

**Welcome address,
Alenka Smerkolj**

I am very much pleased to be involved in launching the 2nd EUSALP AG6 workshop on Territorial Brands in the Alpine Region. First, because this is a sign of Alpine Convention's commitment to the EUSALP and second, because the topic can be considered as an important concretisation of the Alpine Convention's implementation.

The international workshop is an important part of the work programme of the EUSALP Action Group 6, which is led by the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and the Austrian Region of Carinthia.

Working on this issue is not something new for AG6. The first EUSALP workshop on this topic was held 2 years ago, in May 2019. More than 100 practitioners of the agri-food sector, territorial brand managers and experts on local development from all over the Alpine region met at EURAC Research in Bolzano/Bozen gathered at the event. The potential for development of Territorial Brands for local sustainable growth in the agri-food sector was explored and evolving trends were discussed.

Considering the huge potential Alpine agriculture has for the development of bio-economy and sustainable food production and thus for generating many certified high-quality products and environmental services, AG6 continued working on supporting and promoting sustainable value chains of Alpine high-quality food products in the EUSALP area. The 2nd international workshop is now dedicated to the specific challenges of smaller-scale Territorial Brands and their contributions to sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development in peripheral Alpine areas. The links of these Territorial Brands to climate adaptation and carbon footprint will also be dealt with.

What does the topic have to do with the implementation of the Alpine Convention? A lot. First, the creation of conditions for marketing of mountain farm produce based on distinctive, unique, nature-friendly production methods and limited to the locality through guarantees of origin and of quality is a direct implementation of article 11 of the Mountain Farming Protocol. Furthermore, Territorial Brands often realize the cooperation between tourism, agriculture, forestry and handcrafts and the combination of activities generating employment in the context of sustainable development, which article 20 of the Tourism Protocol calls for.

Territorial Brands also correspond to the green economy approach to which the Contracting Parties of the Alpine Convention committed themselves in the

Declaration on fostering a sustainable economy in the Alps in terms of improving the quality of life and the creation of green jobs.

And finally, the Climate Action Plan 2.0 adopted at the last Alpine Conference defines the promotion of Alpine products and the increase of locally retained added value as one of the pathways to follow in the field of mountain agriculture. In this connection the Territorial Brands could play a role in further supporting low-carbon and organic farming techniques across the Alps and at integrating them in local value chains.

In a broader sense, the activities related to the promotion of sustainable value chains of Alpine high-quality food products contribute to break down to the local level the targets of the SDGs of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations. This applies in particular to the goals 2 “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” and 12 “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns”. In this way, the Alpine Convention proves to be a regional implementation of the UN Agenda 2030.

I would like to thank the co-organisers of the workshop from EURAC, which also hosts the branch office of the PSAC, and the dedicated members and leaders of EUSALP AG6.

I hope that this 2nd EUSALP Workshop on Territorial Brands in the Alpine Region will contribute to disseminating good practices but also to identifying common challenges to design and realize successful Territorial Brands that generate sustainable economic, social and environmental development. I wish the event a good course under the proven moderation of Diego Rinallo.