



Young Academics Award 2020

Emissions in the Alps: climate change and air quality, measurements and measures

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. Aim of the Young Academics Award is to recognize this key role by rewarding outstanding Master's theses carried out on relevant alpine topics. This is an initiative of the French Presidency of the Alpine Convention and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, with the support of the Alpine Convention Infopoints of Chamonix (FR), Domodossola (IT), Mojstrana (SL), Tolmin (SL) and Villach (AT). The initiative is run in collaboration with ISCAR.

Emissions in the Alps: climate change and air quality, measurement and measures

Emissions have grown to become a topic of relevance: it is more and more clear that their impacts deeply affect the lives and societies of us all, including our health and our safety as well as the status of our ecosystems. Two manifestations of emissions particularly affect the Alps: the emissions of CO₂ (as a cause of climate change) and the emissions of pollutants (influencing air quality). These two phenomena pose a particular threat to the Alps, an area where a delicate balance amongst ecosystems and human activities is to be achieved and where morphology, coupled with the climatic conditions, exacerbates the impacts of emissions.

On the one hand, **climate change** is exposing the Alps to a twofold increase in temperatures as compared to the average recorded temperatures in the northern hemisphere. This determines, amongst others, not only a quicker pace of glaciers melting, but also changing habitats for animal and plant species as well as more frequent and more severe natural hazardous events.

On the other hand, concerning **air quality**, the shape of Alpine valleys and their special weather patterns prevent pollutants from dispersing: this, coupled with the emissions stemming from human activities like wood burning, heating, the need for transport arteries and industries, causes major issues for Alpine air quality, affecting the health conditions of Alpine inhabitants and ecosystems.

The efforts and the activities of the Alpine Convention to tackle emissions in the Alps have been long-standing and numerous. The Innsbruck Declaration on Climate neutral and resilient Alps, the Climate Target System and the decision to dedicate the 8th Report on the State of the Alps to the topic of air quality are just the most recent examples. But still much needs to be done: it is necessary to thoroughly study and understand these often interconnected phenomena in order to choose the most suitable procedures and concrete actions. To measure and to take measures. For all these reasons, the French Presidency of the Alpine Convention, together with the Permanent Secretariat, decided to dedicate the 5th edition of the Young Academics Award to the topic of "**Emissions in the Alps: climate change and air quality, measurement and measures**": the future is in the hand of young scholars and researchers that can make the difference in understanding and solving these issues through their innovative and out-of-the-box thinking!

Contributions are therefore welcome on the topics of climate change and air quality in the Alpine region and **especially on these related sub-topics:**

- Measuring emissions and their impacts in the Alps: data, indicators and scenarios.
- Air quality management in the Alps: processes, techniques, solutions.
- From local to global: governance of air pollution and climate change on different scales.
- An Alpine approach to climate change: integrated adaptation and mitigation measures, including intelligent or nature-based solutions.
- Communicating air quality and climate change adaptation and mitigation: from science to civil society.

Applications from students from all disciplines are welcome.

The prizes

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

- **1st prize: 1,000 €**
- **2nd prize: 750 €**
- **3rd prize: 500 €**

Five 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 Chamonix (FR), awarded by the [Community of Communes of the Valley of Chamonix Mont-Blanc](#): **500€**;
- Infopoint Domodossola (IT), awarded by the association [ARS.UNI.VCO](#): **500€**;
- Infopoint Mojstrana (SL), awarded by the [Slovenian Alpine Museum](#): **one stay for 5 nights and 2 persons** in Mojstrana (with breakfast and dinner);
- Infopoint Tolmin (SL), awarded by the [Soča Valley Development Center](#): **500€**;
- Infopoint Villach (AT), awarded by the [Infopoint of the Dobratsch Nature Park](#): **500€ and one stay for 1 night and 2 persons** in the Dobratsch Gipfelhaus (AT);

Requirements and selection process

The following requirements need to be fulfilled in order to participate in the call:

- the submitted works must be Master's theses (or equivalent level);
- they must have been presented in the years 2018, 2019 or by 30 June 2020;
- the thesis must be written either in English, French, German, Italian or Slovenian;
- the candidates must hold a Master's Degree (second-cycle academic education) achieved before 30 September 2020. Candidates who have not discussed their thesis but have already submitted it by 30 June 2020, can still apply under the condition that they discuss their thesis and achieve their title by 30 September 2020 (the certificate will need to be provided before the final workshop).

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

The selection process is based on 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*), and according to several criteria, which include:

- direct relevance of the thesis with 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;
- interdisciplinarity, originality, clarity.

In the **second phase**, eight finalist candidates for the main prizes will be invited to the finalists workshop in France in the framework of the next [Alpine Conference](#), where they will have the possibility to present their works and discuss them directly with the jury. On the same day, the jury will decide about the winners, who will be awarded in the presence of the relevant Ministers participating in the Alpine Conference.

The Infopoint prizes will solely be awarded to works that focus mainly and 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. The winners of the Infopoint prizes will also be invited to the award ceremony.

Either an Infopoint prize or a main prize can be awarded to one candidate.

How to apply

First phase

In order to participate, candidates are invited to complete by **30.06.2020** the [online application form](#) in English language and in all its parts, 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 in English;
2. a copy of the graduation certification with final mark. If the final exam has not been held yet, the candidate will need to present a declaration with the foreseen date of the final exam during the application process.

Second phase

The applicants for the main prizes admitted to the second phase will have to provide a presentation for the finalists' workshop and a poster summarizing their research (in A0 format). The candidates to the Infopoint prizes will also be required to prepare a poster on their thesis. 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, check our website for 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: **30.06.2020**.

Notification to successful applicants to the second step: within **beginning of November 2020**.

Workshop and award ceremony: during the **Alpine Conference 2020** (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/

Questions?

yaa@alpconv.org