourism projects.

The workshop addressed the content of the Fourth Report on the State of the Alps, which provides an overview of definitions, classifications, policies for sustainable tourism and law systems, explaining the situation of tourism in the Alps, the relevant challenges and presenting options and tools to find the best solutions. The second part of the event envisaged a round table presentation of projects and experiences of local authorities in the field of sustainable tourism, with short thematic contributions on the actions taken in the Veneto Region to promote local development and support sustainable tourism.

April 14, 2014, Turin

The Italian Presidency launched the travelling tour of the exhibition "Constructive Alps". The tour started in Turin to include **various stages in the Italian Alps all along 2014: Imperia (May) the door of the Mediterranean Alps, Trent (June), Cortina (July - August), Belluno (in October), Morbegno (October), Domodossola (November)**. The exhibition will highlight the best projects of sustainable architecture for the mountain, awarded on the occasion of the international prize "Constructive Alps", promoted in 2013 by Switzerland. The aim is to enhance architectural projects, renovations or new buildings, inspired by the goals of energy efficiency and respect for the environment. The tour kick-off was accompanied by a public workshop entitled *The Mountain and its inhabitants, energy and innovation in the Alps* promoted by the Italian Presidency in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts of Turin and Leapfactory, and with the technical and scientific support of CIPRA Italy and the Alpine Museum in Bern. Promoting energy efficiency in residential housing is one of the most promising application areas of energy saving measures and is particularly relevant to the Alpine region. The subject was discussed during a round table with the participation of stakeholders who, in various ways, are involved with energy, building techniques and sustainable design in mountain areas.





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April 23-24, 2014, Sarnano

Welcoming the invitation by the Apennines to hold a meeting addressing the experiences of cooperation and sustainable development for the mountains, the Italian Presidency promoted the International Conference *The Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention: comparing experiences. The Apennines, a European mountain range*, in the framework of the mountain cooperation activities carried out by the homonymous mountain Cooperation Task Force of the Presidency.

Participants at the conference included experts, researchers and stakeholders at international, national and local level, showing that mountain issues are a very topical challenge. Many issues and interests converge into a very complex area which also offers many resources and opportunities for sustainable development. The Round Table "*What ideas for the Apennines?*" hosted representatives of the local authorities, research centres, associations and institutions to compare experiences in the Alps and Carpathians with the specificities of the Apennines with a view to bringing out the potential as well as the challenges that a cooperation agreement might entail for the Apennines.

In conjunction with the meeting, a document called The Sarnano Charter was drafted to set out objectives and commitments to start off a cooperation project for the Apennine mountains. The document raised the interest of both the scientific community and the local authorities of the Apennines.

May 2, 2014, Trezzo sull'Adda

The *International Parks Festival* was held, a programme of conferences and workshops, exhibitions and shows, experiences from foreign parks and international guests, gathered together in a shared path that gave the opportunity to set up a new solution for meetings between institutions, parks, universities, associations and citizens.

The Italian Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat to the Alpine Convention were present at the Festival and promoted their workshop *Towards the sustainability of the ecological system of protected areas* and talked about the work carried out by the Convention for safeguarding and protecting the natural heritage of the Alps, through the Conservation of Nature and the Countryside Protocol whose objective is to encourage cooperation between the Contracting Parties to ensure the functional efficiency of the ecosystems, the conservation of countryside elements and wild animal and plant species together with their habitats, the regenerative ability and lasting productivity of natural resources, and also the diversity, specificity and beauty of the natural and rural landscape.

May 6-7, 2014, Belluno

The experts of the ad hoc working group of the Alpine Convention gathered in Belluno to draft the 5th Report on the State of the Alps that will deal with demographic change in the alpine region. To draft this document, the Working Group aimed to identify three major theme areas: demographic, occupation and service. For each of them, significant aspects for local areas are taken into consideration, by analysing a set of specific statistic indicators able to represent the state and recent evolution of events.

Before the Belluno meeting, a public workshop was held called *How does the population change in the Alps? Economic scenarios and new possibilities of employment*, organized by the Italian Presidency, in collaboration with the Veneto Region and Fondazione G. Angelini – Centro Studi sulla Montagna.

The workshop offered food for thought to the audience on the job situation in the Alps with respect to population change, also presenting some outstanding experiences in terms of business, research, partnerships and sustainability,





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specifically focusing on the eastern side of Italian Alps. The first indices resulting from the aggregation of demographic data in the Alps were presented during the meeting, which will then be included in the VRSA.

May 8, 2014, Milan

A workshop was held at Palazzo Pirelli in Milan, called *A Digital Agenda for the Alps: promoting competitiveness and social inclusion* during which a paper was presented and discussed for a **Digital Agenda of the Alps** and where the experiences of local institutions were analysed, in particular the Broadband development programme of the Lombardy Region.

The paper for a Digital Agenda of the Alps, currently being analysed by the experts of the Alpine Convention gathered in a specific Task Force promoted by the Italian Presidency, will include an analysis of major areas of action for the digitalization of the Alpine region and an analysis on good practices aimed at eliminating the digital divide in high mountain areas and in areas at the foot of the mountains which are more densely populated, in order to promote greater competitiveness and social inclusion.

The Milan workshop highlighted the need to identify common points for shared work among the Alpine countries, aimed at overcoming the obstacles to the development of ITC potential, such as the lack of or poor Internet access, poor usability and accessibility of products and services, inadequate IT literacy; the event was promoted by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention in partnership with Lombardy Region.

May 22, 2014, Venice

The meeting of the national coordination forum of the Italian Presidency was hosted in the headquarters of the Veneto Region. This is the usual meeting bringing together Alpine local authorities that, since 2012 (after signing a specific Memorandum), support the programme of the Presidency. This meeting is generally held before the meetings of the Permanent Committee. The draft programme of the 56th Permanent Committee to be held in Brescia in June was presented in Venice, where the role of Observers in the Alpine Convention was specifically discussed, on whose activity and relationships a report of the Presidency and of the Permanent Secretariat will be presented. Also discussed was the programme for “New Generations in the Alps”, set in motion by the Italian Presidency to support young generations by means of training and information activities on Convention related themes, and the Presidency will suggest that the Permanent Committee invite a delegation of young people from the Alps to the next Alpine Conference in Turin. The Presidency also mentioned the stronger political interest for the Alpine Convention and specifically about the role of Italy that, as of June, will chair the Convention, the European Council and the UNECE Water Convention.

June 23-24-25, 2014, Brescia

The 56th Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention was hosted at the offices of the Chamber of Commerce of Brescia, where the eight Alpine Delegations met to discuss how to continue the implementation of the Treaty and of the objective of the Programme of the Italian Presidency while preparing the XIII Alpine Conference that will be held in November in Turin. The results achieved and future actions for the definition of the Macro-regional Strategy of the European Union for the Alpine Region were discussed in Brescia, in particular with reference to the works of the Steering Committee, the body in charge of following the preparatory stage of the process, within which the Alpine





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Convention participates as an observer. The Permanent Committee also approved the organization of a “Mountain Week” with the aim to take the contribution of the Mountain to the themes of EXPO 2015 also by engaging the halls of the Alpine Countries; the themes of demographic change in the Alpine region were also discussed, to which the 5th Report on the State of the Alps is devoted, and the implementation of the plan of action on climate change in the Alps and in particular the measures for adaptation that such a fragile area needs. The opening public workshop also dealt with adaptation to climate change, called *The guidelines for local adaptation in mountain regions: what prospects for the Alps and beyond?*, organized in partnership with the Lombardy Region and the Chamber of Commerce of Brescia, which, through the contributions of international experts, tackled the theme of local adaptation to climate change in mountain regions, presenting experiences and actual measures also relating to the region of Lombardy.

July 23-24, 2014 Genoa

The 20th Meeting of the Compliance Committee was hosted in Genoa, in the building of the Liguria Region. This is a body that controls if the commitments and obligations resulting from the Alpine Convention are complied with.

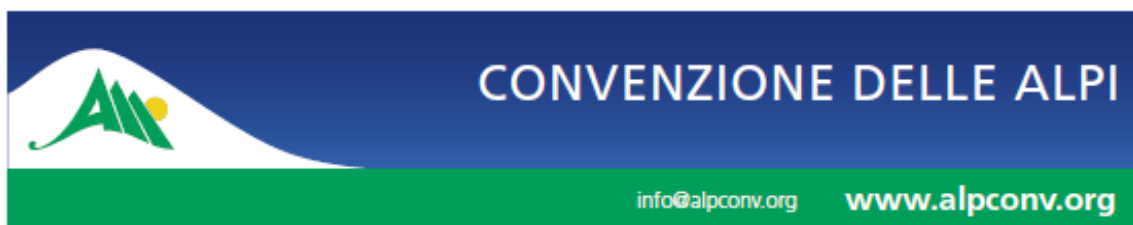
Every four years, the Contracting Parties have to present a report concerning the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols. The first report was adopted by the Alpine Conference in March 2009 and this year the expert delegates in the group are working on the report that will be presented at the Alpine Conference in Turin (November 2014). The Genoa meeting dealt in particular with checking the implementation of the Tourism Protocol of the Alpine Convention.

The decision to hold this important technical meeting in Genoa is part of the framework of actions of the Italian Presidency aimed at strengthening the local presence of the Alpine Convention and its relationships with local institutions: also Liguria with its Maritime Alps is significantly contributing to cross-boundary cooperation in the mountains, in this respect the President of the Permanent Committee opened the works together with the Regional Minister Rossetti and the administrative managers for sustainable development.

September 11-12, 2014, Pieve di Cadore

The experts of the Alpine Convention met in the Dolomites at the offices of Magnifica Comunità di Cadore, for a two-day meeting on the management and enhancement of the role of **Alpine forests** in the protection of mountain ecosystems and as an economic resource for the development of an Alpine green economy.

The technical and scientific meeting of the Mountain Forest Working Group of the Alpine convention was followed by a public workshop titled *The services of forest ecosystems in the Alps as a natural, economic and cultural asset for a regional and European green economy*. The objective of the workshop was to foster public exchange among institutional players, experts from the scientific world as well as local, national and international stakeholders about methods, good practices and the features of the existing approaches for the enhancement of the Alpine forest heritage





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and the environmental, social and economic services guaranteed by multifunctional forest ecosystems in the mountains.

During the meeting, the results of the work carried out by the experts of the “Mountain Forests” Working Group were presented, who are analysing the main research fields and recent changes in international, community and local policies for the development of the Alpine forest sector.

The events were promoted by the 2013-2014 Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, in partnership with the Veneto Region and Magnifica Comunità di Cadore.

September 15, 2014, Sedan

The Regional Natural Park of the Ardennes, the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne and the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention have organized an international workshop titled *The Alps and the Ardennes: sharing experiences among transboundary mountain areas*, at the Sedan Castle (France).

Twenty-five delegates from ten countries took part in a series of technical sessions and then in a closing panel discussion characterized by a high institutional level. The objective of the meeting was to promote sustainable development in mountain areas by sharing experiences on international cooperation in mountain areas: in particular, related to legal and institutional aspects, the development of mountain areas at the transboundary and interregional level, cooperation on nature and landscape protection, highlighting also new opportunities not only for the French Ardennes, but also for those located in Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

This event is part of the Programme of the Presidency which features, among its various objectives, also the promotion of synergies with other mountain ranges (the Carpathians, Pyrenees, Balkans, Apennines, etc.), through cooperation with institutions and mountain partnerships based on the criteria established in the Alpine Convention. The Italian Presidency set up a “Mountain Cooperation” Task Force dedicated to this theme.

September 19, 2014, Boario Terme

The Alpine Convention participated in the 11th Forum Alpinum, the annual meeting promoted by ISCAR - International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps- that gathers bodies, institutions and associations active in the enhancement of the Alps.

The main theme of the Forum was the use and management of Alpine resources, from local to macro-regional level, and focused on the Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine Region that is being discussed at the European Commission following the decision taken by the European Council in December 2013.

At this Forum, the Alpine Convention intended to promote some initiatives aimed at enhancing young talents coming from the Alps as a necessary resource for land development and maintenance. The Permanent Secretariat presented the posters of the best young researchers awarded by the Alpine Convention and, at the last forum session, a workshop was held called *Themes for a new Alpine research and education network built on youth's view* promoted by the Italian Presidency in co-operation with the University of Milan, the UNIMONT “Mountain University” in Edolo. The workshop was also a chance to present the training programme for post-graduate students dedicated to Project Management for the mountains, designed by the Mountain University in Edolo and whose implementation is supported by the Alpine Convention and the Italian Presidency through its “New Generation” Task Force.

September 25-26, 2014, Trento





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The 5th Alpine Water Conference was held in Trento, whose objective is to spread the results of the activities devoted to water management within the framework of the Alpine Convention, with the engagement of other mountain regions, such as the Carpathians, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The 5th Alpine Water Conference is intended to present to a wide audience of experts, institutions and stakeholders the state of the art, the best practices and the main findings about adaptation to climate change in cross-boundary river basins in mountain regions.

Participating experts described the main results of the most recent years of activities in their respective conventions and also provided high-level updated information on climate change and adaptation strategies, as well as the results of some European local cooperation projects. Finally, there was a specific focus on the implementation of measures for flood management.

The Conference was jointly organized and promoted by the Alpine Convention and the UNECE Water Convention, in order to foster the establishment of synergies and the exchange of experiences (e.g. in the Alpine region, the Carpathians, the Caucasus, Central Asia).

September 27, 2014, Longarone

The Alpine Convention participated in the fourth “EXPO of the Dolomites World Heritage”, an exhibition that aims to highlight the features, objectives and social and economic consequences of the inclusion of the Dolomites in the World Heritage List. Within the agenda of events, the Italian Presidency promoted a public workshop on the theme *Landscape and the UNESCO brand: a (not only) Alpine combination* promoted by the Italian Presidency. The workshop intended to network the experiences of management of UNESCO sites in Italy and abroad, by presenting to the audience some significant sites such as Langhe in the Monferrato area in Piedmont, the Aeolian islands in Sicily, the significant Slovenian site of the Škocjan Caves and the City of Verona. Some Institutions active in the management of UNESCO sites took the floor, together with academics who deal with tourism marketing; many people were present, among them also the students of the "P.F. Calvi" Technical and Economic School with a focus on Tourism in Belluno. At the end of the workshop, the commitment of the Veneto Region towards the implementation of the Programme of the Italian Presidency was mentioned, and the joint work carried out on the themes of sustainable tourism.

October 16, 2014, Susa

The Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention promoted the public event *Demographic change and regional development: an Alpine challenge*, presented as a chance to disseminate the results achieved so far by the experts of the Working Group of the Alpine Convention for the VRSA who, led by Mr. Saverio Gazzelloni from the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), are preparing the 5th Report on the State of the Alps.

The RSA will include updated data and analyses on demographic developments in mountain regions and on their underlying forces. This document is intended to provide institutions and public decision-makers with useful elements for the protection of mountain settlements and of populations that choose to continue to live there, ensuring the protection of its ecosystem services, which are necessary also to peri-alpine areas and to the plains. This document, for





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example, will specifically focus on the opportunity to conceive an Alpine Digital Agenda as a tool to ensure access to broadband services to mountain populations.

October 25, 2014, Cuneo

The project for the application of the “Alps of the sea” region as a candidate to join the UNESCO World Heritage List was presented at the Hall of Honour of the City Hall in Cuneo. This project includes the Alpi Marittime Nature Park and the Parc National du Mercantour, that have been working on this project for a long time now, together with Park Marguareis, the Alpi Liguri Park, a few Sites of Community Interest in the province of Imperia and the Regional Protected Area of the botanical gardens of Villa Hanbury. The Italian Presidency has always supported this application and the President of the Permanent Committee was present at the event.

The meeting, particularly addressed to local administrators, representatives of business activities and associations, was organized to present the results of the work of the team of technical experts and academics asked to find the key issues on which the application should focus, together with the operating facility that should manage the whole process.

The various stages of the application process will be co-ordinated by the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) “Marittime Mercantour European Park”, a legal entity that is best able to cope with a particularly difficult challenge, and therefore even more stimulating because of its cross-boundary character.



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For further information and to have access to the documents related to the activities promoted by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, go to link:

www.alpconv.org/it/organization/presidency/activities.html