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Alpine Convention  
Mountain Agriculture Platform

# MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE

ALPINE SIGNALS 8



## IMPRINT

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# MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE

## ALPINE SIGNALS 8

## FOREWORD

by the Austrian Federal Minister in charge of Mountain Agriculture

The living, economic and cultural space of the Alps is not only extraordinarily diverse, but is also a very fragile ecosystem. Although it is intensively taken care of by us, the consequences of climate change and the claims on the region for different uses pose great challenges. A partnership of all countries involved is more important than ever. The Alpine Convention, more than 25 years old, plays a key role in this.

The broad approach of the Convention's activities results in successfully working together in various sectors, such as agriculture, environment or tourism. It is in this sense that we have given the Austrian Presidency of the Alpine Convention the slogan "Protect and Utilise". The first meeting of the Mountain Agriculture Platform showed that each Alpine country faces its own specific challenges. What may have been normal for a long time in one country might not be so easily transferrable to others. We must support each other, learn from each other and act in concert.

If we want to further develop our mountain agriculture for the future, we must create a network between various sectors in the best possible way. An intact natural and cultural landscape is of huge significance for everyone, whether relating to biodiversity or to tourism. The Mountain Agriculture Platform is highlighting the huge efforts made by mountain farmers. Their contribution to ensuring an Alpine region worth living in goes well beyond the conventional tasks of agriculture.

Within the framework of the Alpine Convention, the interaction of the different specific sectors functions excellently – this is evidenced by the discussion results collected over the years. The present documents serve as models for implementing and combining sustainability practices, ecology, economy and the sociocultural dimension. Even if only a small part of the diverse roles of mountain agriculture can be recorded, it very significantly contributes to keeping the Alps as a vital natural, economic and cultural space, and to further develop it in a sustainable way.

**Andrä Rupprechter**

Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management



## FOREWORD

by the Secretary General of the Alpine Convention

A sustainable and multifunctional mountain agriculture is the backbone of life in the Alps: it impinges on the economic, social, demographic and cultural dimensions of the Alpine populations as well as on ecological and morphological factors for the Alpine environment. Not to mention the most basic need of the residents it fulfils: the provision of food. At the same time, mountain agriculture poses specific challenges and raises more delicate demands as compared to agriculture in the flatland. It requires therefore particular attention and dedicated policies in an integrated approach.

The topic of mountain agriculture has been the focus of several Alpine Convention activities: from the approval of a Protocol on Mountain Agriculture, to the establishment of a dedicated Platform, to the adoption of the Declaration on Mountain Agriculture, which stresses the functions and the goals of Alpine mountain agriculture, as well as the Contracting parties pledges to support it.

Mountain agriculture is one of the drivers of an Alpine green economy: it has the potential to promote regional economic development and to improve the living conditions of Alpine residents, while at the same time ensuring ecological protection and environmental preservation.

This is why the present document is particularly welcome: it proposes an approach to mountain agriculture that opts for quality products supported by labelling and certifications, that focuses on the creation of local supply-chains, and that is inherently sustainable and centred on people. These are all key factors in promoting mountain agriculture, and further initiatives are needed, together with an international approach to coordinate States' efforts in these sectors.

**Ambassador Markus Reiterer**

Secretary General of the Alpine Convention





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## THE MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE PLATFORM OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION

From the beginning of the Alpine Convention (AC), defining and ensuring the services of mountain agriculture has been one of its central themes, and the framework for discussions within the Alpine Convention regarding this topic is set out in the Mountain Farming Protocol (see p. 10). The objective of the international activities is to preserve and promote a mountain agriculture which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible, so that its contribution to ensure a natural livelihood, to prevent natural risks, to preserve the beauty and recreational value of natural and cultural landscapes and for the cultural development in the Alpine region is recognised and secured (Article 1 of the Protocol).

The Mountain Agriculture Platform of the Alpine Convention was established at the XIth meeting of the Alpine Conference, in March 2011 in Brdo, Slovenia, with Austria holding the Presidency of the Platform. The meeting for the Platform's constitution took place on 6-7 June 2011 in Vienna.

In the first mandate of the Platform, core activities of the Alpine Convention in the field of mountain agriculture were selected as working topics: recording and analysing the social services of mountain agriculture and their reciprocal effects; analysing the human element in mountain agriculture; analysing options regarding mountain-specific marketing, quality development and product labelling. The Declaration on Mountain Agriculture (see p. 19) drafted in 2011 summarises the services of mountain agriculture and urges regional, national and European institutions dealing at different decision-making levels with the redesign of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to take sufficiently and adequately into account the interests and development needs of Alpine agriculture specified in the Mountain Farming Protocol, which are, among other things, part of current European law.

The themes of marketing/quality and labelling (see p. 21) feature the opportunity to establish a closer link between the specific mountain agriculture products and market mechanisms and to provide a contribution to overcome the productivity disadvantages in mountain regions. The Platform concluded its deliberations with a recommendation text (2013), and defined the requirements according to which

products may use the label "Mountain". Subsequently in 2014, the Platform drafted a future paper on mountain agriculture entitled "Sustainable mountain agriculture. Basis for a vibrant Alpine region" (see p. 23) and with this completed its first mandate. This future paper provides approaches for visions and models for a functioning and future-oriented cultivation of the Alpine living space.

The next topics selected for the 2013-14 mandate dealt with analysing the contribution of mountain agriculture to food security/food sovereignty, the interaction between mountain agriculture and energy, and the optimization of cooperation, partnership and participation. These three topics were maintained also during the 2015-2016 mandate. A Statement on the "Contribution of mountain agriculture to food safety in the Alpine Convention Perimeter" (see p. 27) was adopted at the latest (XIVth) meeting of the Alpine Conference in 2016. It stated that concepts of food security and food sovereignty are of major significance for mountain agriculture and go hand in hand. The document provides an insight on the significant contribution of mountain agriculture to food security in the countries of the Alpine Convention and demonstrates the national significance of multifunctional mountain agriculture. Given the natural difficulties of exploitation, recognition and remuneration of its multifunctional services are necessary.

Having concluded on these topics, the Platform is currently dealing with the relationship between mountain agriculture and energy, the role of cooperation and partnerships and securing ecosystem services through mountain agriculture. Accordingly, the topics refer to environmental, social and political issues and therefore to a thorough consideration of the conditions and opportunities of mountain agriculture.

The documents published in this brochure depict the work of the Platform through the fundamental declarations or outcomes that it has drafted during its activity so far and that were endorsed by the Ministers. They underline the importance of international measures within the framework of the Alpine Convention for the recognition of the significance of mountain agriculture and to ensure its multifunctional tasks.



Members of the „Mountain Agriculture“ Platform at the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Platform, on 26-27 September 2013 in Galtür, Austria.

PROTOCOL ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1991  
ALPINE CONVENTION IN THE FIELD OF MOUNTAIN FARMING<sup>1</sup>

## MOUNTAIN FARMING PROTOCOL

### Preamble

The Federal Republic of Germany,  
the Republic of Austria,  
the French Republic,  
the Italian Republic,  
the Principality of Liechtenstein,  
the Principality of Monaco,  
the Republic of Slovenia,  
the Swiss Confederation,  
and the European Community –

IN ACCORDANCE WITH their task, arising from the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention) of 7 November 1991, of pursuing a comprehensive policy for the protection and the sustainable development of the Alpine region,

IN COMPLIANCE WITH their obligations under Article 2(2) and (3) of the Alpine Convention,

AWARE that it is incumbent upon them, in the general interest, to preserve and promote the management of traditional countryside and farming which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible, taking into account the more difficult economic conditions,

RECOGNISING that, by virtue of its wealth of natural resources, water resources, agricultural potential, historical and cultural heritage, value for quality of life and for economic and leisure activities in Europe and the transport routes crossing it, the Alpine region will continue to be of vital importance, particularly for the local population but also for the population of other regions,

CONVINCED that the local population must be able to determine its own social, cultural and economic development plan and take part in its implementation in the existing institutional framework,

CONVINCED that it is necessary to balance the economic interests and the environmental requirements, taking account of the

specific features of each region and of the central role of farming,

CONSIDERING the importance which farming has always had in the Alpine region and the indispensable contribution which this branch of the economy makes, and will continue to make, particularly in mountain regions, as an essential resource for maintaining an adequate population density, food supply for the population, production of typical high-quality produce, conservation and maintenance of the countryside, particularly for tourism, and, finally, protection of the soil against erosion, avalanches and floods,

RECOGNISING that farming methods and intensity exert a decisive influence on nature and landscapes and that extensively farmed countryside must fulfil an essential function as a habitat for Alpine flora and fauna,

RECOGNISING the fact that the geomorphology and climate of mountain regions create more difficult living and production conditions for farming activity.

CONVINCED that certain problems can only be resolved in a cross-border framework and require joint measures on the part of the Alpine States and, in particular, that economic and social adjustment and accompanying measures should be put in place, at national and European level, so that the future of farmers and their farms in mountain regions is not called into question by the application of exclusively economic parameters,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

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<sup>1</sup> Protocol on the implementation of the 1991 Alpine Convention in the field of mountain farming, in short Mountain Farming Protocol, entered into force on 18 December 2002.



## Chapter I

### General Provisions

#### **Article 1 Objectives**

1. This Protocol lays down international measures to preserve and promote mountain farming which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible; it aims at recognising and securing the continuity of its essential contribution to maintaining the population and safeguarding sustainable economic activities, particularly by means of producing typical high-quality produce, safeguarding the natural environment, preventing natural risks and conserving the beauty and recreational value of nature and the countryside and of cultural life in the Alpine region.
2. In implementing this Protocol, the Contracting Parties shall seek to optimise all the functions of mountain farming.

#### **Article 2 Taking account of the objectives in other policies**

The Contracting Parties undertake to take account of the objectives of this Protocol in their other policies as well.

#### **Article 3 Fundamental obligations in the general economic context**

The Contracting Parties agree on the need to adapt agricultural policy at all levels, in accordance with general economic policy, to the requirements for balanced, sustainable development in order to make it possible, within the framework of the given financial policy conditions:

- a) to encourage, particularly in mountain regions, environmentally compatible farming and its functions in the general interest, as provided for in Article 7 of this Protocol;
- b) to take significant action against abandonment of mountain regions and to ensure adequate living conditions there, by means of social and structural policy measures accompanied by a series of agricultural and environment policy measures.

#### **Article 4 Role of farmers**

The Contracting Parties agree that, in mountain regions in particular farming has, over the centuries, shaped the countryside, giving it its historical character and cultural value. The essential role played by farmers in conservation of nature and the countryside, today and tomorrow, by virtue of their multiple functions, must therefore be recognised and farmers must be associated in the decisions and measures taken for mountain regions.

#### **Article 5 Participation of regional and local authorities**

1. Each Contracting Party shall define, within its institutional framework, the best level of coordination and cooperation between the institutions and regional and local authorities directly concerned so as to encourage solidarity of responsibility, in particular to exploit and develop synergies when applying mountain farming policies and implementing measures under them.
2. The regional and local authorities directly concerned shall be parties to the various stages of preparing and implementing these policies and measures, within their competence and within the existing institutional framework.

#### **Article 6 International cooperation**

The Contracting Parties agree:

- a) to proceed with joint evaluations of the development of agricultural policy and to guarantee reciprocal consultation before adopting any major decision on agricultural policy, for the purposes of implementation of this Protocol;
- b) to secure implementation of the objectives and measures laid down by this Protocol, by means of transfrontier cooperation between all the competent authorities, particularly regional administrations and local authorities;

c) to encourage exchanges of knowledge and experience and joint initiatives, by means of international cooperation

between research and training institutes, agricultural and environmental organisations and the media.

## Chapter II

### Specific Measures

#### **Article 7 Encouragement of mountain farming**

1. The Contracting Parties shall seek to differentiate agricultural policy measures at all levels, in accordance with the different local conditions, and to encourage mountain agriculture, taking account of the local natural handicaps. Support shall be given, in particular, to farms ensuring a minimum of agricultural activity in extreme locations.
2. The contribution which mountain farming makes to the conservation and maintenance of nature and the countryside and to the prevention of natural risks, in the general interest, shall give rise to appropriate compensation, in the framework

of contractual agreements linked to identified projects and services going beyond the general obligations.

#### **Article 8 Land use and countryside**

1. The Contracting Parties undertake, respecting nature and the countryside, to take account of the particular conditions in mountain areas in the context of planning, zoning, reorganising and improving land use.
2. In order to accomplish its multiple tasks, first, mountain farming must have the land necessary for farming which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible.





3. In this context, it is necessary to ensure conservation, restoration and use of the traditional components of the countryside (woodland, wooded boundaries, hedges, thickets, wet, dry or low-yield pasture and Alpine pastures).
4. Special measures shall be taken for the conservation of traditional farm buildings and rural architecture and for further use of traditional building materials and methods.

**Article 9**  
**Nature-friendly farming**  
**methods – Typical produce**

The Contracting Parties undertake to adopt all necessary measures with a view to applying common criteria to promote employment and wider use, in mountain areas, of nature-friendly extensive farming methods characteristic of the area and to protect and promote typical farm produce, with distinctive, unique, nature-friendly production methods limited to the locality.

**Article 10**  
**Livestock farming suited to local**  
**conditions and genetic diversity**

1. The Contracting Parties agree that livestock farming suited to local conditions and to the available land is an essential component of mountain farming, both as a source of revenue and as a decisive part of the identity of the countryside and culture. Consequently, livestock farming, including traditional domestic animal husbandry, must be maintained, with its characteristic variety of species and typical produce; such husbandry must be suited to local conditions and to the available land and compatible with the environment.
2. To this end, the necessary farming, pasture and forestry facilities shall be maintained, keeping a balance between pasture and livestock which suits local conditions, in the context of suitable, extensive grassland farming.
3. Measures shall also be adopted to maintain the genetic diversity of livestock and crops, particularly in the field of agricultural research and advisory services.

**Article 11**  
**Promotion and marketing**

1. The Contracting Parties shall seek to create conditions conducive to the marketing of mountain farm produce, with a view to increasing sales on the spot and making such produce more competitive on national and international markets.
2. Promotion shall take the form, inter alia, of guarantees of origin and of quality, allowing protection of producers and consumers alike.

**Article 12**  
**Limitation of production**

In case of limitation of agricultural production, the Contracting Parties shall seek to take account of the specific requirements, in mountain areas, for farming which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible.

**Article 13**  
**Complementary nature of farming and forestry**

The Contracting Parties agree that the complementary nature and partial interdependence of farming and forestry in mountain areas necessitate an integrated approach. Consequently, they shall encourage:

- a) forestry compatible with nature both as an additional source of revenue for farms and as a sideline activity for farm workers;
- b) consideration of the protective, productive and recreational as well as the environmental and biogenetic functions of forests, in relation to farmland, taking account of the specific local conditions and in harmony with the countryside;
- c) regulation of grassland farming and of the game population, to avoid any intolerable damage to forests and crops.

#### **Article 14** **Additional sources of income**

Recognising the traditional importance of family farms in mountain farming, in order to support family farms as an economic activity, whether principal, secondary or sideline, the Contracting Parties shall encourage the creation and development of additional sources of income in mountain areas, particularly on the initiative and in favour of the local population itself, notably in sectors linked to agriculture, such as forestry, tourism and crafts, in harmony with conservation of nature and the countryside.

#### **Article 15** **Improvement of living and working conditions**

The Contracting Parties shall encourage reinforcement and improvement of the quality of the services indispensable in order to overcome the unfavourable conditions faced by farm and forestry

workers in mountain areas in order to link improvement of their living and working conditions to economic and social development in other fields and in other parts of the Alpine region. To this end, the decision-making criteria must not be purely economic. This shall apply principally to links, to construction and restructuring of housing and farm buildings, and to purchase and maintenance of technical installations and equipment.

#### **Article 16** **Further measures**

The Contracting Parties may take further measures on mountain farming than the measures provided for in this Protocol.





## Chapter III

### Research, Training and Information

#### **Article 17** **Research and observation**

1. The Contracting Parties shall encourage and harmonise, in close cooperation, research and systematic observation which are conducive to achieving the objectives of this Protocol.
2. In particular, they shall encourage agricultural research specially targeted on mountain farming which shall be conducted in a manner corresponding as closely as possible to the specific local conditions and shall be taken into account in the process of setting and checking agricultural policy objectives and measures, applying the results obtained to training and technical assistance activities for agriculture.
3. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that the national results of the research and systematic observation are integrated in a joint permanent observation and information system and that they are made accessible to the public under the existing institutional framework.
4. As regards the different mountain areas and taking account of the objectives and measures laid down by this Protocol, the Contracting Parties shall, in particular, establish a comparison of the economic and social situation of mountain farming.
5. The comparison shall be updated periodically and shall contain indications of the issues and the locations posing particular problems, of the effectiveness of the measures put in place and of the measures to be adopted. Priority shall be given to data on demographic, social and economic development, in conjunction with the different geographical, environmental and infrastructure indicators for the areas and definition of criteria corresponding to sustainable, balanced development, as provided for in the Alpine Convention and in this Protocol.
6. In addition, the subjects listed in the Annex shall be considered priorities.

#### **Article 18** **Training and information**

1. The Contracting Parties shall encourage basic and further training and the provision of information to the public about the objectives, measures and implementation of this Protocol.
2. The Contracting Parties shall encourage, in particular:
  - a) further development of basic and further training, technical assistance concerning farming, assistance with business and commercial management, without losing sight of protection of nature and the environment. In general, the training offered shall be structured to favour orientation towards and preparation for other alternative or complementary activities in sectors linked to farming;
  - b) ample and objective information not restricted to the persons and administrations directly concerned but reaching, via the media in particular, the broadest public inside and outside the Alpine region to raise awareness of and interest in the functions of mountain farming.
3. In addition, the subjects listed in the Annex shall be considered priorities.

## Chapter IV

### Implementation, Monitoring and Controlling

#### Article 19 Implementation

The Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the implementation of this Protocol by taking any appropriate measures within the existing institutional framework.

#### Article 20 Monitoring of compliance with obligations

1. The Contracting Parties shall regularly report to the Standing Committee on measures taken under this Protocol. The reports shall also cover the effectiveness of the measures taken. The Alpine Conference shall determine the intervals at which the reports must be submitted.
2. The Standing Committee shall examine these reports in order to ensure that the Contracting Parties have fulfilled their obligations under this Protocol. It may also ask for additional information from the Contracting Parties concerned or have recourse to other information sources.

3. The Standing Committee shall draw up a report on the compliance of the Contracting Parties with the obligations arising from the Protocol, for the attention of the Alpine Conference.
4. The Alpine Conference shall take note of this report. If it finds that obligations have not been met, it may adopt recommendations.

#### Article 21 Evaluation of the effectiveness of the provisions

1. The Contracting Parties shall regularly examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions of this Protocol. They shall consider the adoption of appropriate amendments to this Protocol where necessary in order to achieve objectives.
2. The regional and local authorities shall be associated with this evaluation within the existing institutional framework. Non-governmental organisations active in this field may be consulted.





## Chapter V

### Final Provisions

#### Article 22

##### Links between the Alpine Convention and the Protocol

1. This Protocol constitutes a Protocol to the Alpine Convention within the meaning of Article 2 thereof and any other relevant articles of the Convention.
2. Only Contracting Parties to the Alpine Convention may become a party to this Protocol. Any denunciation of the Alpine Convention also implies denunciation of this Protocol.
3. Where the Alpine Conference discusses matters relating to this Protocol, only the Contracting Parties to this Protocol may take part in the vote.

#### Article 23

##### Signature and ratification

1. This Protocol shall be open for signature by the signatory States of the Alpine Convention and the European Community on 20 December 1994 and in the Republic of Austria, as the depositary, from 15 January 1995.
2. This Protocol shall enter into force for the Contracting Parties which have expressed their agreement to be bound by the said Protocol three months after the date on which three States have deposited their instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval.

3. For Parties which express their agreement to be bound by the Protocol at a later date, the Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval. After the entry into force of an amendment to the Protocol, any new Contracting Party to the said Protocol shall become a Contracting Party to the Protocol, as amended.

#### Article 24

##### Notifications

The depositary shall, in respect of this Protocol, notify each State referred to in the preamble and the European Community of:

- a) any signature;
- b) the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval;
- c) any date of entry into force;
- d) any declaration made by a Contracting Party or signatory;
- e) any denunciation notified by a Contracting Party, including the date on which it becomes effective.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Protocol.

Done at Chambéry on 20 December 1994 in the French, German, Italian and Slovene languages, the four texts being equally authentic, the original text being deposited in the Austrian State archives. The depositary shall send a certified copy to each of the signatory States.

## Annex

### Research and Training Priorities Pursuant to Articles 17 and 18

#### Research

Definition and classification of mountain areas on the basis of their altitude and of the climate, geomorphologic, economic and infrastructure conditions at different locations.

Verification of the effects of the measures adopted on mountain farming at different political decision-making levels (EU/CAP, States, regions, local authorities) and of the ecological functions (social and environmental compatibility).

Evaluation of the economic, ecological, social and cultural functions of farming and forestry and of their development prospects, in the context of the specific local conditions in different mountain areas.

Methods of production and manufacture, criteria for improvement and quality in farm produce in mountain areas.

Genetic research and technical assistance for differentiated conservation of the diversity of the species of livestock reared and crops grown which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible.

#### Training

Technical, scientific and socio-economic assistance and training for farms and for food companies processing their produce.

Technical and economic business management aiming, in particular, at diversification of the supply of products and alternative production and income inside and outside farming.

Technical and financial conditions and effects of application of natural farming and production methods compatible with the environment.

Media, presentation and dissemination of information in line with the direction of public opinion, policy and the economy, inside and outside the Alpine region.



## MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE DECLARATION<sup>2</sup>

The Contracting Parties of the Alpine Convention,

In accordance with their task, arising from the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention) of 7 November 1991, of pursuing a comprehensive policy for the protection and the sustainable development of the Alpine region, and in implementation of the Mountain Farming Protocol,

Aware that it is incumbent upon them, in the general interest, to preserve and promote the management of traditional cultural landscapes and an agriculture which suits local conditions and is environmentally compatible, and to promote them in consideration of the more difficult economic conditions,

Recognising that, by virtue of its wealth of natural resources, its water resources, its agricultural potential, its historical and cultural heritage, its value as a living, economic and leisure space in Europe, and the transport routes crossing it, the Alpine region will continue to be of vital importance, particularly for the local population but also for the population of other regions,

Convinced that the local population must be able to determine its own social, cultural and economic development plan and take part in its implementation within the existing institutional framework,

Convinced that it is necessary to balance economic interests and environmental requirements, taking account of the specific features of each region and of the central role of agriculture,

Considering the importance which agriculture has always had in the Alpine region and the indispensable contribution that this sector of the economy makes – and will continue to make, particularly in mountain regions – as an essential resource to maintain an adequate population density, supply food to the population, produce typical high-quality products, preserve and maintain the cultural landscape, including for tourism purposes, and protect the soil against erosion, avalanches and floods,

Recognising that the farming methods and intensity have a decisive influence on nature and landscapes, and that sustainably farmed cultural landscapes have an essential function as habitats for the Alpine flora and fauna,

Recognising the fact that the geomorphology and climate of mountain regions create more difficult living and production conditions for agriculture,

Convinced that certain problems can only be resolved in a cross-border framework and require joint measures by the Alpine States and, in particular, that economic and social adjustment and accompanying measures should be put in place, at the national and European level, so that the future of farmers and their farms in mountain regions is not called into question by the application of exclusively economic parameters,

Aware that the ongoing transformation of the general framework of the agricultural policies, caused by globalisation, climate change and demographic developments, presents mountain agriculture with significant economic, environmental and social challenges, and that the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should play a crucial role in overcoming them,

- shall seek to differentiate agricultural policy measures at all levels, in accordance with the different local conditions, and to encourage mountain agriculture, taking account of the local natural unfavourable conditions; support shall be given, in particular, to farms ensuring a minimum of agricultural activity in extreme locations,
- acknowledge the European dimension of mountain areas as a living, economic and recreational space, and a place of biodiversity; support a solid second pillar of the CAP with adequately funded measures, aimed at giving mountain farmers the necessary support to implement a sustainable agricultural system, and welcome the possibility to create, within its framework, a “mountain area” subprogramme, are in favour of a consistent implementation of the goals and provisions of the CAP, with

<sup>2</sup> Declaration on Mountain agriculture, prepared by the Platform, adopted by the Permanent Committee on the 47th meeting held on 11 October 2011 in Lucerne, and submitted to the competent EU bodies on 18 October 2011, in view of the future direction of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013.

enough flexibility at the national and regional level, and of providing the desired services to society in such a manner to avoid any conflict of interest,

- agree that the contribution which mountain agriculture makes, in the general interest, to the conservation and maintenance of the natural and cultural landscape, to Alpine biodiversity and to the prevention of natural hazards, shall give rise to appropriate compensation, in the framework of contractual agreements linked to identified projects and services, going beyond the existing general obligations,
- undertake to adopt all the necessary measures to promote the use and dissemination of cultivation methods which suit local conditions and the environment, in mountain areas and particularly on mountain pastures, and to safeguard and promote agricultural products obtained with typical regional, unique and environmentally friendly production methods,
- agree that livestock farming suited to local conditions and to the available land is an essential component of mountain agriculture, both as a source of revenue and as a key factor of the landscape and cultural identity,
- seek to create conditions conducive to the marketing of mountain farm produce, promote the development of new and innovative products, and support the EU-wide introduction of a protection label for the products of mountain agriculture, highlighting the right of people to determine their own agricultural and food systems,
- recognise the traditional importance of family farms in mountain agriculture and, in order to support them, undertake to promote the creation and development of additional sources of income in mountain areas, particularly in the sectors linked to agriculture, such as forestry and the sustainable management of woodland, tourism, the hotel, restaurant and catering sector, and crafts, with the purpose of preserving farms – managed as main or sideline businesses – in accordance with the preservation of the natural and cultural landscape, and
- invite the European, regional and national institutions involved in the reorganisation of the CAP at the various decisional levels to take into due account the goals of Alpine agriculture, as set out in the Mountain Farming Protocol, and which are also an integral part of the current European law; to especially support the management systems that safeguard resources and are typical of the local area; and to also take into account the requirements of the other Protocols of the Alpine Convention, in view of the importance of mountain agriculture for biodiversity and the protection of the Alpine landscape.

## RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE PLATFORM ON THE ISSUES OF MARKETING/QUALITY/LABELLING<sup>3</sup>

### Context

In compliance with article 11 of the Mountain Farming Protocol (18 December 2002):

1. "The Contracting Parties shall seek to create conditions conducive to the marketing of mountain farm produce, with a view to increasing sales on the spot and making such produce more competitive on national and international markets.
2. Promotion shall take the form, inter alia, of guarantees of origin and of quality, allowing protection of producers and consumers alike."

The Mountain Agriculture Declaration states as follows:

The Contracting Parties

"... undertake to adopt all the necessary measures ... to safeguard and promote agricultural products obtained with typical regional, unique and environmentally friendly production methods; ...

... seek to create conditions conducive to the marketing of mountain farm produce, promote the development of new and innovative products, and support the EU-wide introduction of a protection label for the products of mountain agriculture, highlighting the right of people to determine their own agricultural and food systems..."

Member States regulate in part at the national level the use of the "mountain" denomination. However, these provisions only apply to products produced in their respective country, as there is no internationally recognised regulation or agreement between States in this field. To better safeguard the products of mountain agriculture, further regulation by the Alpine Convention is of great importance and should be coordinated with other activities carried out at the European level.

### Introduction

The products of mountain regions reflect the specific production conditions and the cultural landscape of the mountains, and therefore have a high identification potential.

In order to define the area of mountain products, the existing regional context shall be taken into account, in line with the already existing activities at the level of the European Union.

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<sup>3</sup> Results of the discussions of the Mountain Agriculture Platform on the issues of marketing/quality/labelling including requirements for using the "Mountain" label: Prepared and adopted by the Platform on its 4th meeting, 25-26 June 2012, for the XIIIth Ministerial Conference in Turin, Italy.

## Products of mountain agriculture

The term “mountain” and the denominations which contain it, including the corresponding translations, can be used to designate products of mountain agriculture in commercial documents and for advertising purposes only if:

- they have been produced in the mountain region<sup>4</sup>,
- they have been processed in the mountain region or its immediate vicinity<sup>5</sup>,
- the used ingredients, which determine the product, come from the mountain region,
- the used ingredients, which do not determine the product, where available, come from the mountain region,
- the ruminants are fed mainly with roughage which, if available, comes from the mountain region,
- the products are obtained with procedures that are respectful of resources, the environment, and animals, and
- the animals for slaughter for the production of meat and meat-based products have spent at least the last two thirds of their lives in the mountain region.

## Certification and Control

The respect of these requirements shall be ensured at all levels of production, processing and marketing, using the existing tools at the national level and according to the existing legislation.

## Transitional clause

The term “mountain” and the denominations that contain it, including the corresponding translations, which have been used so far for the products of mountain and Alpine agriculture can still be used for an adequate period of time.

After such period, they will have to comply with the requirements that have been set out for the products of mountain agriculture.

## Future perspectives

The present recommendations of the Mountain Agriculture Platform are the basis for the safeguard and a better marketing of the products of mountain agriculture in the entire Alpine space.

The safeguard of the products of mountain agriculture complements the existing instruments for the products of organic agriculture and the products covered by a Protected Designation of Origin or Protected Geographical Indication, which are also of great importance for mountain agriculture.

The next step would be the creation of an Alpine label of controlled and guaranteed origin, to clearly differentiate these products from those coming from other areas. The quality of the products of mountain agriculture should be particularly emphasized, and a corresponding marketing strategy should be planned.

Given the great importance of organic production, all the necessary measures should be implemented to ensure that the percentage of organic agriculture in mountain agriculture can further increase.

<sup>4</sup> The definition of the perimeter of the Alpine Convention is based on different administrative units and therefore presents some inaccuracies.

<sup>5</sup> The definition of the administrative units is under the responsibility of the Contracting Parties.

## SUSTAINABLE MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE BASIS FOR A VIBRANT ALPINE REGION<sup>6</sup>

### Initial situation

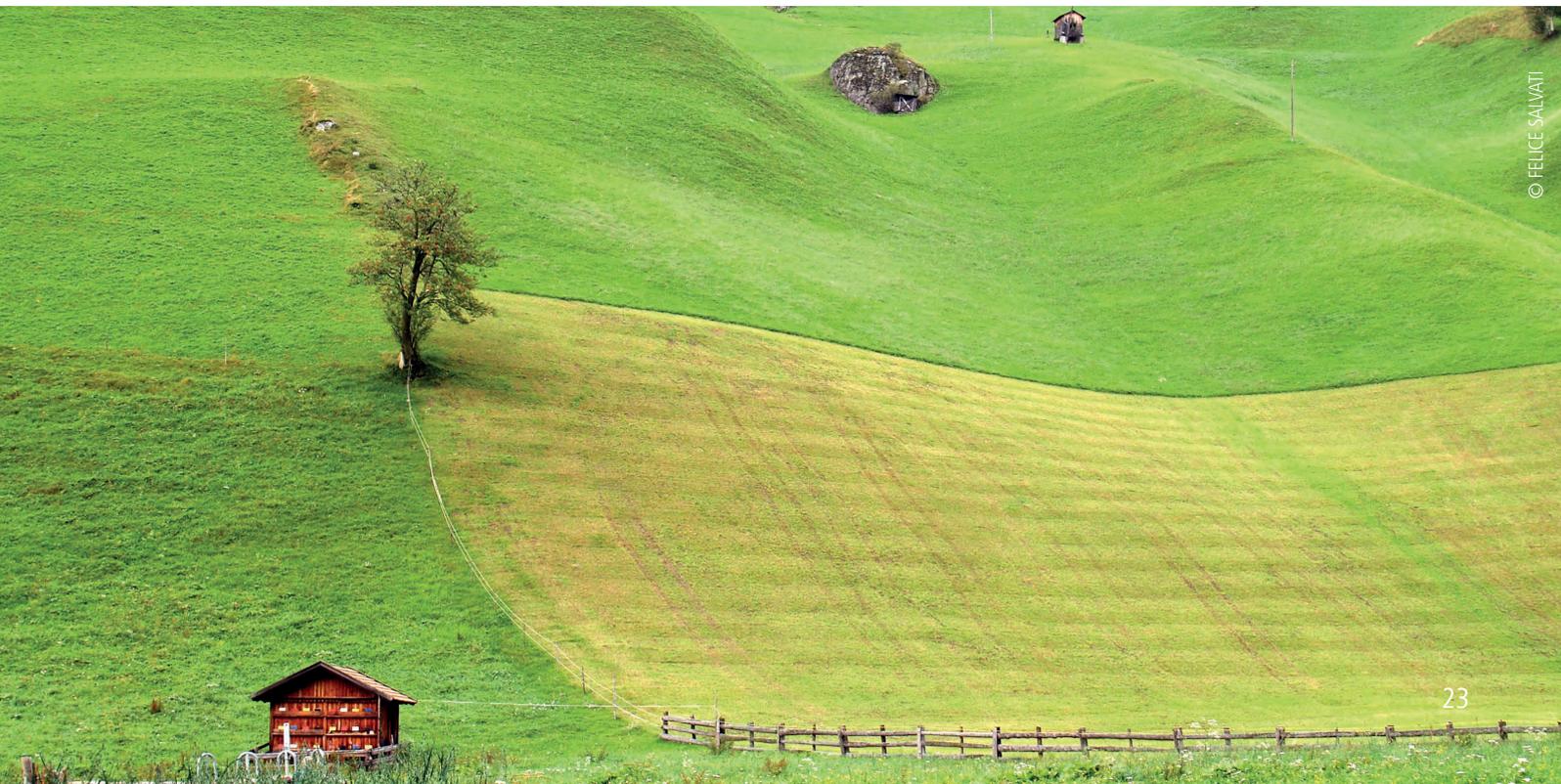
The contribution that multifunctional mountain agriculture can give to the preservation and development of Alpine regions is undisputed. The production of high quality raw materials and food, the protection from natural hazards, the preservation and further development of typical cultural landscapes and the safeguard of biodiversity all have a significant impact on the local society and its culture, as well as on the economic structure in the Alpine space. In order to ensure the future and the economic potential of mountain agriculture, it takes a strong proactive approach and an entrepreneurial strategy, as well as a targeted programme for the development of the rural space, and a differentiated incentive system which takes into account the specific challenges, the continuous changes and the strengths of Alpine areas.

The provision of financial support is primarily at the discretion of the member States/regions. It is also necessary to work on innovative, long term, and possibly more market-oriented products and services to fight the trend to abandon agriculture and the depopulation of Alpine areas. Mountain agriculture, however, should not be seen as an isolated issue. On the contrary, its interaction with other sectors, such as the protection of nature, tourism, traditional

crafts, forestry and energy should be taken into greater account. In this context, innovation plays a decisive role. This not only refers to technological innovations, but more specifically to the choice of more suitable forms of organisation, marketing and communication. Growing attention is given not only to the production of food, but also to preserving the attractiveness of the living space.

In this context, the points that are listed below are the provisional result of the discussions of the Mountain Agriculture Platform, which have taken into account all available sources, such as the Mountain Farming Protocol of the Alpine Convention, the Declaration made by the Platform and approved by the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention on 11 October 2011, the Oberammergau declaration of 11 April 2011, the requests of the Alliance for Agriculture and Nature Protection in the Alpine Regions of April 2012 or the relevant documentation on the future direction of the CAP.

<sup>6</sup> Sustainable mountain agriculture, Basis for a vibrant Alpine region, prospective paper with approaches for visions and guidelines for a functioning and a sustainable management: Prepared and adopted by the Platform on its 7th meeting, 3-4 July 2014, for the XIIIth Ministerial Conference in Turin, Italy.



## Preservation and strengthening of the economic, social and cultural life in the mountain regions

### Ecology

1. Provision of ecosystem services in mountain regions, in particular for the safeguard of water resources, the protection from natural hazards, the safeguard of soil fertility, the preservation of the diverse cultural landscapes typical of the mountains, and the preservation of biodiversity,
2. Preservation of a functional business structure allowing for the development of a mountain agriculture that can manage resources effectively and adapt to climate change.

### Economy

1. Preservation of the production potential that is necessary to supply the local population,
2. Acknowledgement and safeguard of the essential contribution that mountain agriculture gives to the production of safe and

varied food, obtained with environmental and animal friendly methods,

3. Offer of services that are typical of mountain areas,
4. Development of new products and services to ensure diversification and thus obtain more added value and employment.

### Social dimension

1. Contribution to preserving decentralised structures to ensure that the local population can rely on a rural living space with future perspectives, to fight depopulation,
2. Strengthening of the awareness and understanding of the role of mountain agriculture, also as a source of authentic learning for society.

## Establishment of the mountains as a model for sustainable development, including the transfer of the necessary know-how and technologies

### Ecology

1. Safeguard of the cultural landscape and biodiversity thanks to a sustainable and effective management of resources, as the basis for the productivity of mountain agriculture, the living space for the local population and the basis for natural tourism in mountain areas,
2. Promotion of the contribution of mountain agriculture to an agricultural system that is respectful of resources and suited to the local conditions,
3. Promotion of a sustainable economy that aims at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and at the same time helps to adapt to climate change.

### Economy

1. Expansion of the production and marketing of high quality regional products, labelled as such and sold at fair prices,
2. Strengthening of the role of mountain agriculture as an essential cooperation partner, for instance, of traditional crafts, trade and municipalities, taking into due account all specific structures and their networking,
3. Creation and establishment of an Alpine label of controlled and guaranteed origin, to clearly differentiate the Alpine products from those coming from other regions, and create more value.



### Social dimension

1. Acknowledgement of the right to food sovereignty and to the independent sustainable development of the Alpine space,
2. Contribution to the mitigation of the effects of demographic change and of the depopulation of mountain areas,
3. Raising awareness on the active contribution of farmers to sustainable development and their ability to provide services to society.

## Safeguard of farms through the creation of favourable conditions for their functioning and profitability

### Ecology

1. Creation and maintenance of targeted incentive systems for the implementation of a sustainable production which takes climate change into account,
2. Strengthening of cooperation and intensification of partnerships with other sectors, such as environmental protection, environment and water management, tourism, gastronomy, trade and traditional crafts,
3. No GMO crops, organic patents and animal clones in the mountain areas.

### Economy

1. Consideration of the peculiarities of the "mountain agriculture" economic system, for instance through labelling projects aimed at promoting the sales and revenues of mountain products, or in technical standards and information obligations,
2. Structuring and strengthening of the role of mountain agriculture within the regional value creation chains.

### Social dimension

1. Strengthening the acceptance of measures and programmes through the promotion of the services that mountain agriculture provides to society,
2. Involvement in and consolidation of broad decisional and participatory processes,
3. Strengthening of training and further education, consultancy, research and development of adequate technology, and of the necessary transfer of knowledge into practice, especially through cross-border, transnational and interregional projects and networking,
4. Provision, safeguard and further development of adequate infrastructures and basic services, for instance in the school sector, in the field of public transport or modern information technologies,
5. Enabling a multidisciplinary training of youth,
6. Ensuring the succession of farms, and especially supporting the creation of new agricultural enterprises.

## Interactions with the agricultural policy

As for the agricultural policy, and in view of the existing natural disadvantages, it is impossible to keep agricultural activities in the mountains in the current conditions without any special incentives.

It is therefore necessary to exploit the possibilities and the margins offered by the agricultural policy to strengthen mountain agriculture, through

- the organisation of direct payments, considering the needs of mountain agriculture,
- extraordinary payments for the disadvantaged areas,
- giving a greater budgetary relevance to the services provided by mountain agriculture to rural areas and the environment, along with a concentration of funds,
- the promotion of small-scale and young farmers.

## Conclusions

Mountain agriculture is particularly integrated in the regional structures, and is tightly linked to other sectors of the economy. Maintaining agriculture in the Alpine mountain regions is of great social relevance, and the quality of life of people who are not directly involved and the attractiveness that these areas have for tourists depend on it. As the activities for a Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) also show, the Alps and their mountain agriculture have a European dimension and, as a living, economic, recreational space and a habitat for biodiversity, are of pan-European interest.

In order for mountain agriculture to fulfil its many functions and to ensure that the vision described in this document can become reality, the above-mentioned framework conditions are necessary, as well as corresponding measures in the agricultural policies of the EU (CAP) and of the Alpine States. A periodic assessment of the agricultural policies of the Alpine states is the prerequisite. The future of mountain agriculture largely depends on the cooperation of all social forces, which promote the sustainable development of mountain areas. However, the main actors, namely mountain farmers in the Alpine space, must play a particular role.



# CONTRIBUTION OF MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE TO FOOD SAFETY IN THE ALPINE CONVENTION PERIMETER

## STATEMENT BY THE MOUNTAIN AGRICULTURE PLATFORM<sup>7</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, farming, food production and distribution and food security are faced with significant challenges. The reasons can be found in the growing population, the changes in eating habits - such as the growing consumption of meat in Asian countries and the demand for regional, organically produced and high-quality food in Europe. The effects of climate change and the competition for land between agri-food production and the production of renewable sources of energy (such as biofuels), as well as the growing demand for land for infrastructures, industrial and construction activities, further deteriorate the situation.

The concepts of food security and food sovereignty are of primary importance for mountain agriculture and go hand in hand. On the one hand, agriculture in the Alps contributes to food security and food sovereignty because it produces sustainable and regional products for the almost 14 million people that live within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, and beyond for the entire national territory of each country. On the other, it is equally necessary to preserve agricultural activities in these regions because they play important functions beyond food production, such as the protection of the cultural landscape and of the genetic diversity of animal and plant species.

This document presents an overview of the contribution of mountain agriculture to food security in the countries of the Alpine Convention, and indicates the produced quantities of a selection of food products from mountain areas. The document also illustrates the general importance of agri-food production in the Alpine space.

To this purpose, it is necessary to take account of the contribution of mountain agriculture to food security in the area covered by the Alpine Convention, and of the relatively difficult conditions where it is practised, given the particular geomorphology and climate. An environmentally friendly production of high-quality food products, that is compatible with the local context, must therefore prevail over a production driven mainly by quantity. This is particularly true for the prevailing dairy sector, which is often successfully supported by a system of cooperatives, especially considering the current issues linked to the elimination of milk quota. This type of agriculture would ensure the safeguard of the related ecosystem services and of biodiversity, in the context of sustainable food security supported by mountain agriculture in the Alps. A key role can be played by a more effective implementation of a "climate smart agriculture", which on the one hand adapts to climate changes, and on the other reduces its impact on climate by using innovative methods.

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<sup>7</sup> Contribution of mountain agriculture to food safety in the Alpine Convention perimeter, in the form of a Statement by the Mountain Agriculture Platform: Prepared by the Platform on its 10th meeting, 12-13 July 2016, for the XIVth Ministerial Conference in Grassau, Germany.

## Definitions

In the field of food production, the two following concepts are particularly relevant:

### Food security

The classic concept of “food security” refers to the quantity of food that the inhabitants of a country or a region can rely on. The definition of food security, formulated by the FAO World Food Summit in 1996, states the right for everyone to access, at all times, sufficient, safe and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. The four essential dimensions of food security (see also FAO 2006) that descend from this definition are the following:

- Availability, which refers to the offer of food and includes the sustainable production, processing and marketing of food;
- Accessibility, which refers to the demand of food and the possibility for each consumer to find and/or afford food, and therefore includes the legal, physical, social and economic access to food;
- Use, which is connected to aspects such as food safety or their nutritional value;
- Stability, which refers to time.

### Food sovereignty

Food self-determination, better known as “food sovereignty”, is the right of people and sovereign states to democratically determine their food and agricultural policy, i.e. the right and capacity of each state to produce its own food and to decide how to produce and distribute it (IAASTD 2009). This concept does not only include the right to food: it also refers to the fact that producers, too, can play an active role in defining food policies, and to the promotion of local and regional markets and strengthening of sustainable agriculture.

The document “Sustainable mountain agriculture” by the Mountain Agriculture Platform highlights the great importance of both concepts for the Alpine space. It calls for the preservation of the necessary production potential to supply the population, and for the acknowledgement and safeguard of the production of safe and varied food, obtained with environmentally and animal friendly methods. Acknowledging the right to food sovereignty is mentioned as an important vision for mountain agriculture.

Keeping agriculture activities in the mountain areas aims at supplying the local population with regional, traceable products in the Alpine Convention area, available at supermarkets and regional markets. The importance of the production of some food products, however, such as milk, goes beyond the borders of the Alpine Convention.





## Food production in mountain areas

Mountain agriculture contributes to food security and to the preservation, resilience and development of Alpine regions with the production of high-quality raw materials and food.

The share of food production in the mountain areas of each country in the Alpine Convention strongly depends on the size of their mountain land, the quantity of land devoted to agricultural and food production and the type of product, as some specific products are more widespread than others in mountain areas. In Liechtenstein, the Alpine area covers 100 % of the total national territory, in Austria and Switzerland more than 60 %, and in Slovenia more than 30 % (see Table 1).

Table 1: Percentage of the Alpine Convention area out of the total national area / percentage of the population within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total population (Source: EURAC (2014): these data – for 2010 – were collected by national institutes of statistics for the creation of a database on agriculture in the Alps).

Country	Percentage of land within the Alpine Convention perimeter out of the total national territory (1)	Percentage of the population who lives within the Alpine Convention perimeter out of the total population (2)
Austria	65.1 %	39.6 %
France	7.5 %	4.1 %
Germany	3.1 %	1.8 %
Italy	17.1 %	7.4 %
Liechtenstein	100.0 %	100.0 %
Slovenia	33.8 %	31.3 %
Switzerland	60.4 %	23.6 %

1 EUROSTAT 2015 - Land cover overview

2 EUROSTAT 2014 - Population change - Demographic balance and crude rates at national level

In Austria, about 40 % of the total population (i.e. 23 % of people who live in the Alps) lives within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention; in Slovenia about one third, and in Switzerland one quarter of the total population (about 13 % of the Alps population). In Italy, instead, only 7 % of the population lives within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, which however corresponds to about one third of the total popu-

lation in the Alps. The area that falls within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention corresponds to about 17 % of the national territory in Italy, 3 % in Germany and about 8 % in France.

The analysis of the results of the last 2010 survey on the farming structure in Alpine Convention area shows that the percentage of agricultural enterprises out of the total number of enterprises varies significantly. Countries with a higher percentage of mountain land out of the total national territory also have a higher percentage of farming and forest enterprises within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention (see Figure 1 in the Annex).

As land in the Alpine regions is mainly devoted to grassland, we find the highest number of livestock fed with roughage. Animal husbandry and milk production, as well as dairy products, are of great importance in the entire Alpine Convention area. In Austria, more than half the total amount of cattle is reared within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention; about 40 % in Switzerland, and 34 % in Slovenia. Percentages are even higher for sheep and goats. For further details, please see Figure 1 and 2 in the Annex.

### Results of the questionnaire survey

Farmers continue to see themselves mainly as food producers, thus contributing to the food security of their countries. However, there is a growing awareness of the importance of the other functions of mountain agriculture (Bryden et al. 2011, Dax et al. 2007, Ortner & Hovorka 2009).

In order to assess the contribution of agricultural and food production to the food security of each country in the Alpine Convention, a questionnaire was sent to the Contracting Parties. In addition to questions on a selection of food items produced in large quantities in the Alpine area of each country, examples of regional supply chains and food products with a Protected Designation of Origin from the Alpine space are also included. The survey also covers the initiatives aimed at the production of crops that were once widespread in the Alpine region.

### *Quantities of food produced within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention*

In answering the question on the quantitatively most important food products, the Alpine Convention countries rank (cow's) milk and (cow's) dairy products first, as well as meat from ruminants (cattle, sheep, goats).

As shown in Table 2, in Austria more than half (56 %) of all the milk produced comes from mountain areas. In Switzerland, the milk produced in mountain areas accounts for about one third of the total national production; 26 % in Slovenia. In Italy, about 39 % of cow's milk comes from the Alpine area. In Germany and France, the amount of milk produced in mountain areas is about 2 % of the total national production (for further details, see Table 3 in the Annex).

Similarly, in Austria more than half of the total beef production (55 %) comes from within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention. In Switzerland and Slovenia, about one third of beef is produced within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention. The percentage of slaughtered beef coming from the Alpine Convention area is 11 % in Italy, 6 % in Germany and 1 % in France. As for the production of beef and sheep meat within the entire Alpine Convention area, it was not possible to collect standardized data from the received questionnaires. Therefore, the production of meat has been estimated on the basis of the number of cattle and sheep (for further details on the estimates of slaughtered quantities, see Table 4 in the Annex).

Table 2: Percentage of milk and meat produced in the Alpine Convention area

Country	Percentage of dairy production within the Alpine Convention perimeter out of the total national production	Percentage of slaughtered beef from the Alpine Convention area, out of the total slaughtered beef
Austria	56 %	55 %
France	2 %	1 %
Germany	2 %	6 %
Italy	39 %	11 %
Liechtenstein	100 %	100 %
Slovenia	26 %	34 %
Switzerland	32 %	31 %

As for the question on the food products that are produced in significant quantities in the Alpine Convention area, Liechtenstein is in a peculiar situation: the entire national territory lies within the Alpine space, therefore all the agricultural products of this land come from the Alpine Convention area.

The survey also shows that food products from mountain areas – also beyond milk and meat - have an important role even in the countries where the percentage of land within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention is not particularly high. South Tyrol, for instance, is one of the most important apple-growing areas in Europe. As a consequence, about 84 % of the total apple production in Italy comes from the Alpine Convention area. In France, about 48 % of the land cultivated with medicinal and aromatic plants, and 41 % of walnut orchards, are in mountain areas.

The questionnaires also highlight several best practices for agricultural production in the Alpine space. A few examples are illustrated below.

#### *Quality attributes of food production in the Alpine space*

The quality characteristics of mountain agriculture illustrated below include quality labels with a proof of origin; crops and animal breeds which were once important; sustainable management systems; the percentage of organic farms and organically farmed land; diversification aimed at creating more added value and employment; and the deliberate avoidance of plant protection products and the firm commitment to exclude GMOs.





Local brands and quality labels with a proof of origin – especially the Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) and the Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) – distinguish the agricultural and food products whose quality and characteristics are determined by their geographical origin. In addition, Regulation (EU) No. 1151/2012 and the Delegated Act (EU) No. 665/2014 allow for the use of the optional quality indication for mountain products. Some Alpine countries (Austria, France, Italy) have already taken the first steps for their national implementation<sup>8</sup>.

For these products, the quality and region of origin are not the only attributes that matter. The preservation of a specific traditional production method is also relevant, as well as the cultural landscape that this generates. The product is also the expression of a land and of a specific production method, and stands out from other products as a regional typical product.

Regional specific products with a Protected Denomination of Origin or a Protected Geographical Indication often come from mountain areas. Santini et al. (2015) observe that, compared to the size of a territory, the percentage of PDO or PGI products in mountain areas is significantly higher than the EU average.

The results of the survey confirm this data. In Switzerland, for instance, 70 % of PDO or PGI products come from the Alpine Convention area, including cheeses such as Emmentaler and Gruyère, as well as dried meat from the Grisons. In Austria, 8 of the 14 products covered by a PDO come from the Alps (mainly cheese and speck). Slovenia has 6 PDO products (cheese, cured meats and filled pasties) from the Alpine space. In Germany, France, Italy and Liechtenstein, many well-known regional products covered by a PDO come from mountain areas, including the Allgäuer Bergkäse cheese, the South Tyrol apple, Montasio, Prosciutto di San Daniele, Gorgonzola, Raclette, the Liechtensteiner Sauerkäse cheese, Beaufort, Noix de Grenoble and the Pommes des Alpes de Haute Durance.

The Alpine Convention countries have also launched several initiatives aimed at the production of yield crops and animal breeds which were once widespread in the Alpine region. These species have adapted to the difficult conditions of the Alpine (valley) environment and allow farming at high altitudes: France and Austria promote sturdy indigenous cattle and sheep breeds (such as Tarine, Abondance, Pinzgauer Rind, Mérinos d'Arles). Italy mentions, as an example, the actions for the rearing and marketing of the Villnösser Brillenschaf, the oldest sheep breed in South Tyrol. In South Tyrol, for instance, the promotion of traditional Alpine cereal cultivation is supported by the "Regiokorn" project, which creates a network of farms, mills and bread makers. The cultivation of spring wheat – the "Tiroler beggrannter Binkel" – is promoted by the Austrian rural development programme. In the Alpine valleys in Switzerland, the Gran Alpin cooperative promotes the eco-friendly farming of cereal fields, and collects, processes and sells the grains.

Closed-cycle sustainable agriculture techniques, such as organic farming, play an important role in the Alps. The indicators used in this context also include the (lower) amount of excess nitrogen found within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention (for instance, see Statistik Austria 2010, BMLFUW 2013 for Austria).

An analysis of organic farming in the Alpine Convention area reveals that the percentage of organic farms varies from country to country (see Table 5 in the Annex). In Austria and Switzerland, more than 50% of all the organic farms are found within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, and respectively represent 50% and 60% of the country's organically farmed land. In Slovenia, 36 % of organic farms are located within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, and cover 34 % of the organically farmed land. In Germany, although 11 % of all organic farms are found within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, their surface only represents 5 % of the total organically farmed land. This means that the German organic farms in the Alpine Convention area are smaller than elsewhere. Italy has a similar situation: 10 % of its organic farms representing 4 % of the organically farmed land are located in the Alpine Convention area.

<sup>8</sup> On this point, see the EUROMONTANA report: <http://www.euromontana.org/en/implementation-of-the-eu-optional-quality-term-mountain-product-where-do-we-stand-in-the-different-member-states/>

### *Supply chains and regional cooperation*

An important aspect for the future of mountain agriculture is the creation and preservation of regional supply chains in the food sector.

The goal of having regional supply chains is to keep most production stages within the region, thus ensuring that most of the generated added value also stays in the region. This benefits the incomes from mountain farming, which increasingly depend on public subsidies and non-agricultural activities (Groier 2013). Some examples of regional supply chains can be found in the combination between mountain agriculture and food production (marketing and labelling of mountain products), mountain farming and tourism, as well as mountain farming and other services (trade, recreational and educational activities, etc.).

The survey highlights several existing products whose production chains (farms, processing, marketing) are entirely within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention/in mountain areas, including the following:

- High quality French cheeses with protected denomination of origin

All high-quality French cheeses covered by a Protected Denomination of Origin (especially in the departments of Savoie and Haute-Savoie, as well as Isère) are produced within organized supply chains which include producers (cooperatives), local enterprises, as well as industrial groups. This is an added value that often ensures higher prices for milk producers.

- Beef from Trentino

Calves are reared in the farms of the Federazione Provinciale Allevatori di Trento and slaughtered locally. The meat of the beef born, reared and slaughtered in Trentino is sold at the shop of the Federation in Trento and through the regional consumer cooperatives.

- Meadow orchards in Bavaria

The survey mentions several interesting examples of meadow orchards (Obstverwertung Rohrdorf) and distilleries at farms, as well as the fruit market in Feilnbach, a regional market in the Alpine area.

- Support to regional development projects in Switzerland

With the partial revision of the Ordinance on structural improvements, the Federal Council has authorized the "Support to projects for regional development and the promotion of indigenous and regional products, for which farming plays a major role", in compliance with the Federal law on agriculture. In order to improve the creation of value in agriculture and in the region, the Canton of the Grisons, for instance, has launched and expanded a dairy farm with a cellar where cheese is aged and sold, and has promoted the processing of fruit by building a distillery with premises to sell and taste its products. Also, rural tourism has been developed in cooperation with tourism bodies, for instance expanding a mountain stable (PRE Center Sursilvan d'Agricultura, Disentis).

- Creation of regional brands in Austria

The brand "Genuss Region Österreich" (Austrian Region of Taste) aims at informing consumers on the specific gastronomic products of each region. Some examples of "regions of taste" within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention are the "Pinzgauer Rind" beef and the "Großwalsertaler Bergkäse" mountain cheese.

- Regional brand "natürlich vo do" in Liechtenstein

The brand was created to let consumers easily identify the food products from Liechtenstein and allow their sale in local shops,

- Grape - regional supply chain in the Severna Primorska region

The Slovenian region of the "north coast" has created an umbrella brand (Grape – dobro pridelano doma – good things from our home) for agricultural and craft products, aimed at promoting the local products coming from the mountains in this region. The umbrella brand is a market platform which brings together several local producers

The survey also shows that the regional supply chains of all the Alpine Convention countries still have growth potential. The creation of an economic organization and the participation of producers to the supply chain are considered as essential elements for a positive impact on the territory. Several examples of regional markets and direct sale of products are also mentioned – such as at the huts on mountain pastures – which are also important in relation to tourism.

These regional supply chains often take the shape of cooperation initiatives. Agricultural cooperatives are very common in the Alpine space and in many areas they are the pillars of the regional economy: they offer consultancy services to small enterprises, support them with logistics and enable and facilitate the access to local and global markets (FAO 2014a; FAO 2014b). In this way, the world of cooperatives helps to ensure the income of small

enterprises in mountain areas and reduces their financial risks (Bardsley and Bardsley 2013; Streifeneder 2015). Cooperatives thus significantly contribute to the survival of mountain agriculture and food production.

A shared position paper of six European networks also refers to the economic, social and environmental benefits of local food production. The initiative, under the auspices of the Lombardy Regional Authority and Unioncamere Lombardia, was presented during EXPO2015.

Finally, it is important to note that, in addition to food production, other agricultural products such as wool, timber and wood-en products also significantly contribute to the regional supply chains.



## Conclusions and Perspectives

Mountain farming is carried out in a difficult natural context, therefore yields are lower (with the exception of the valleys, which enjoy more favourable conditions) if compared to regions where these challenging conditions do not exist. Many mountain areas therefore focus on high-quality typical products. Thanks to this approach, mountain food products gain greater resonance as regional specialities.

### **Mountain agriculture significantly contributes to food security**

In conclusion, it is important to stress that mountain agriculture can significantly contribute to food security and sovereignty with several types of products. Often densely populated Alpine regions can thus rely on healthy food products that come from a short supply chain, sold at local markets and shops. This meets a fundamental need: the local availability of food, a key factor of food security, as mentioned above.

The production and processing of agricultural products in the region help to create more value and, consequently, increase the economic resilience and the vitality of mountain areas, as several examples fittingly show. This promotes cooperation between agriculture, the sectors that are somehow linked to it and the regional supply chains. In an economic space such as the Alps, made of small enterprises, a short production, processing and distribution chain can facilitate access, which in turn has an impact on demand and supply dynamics, and on prices. Regional supply chains certainly have the potential to further grow.

An aspect that deserves just as much attention in the Alpine space is the issue of food waste and losses generated along the food supply chain, from farming to food production and processing, from marketing to gastronomy and household consumption. It only seems reasonable that the Alpine region becomes a model to raise awareness of the issue of food waste, and reduce it.

### **The quality aspects of food security are part of the regional identity**

Given the challenging production conditions, mountain agriculture cannot be a strong player in a global, deregulated market based on non-distinct mass production. In many areas of the Alpine space, we can observe a rediscovery of traditional products and regional

specialities: many of these typical products come from mountain areas and enrich the cultural variety of the country.

Food security shouldn't just be seen in terms of quantities of food products, but also in terms of taste and culture. Alpine agriculture does not only contribute to food security, but also to food diversity. Regional products covered by Protected Denomination of Origin or Protected Geographical Indication often come from mountain areas; this is a strength that should be further exploited in the future.

### **Preserving arable land and soil as key elements to ensure food security**

Arable land is the most important, non-renewable resource for agricultural production, as well as the basis to provide services of general interest.

Soil protection should be given the greatest importance: in quantitative terms, through sustainable land planning; in qualitative terms, through an effective management of arable land.

### **The diversity of mountain agriculture increases adaptability**

Biological, genetic and cultural diversity is an essential characteristic of the Alpine space. Genetic diversity in agriculture – one of its features – is an important prerequisite for food security (FAO 2009, 2012). Several initiatives in the Alpine Convention countries aim at the production of crops and sturdy animal breeds which were once widespread in the Alpine region. This practice should become more frequent in the future.

Mountain farming requires the use of cultivation methods and working techniques that are suited to the specific location (for instance, meat production in dry areas, and milk production at high altitudes). This could be seen as a "strategic potential" of mountain agriculture in the future, if the regional variety of crops, breeds and cultivation methods, as well as their adaptability to future changes – such as climate change – are preserved.

### Multifunctional mountain agriculture is of national relevance

The contribution that multifunctional mountain agriculture can give to the preservation and development of Alpine regions is undisputed. The resource-effective production of high-quality raw materials and food, the protection from natural hazards, the preservation and development of typical cultural landscapes and the safeguard of biodiversity all have a significant impact on the local society and its culture, as well as on the economic structure in the Alpine space (Holzner 2007, Ringler 2009). In the Alpine space, mountain agriculture also performs roles and functions that are relevant for large extra-Alpine regions, thus becoming important for each Alpine country as a whole. The typical cultivation and production techniques of the Alpine space play a fundamental role and will help mountain agriculture to continue to perform its many functions in future, especially to ensure food security.

### It is necessary to promote (ecosystem) services of general interest

In mountain areas, ecosystem services, especially the supply of water resources, the protection from natural hazards, the preservation of soil fertility, the safeguard of the diversity of cultural landscapes and the biodiversity typical of each region are the necessary prerequisites for a decentralised settlement in the Alpine space, and for food security.

Given the natural obstacles to farming, a compensation for such services should be planned ("public money for public goods").





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## ANNEX

Figure 1: Percentage of farms and farmed land used within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total amount of farms/farmed land, as well as the percentage of grassland within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total grassland in 7 countries of the Alpine Convention in 2010 (EURAC 2014). For Switzerland, 2013 data have been used.

Figure 1.1: % of farms within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention of the total national farms

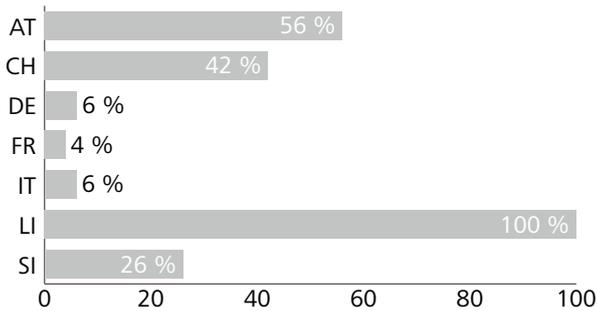


Figure 1.2: % of farmed land used within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total national farmed land

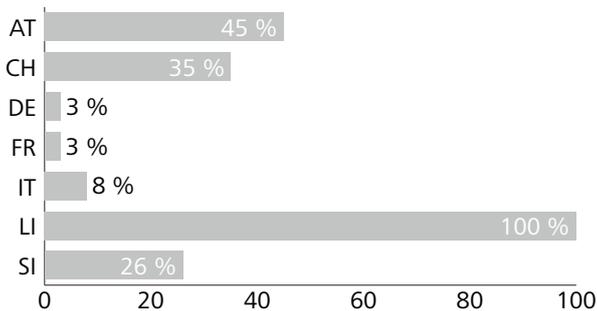


Figure 1.3: % of grassland within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total national grassland

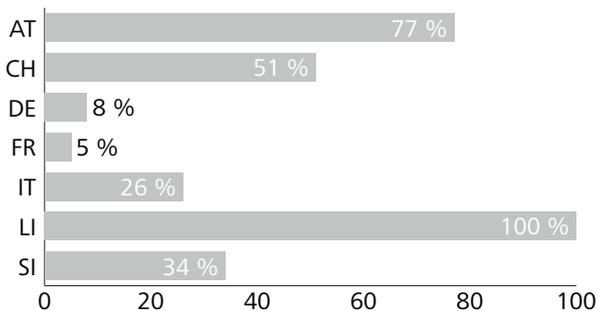


Figure 2: percentage of cattle, sheep and goats out of the total animal count in 7 countries in the Alpine Convention in 2010 (EURAC 2014). For Switzerland, 2013 data have been used.

Figure 2.1: % of cattle within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total cattle

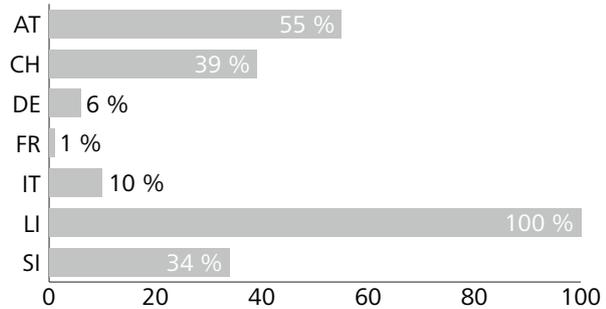


Figure 2.2: % of sheep within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total sheep

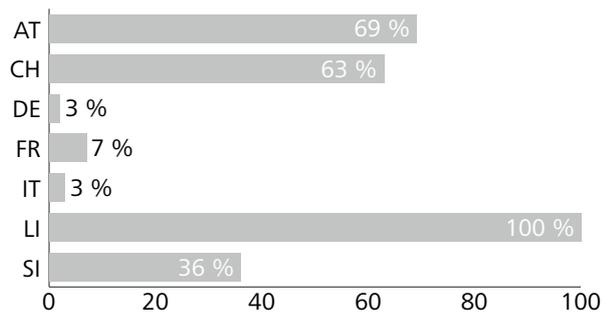


Figure 2.3: % of goats within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total goats

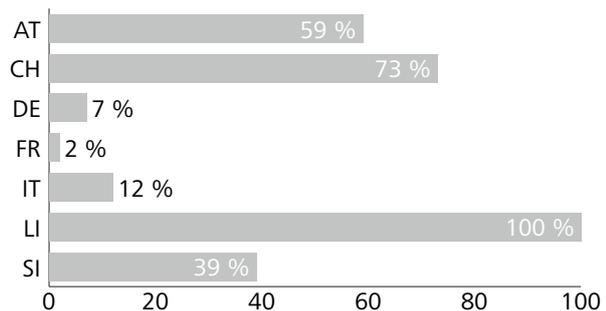




Table 3: estimates of cow milk production in the Alpine space (results of the questionnaire survey).

Country	National production in tons	Production within the Alpine Convention perimeter, in tons	Percentage of production within the Alpine Convention perimeter out on the total national production
Austria	3.257.738	1.824.528	56 %
France	24.000.000	500.000	2 %
Germany	29.628.880	650.000	2 %
Italy	10.996.563	4.339.860	39 %
Liechtenstein	14.000	14.000	100 %
Slovenia	603.930	157.750	26 %
Switzerland	3.261.407	1.049.732	32 %

The following table shows the total number of livestock in each country, subdivided into "cattle" and "sheep", as well as the total slaughtered quantities (in tons) in each country, for the "cattle" and "sheep" categories. The data come from the EUROSTAT (2010) database. Based on these values, a proportionality factor has been calculated (= slaughtered quantity in the livestock category / total number of livestock of that same category). This proportionality factor has been multiplied by the number of livestock within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention (EURAC 2014), thus determining the potential slaughtered quantity for each livestock category within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention. Table 4 shows the resulting quantities of meat.

Table 4: Production of meat from ruminants within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention. Own estimates of cattle and sheep based on the total number of livestock in the country (EUROSTAT 2010) and within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention (EURAC 2014).

Country	Product	Total number of livestock 2010 (EUROSTAT)	Total slaughtered meat (tons) in 2010 (EUROSTAT)	Factor slaughtered quantity / animal	Number of livestock within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention 2010 (EURAC)	Slaughtered meat from within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention (tons) (1)	Percentage of slaughtered meat from within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total slaughtered quantities (1)
Austria	Beef	2.023.510	224.790	0.11	1.114.004	124.383	55 %
France	Sheep meat	7.475.000	190.740	0.03	493.598	12.595	7 %
	Beef	19.506.210	1.527.180	0.08	273.374	21.302	1 %
Germany	Beef	12.534.510	1.186.720	0.09	730.228	68.201	6 %
Italy	Beef	5.952.990	1.075.410	0.18	622.600	114.797	11 %
Liechtenstein	Beef	5.993	(2)	–	5.993	(2)	100 %
Slovenia	Beef	472.330	35.770	0.08	161.264	12.269	34 %
Switzerland	Beef	1.591.750	143.390	0.09	497.965	44.858	31 %
	Sheep meat	434.080	4.970	0.01	246.902	2.827	57 %

(1) estimate based on the number of animals; (2) data are not available or are included in the data on Switzerland

Table 5: Percentage of organic farming (organic farms and organically farmed land) within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention out of the total organic farms and organically farmed land in 6 countries of the Alpine Convention in 2010 (results of the questionnaire survey); Data for Switzerland: 2013.

Country	Organic farms within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention/total organic farms in the country	Organically farmed land within the perimeter of the Alpine Convention / total organically farmed land
Austria	51 %	58 %
Germany	11 %	5 %
Italy	10 %	4 %
Liechtenstein	100 %	100 %
Slovenia	36 %	34 %
Switzerland	62 %	60 %



**The Alpine Convention** is an international treaty between the Alpine Countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland) as well as the EU, for the sustainable development and protection of the Alps.

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