

YOUNG ACADEMICS AWARD 2022

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT AND MOBILITY IN THE ALPS

Research and innovation are key elements for promoting sustainable development in the Alps, and young academics play a crucial role in shaping the future of the Alps. The aim of the Young Academics Award is to recognise this key role by rewarding outstanding Master's theses on relevant Alpine topics. This is an initiative of the Swiss Presidency of the Alpine Convention and the Permanent Secretariat, with the support of the Alpine Convention Infopoints of Domodossola (IT), Mojstrana (SI), Tolmin (SI) and Villach (AT). The initiative is run in collaboration with ISCAR.

Transport and mobility in the Alps

Transport and mobility are crucial aspects of life in the Alps. They exert a considerable impact on the quality of life at the personal (e.g., daily commuting, leisure activities, etc.) as well as at the collective and economic level (e.g., transport of goods, touristic accessibility). At the same time, they also affect the Alps as a territory: they shape the Alpine landscapes, affect the quality of air and the level of noise pollution, impact upon ecosystems and biodiversity.

Although transport and mobility are interlinked concepts, they are not the same. Whereas transport is considered a means for changing the location of people or goods in order to fulfil concrete needs, mobility is a more abstract and emotionally charged concept, associated with the freedom of moving and of exchanging goods and views, of having access to the world. Mobility necessarily involves transport. However, how much, and what kind of transport is needed for ensuring a certain degree of mobility depends on many factors, such as the spatial organisation of society, the transport systems and alternative means of communication.

The Alps are an ideal innovation hub for sustainable solutions in the field of transport and mobility: the demand for new solutions is more acute than ever and the challenges greater than elsewhere. For these reasons, the Swiss Presidency of the Alpine Convention, together with the Permanent Secretariat, decided to dedicate the **sixth edition of the Young Academics Award** to the topic of **sustainable transport and mobility in the Alps**. We are looking forward to receiving innovative and creative contributions from young researchers whose Master's theses contain a specific reference to the Alpine territory and cover one (or a combination of) the following topics:

- Freight transport in the Alps: e.g. policies and solutions for modal shift; management of freight traffic; international coordination;
- Passenger transport: e.g. strategies to foster public transports in mountain areas; sustainable solutions for commuting *to* and *in* the Alps; alternative ways of moving such as cycling; lessons from the COVID-19 crisis for reducing mobility needs; how can public transport recover after the COVID crisis; ensuring rail connections between countries/regions; expansion of rail services and lines;
- Individual sustainable mobility: fostering urban cycling mobility e.g. through park and ride infrastructures; electric cars: strategies and infrastructures;
- Tourism: e.g. sustainable solutions for transport and mobility in the tourism sector;

The prizes

Three main prizes will be awarded by the Swiss Presidency and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention to works of Alpine-wide relevance:

- 1st prize: 1.000 €
- 2nd prize: 750 €
- 3rd prize: 500 €

Four additional Infopoint prizes will be awarded to works that are thematically relevant and have a main and specific focus on the areas where the following Infopoints of the Alpine Convention are situated and active:

- Infopoint Domodossola (IT), awarded by the association [ARS.UNI.VCO](#): **500€**;
- Infopoint Mojstrana (SI), awarded by the [Slovenian Alpine Museum](#): **one stay for three nights and two persons** in the **Aljaz Hut in Vrata Valley** (SI) with half-board;
- Infopoint Tolmin (SI), awarded by the [Soča Valley Development Center](#) and the [Municipality of Tolmin](#): **500€**;
- Infopoint Villach (AT), awarded by the [Infopoint of the Dobratsch Nature Park](#): **500€ and one stay for two nights and two persons** in the **Dobratsch Gipfelhaus** (AT).

Requirements and selection process

The following requirements are to be met in order to participate in the award:

- the submitted work must be a Master's thesis (or equivalent level);
- candidates must have achieved the corresponding Master's degree (second-cycle academic education) between 01 January 2019 and by 30 June 2022;
- the thesis must be written either in English, French, German, Italian or Slovenian;
- the thesis must have relevance to the topic and the [geographic area](#) of the Award.

The received theses will be evaluated by an international scientific jury selected by the Alpine Convention. The decisions of the jury are final and not contestable.

The selection process is conducted in two phases.

In the **first phase**, the pre-selection, the participants' works will be assessed based on the evaluation of the submitted documents (see section *How to apply*) in accordance with the following criteria:

- direct relevance of the thesis to the topics and sub-topics stated in the call as well as with the entire Alpine Convention territory and processes;
- relevance and innovativeness of the analysis and its theoretical contributions to further research;
- capacity to propose innovative, practical, comprehensive and Alpine specific solutions;
- academic value, interdisciplinarity, originality, clarity.

In the **second phase**, a maximum of 8 finalists for the main prize category will be invited to the *finalists' workshop*, held in Switzerland in the framework of the next [Alpine Conference](#), where they will have the opportunity to present their works and discuss them directly with the jury. On the same day, the jury will decide on the winners, who will be announced and awarded in the presence of the relevant Ministers participating in the Alpine Conference.

The winners of the Infopoint prizes will also be invited to the award ceremony. The Infopoint prizes will be solely awarded to works that focus specifically on one of the territories of the Alpine Convention Infopoints mentioned above, while at the same time fulfilling the thematic and quality criteria. Should these conditions not be met, the prizes offered by the partners of the Alpine Convention may not be awarded.

One candidate can either be awarded an Infopoint prize or a main prize.

How to apply

First phase

In order to participate, candidates are invited to complete the [online application form](#) in English language in all its parts by **30 June 2022**, attaching to it:

1. a digital copy (in pdf format) of the complete work in one of the Alpine languages (German, French, Italian, Slovenian) or English;
2. a copy of the graduation certification with the final mark. If the final exam has not yet been taken, the candidate will need to present a declaration with the foreseen date of the final exam during the application process.

Second phase

The finalists will be asked to present their thesis in the finalists' workshop and to prepare a visual/graphic representation of their works to be presented in the context of the Alpine Conference and other events, as well as for digital distribution (more details will be provided at a later stage). Moreover, applicants need to be available to travel on the dates of the workshop, held in parallel to the Alpine Conference (the dates have not been defined yet and will be communicated as soon as possible. Please refer to the Alpine Convention website for the updates). The award ceremony will take place on this occasion and the travel and overnight costs will be reimbursed by the Alpine Convention.

Deadlines

Deadline for applications: **30.06.2022**.

Notification to successful applicants for the second phase: during **September 2022**.

Workshop and award ceremony: during the **Alpine Conference 2022** (dates and location will be communicated in a timely manner).

Contacts

For any question you can contact yaa@alpconv.org.

Further information:

<https://www.alpconv.org/en/home/projects/young-academics-award/>

Online application form:

www.alpconv.org/en/home/projects/young-academics-award/yaa-application/

In cooperation with:

