

alps
in
our
hands.



“There are enough plans and concepts: now is the time to act.”

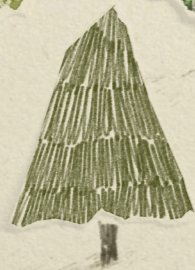
Serena Arduino, vice-president CIPRA International and member of the Alpine Biodiversity Board.

Nova Gorica, Slovenia, 26. September 2024 – Twenty years after the first AlpWeek, over 200 participants left the 2024 event reinvigorated by a shared commitment to a sustainable future for the Alps.

This international event provided a platform to assess the progress made in safeguarding the Alpine region's biodiversity, combating climate change, and improving the quality of life for Alpine communities. In this regard the AlpWeek 2024 was not only a celebration of past achievements but a catalyst for future action, directed towards the implementation of the [Multi-Annual Work Programme \(MAP\) 2023-2030](#) of the Alpine Conference. The

AlpWeek brought together people of all ages from the fields of politics, research, non-profit organisations and civil society to jointly shed light on the most pressing issues – true to the motto “Alps in our hands”. The Alpine region is changing faster than other regions and its nature is severely compromised, so bold ideas for action are needed. There are enough plans and concepts, now is the time to use this knowledge and act! Furthermore, there is a need for greater cross-border cooperation, innovative political measures and the involvement of communities in tackling future challenges.

/Biodiversity



The Alps, one of Europe's regions richest in biodiversity, face mounting pressures from land use, climate change, and different competing interests. Over the past two decades, global, European, and Alpine governance efforts have led to diverse legislation, institutions, and processes to protect this precious ecosystem.



Today, we have the tools needed to make impactful decisions and take action without waiting for more studies or guidelines.

Protecting Alpine biodiversity starts with using the existing tools. A key step is to connect protected areas across the Alps. The [ALPARC cartography](#) shows how the global goal of more biodiversity protection can be achieved through courageous decisions and [spatial planning](#) taking into consideration main barriers and land use conflicts.

ALPARC has implemented categories to define high-value biodiversity areas. Ecological connectivity of these areas needs to be ensured. To succeed, we need to deepen collaboration among stakeholders – including local communities, park authorities, and policymakers – who each play a crucial role. Parks, especially, act as essential links with local communities, strengthening this network of cooperation.

[BirdLife's maps on climate refugia](#) for the conservation of high-elevation species show further priority areas for conservation and current and future conflict



with ski slopes. The significance of these climate refugia for ensuring the survival of high-elevation species needs to be acknowledged. This entails recognising the impact of our actions in sensitive areas and the necessity to give up certain activities in these areas, such as skiing, for the well-being of the environment.

Mountain areas constitute a historical biodiversity hotspot, and increasingly, a refuge for species in the face of climate change. This is relevant for activities in these areas, such as pastoralism. But the shepherds also face other new challenges: Conflicts can rise from human-wild-life cohabitation, particularly with large carnivores.

To prevent conflicts cross-sectoral collaboration, active stakeholder involvement and education is vital. Developing comprehensive training programmes for schools and communities and connecting practitioners will foster a culture of cooperation.

This culture of cooperation is also crucial when developing and enacting effective regional climate strategies against biodiversity loss.

Decision-makers must draw on scientific data and local knowledge, nurturing a cooperative spirit that respects both the land and its people.

Protecting biodiversity is not just about conserving certain species; it's essential for the well-being of all who live in the Alpine region – humans included.

/Climate Action



Increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns and more intense and frequent natural hazards will impact on the landscapes and environmental processes in the Alpine environment, economy and society. To enable the sustainable development of the Alpine space in the context of climate change, both mitigation and adaptation efforts are required.

“Current systems are based solely on growth; the economic system does not contribute to solving the problems, but becomes a problem itself.”

Christian Felber,
Initiator of the [Economy for the Common Good](#)



We have already exceeded most of the planetary boundaries, not because of population growth alone, but due to unsustainable lifestyles: Our generation consumes resources at three times the rate of our grandparents, and still mostly relies on fossil fuels. While technology offers powerful tools to boost efficiency, it is not the solution to everything. To move forward, we need a shared understanding that our planet has finite resources, and we must openly address the economic impacts of climate inaction, including projected reductions in GDP.

We need to address the solutions: invest in innovation and research, redesign the economy and update industrial policies.

Adaptation also calls for thoughtful soil protection and desealing efforts. By removing unnecessary pavement and concrete, we can improve water drainage, enhance the microclimate, and make the landscape more resilient to climate effects. Across the Alps, inspiring examples of [desealing and soil regeneration](#) are already proving how impactful these measures can be.

“Green growth is not a solution — everything that contains growth is not green and I believe we need to find new economic models, (...) we can have green development but we can’t count on growth.”

Lučka Kajfež Bogataj,
Slovenian climatologist and keynote speaker

Climate change brings along [multiple climate risks](#) such as heat, drought and flooding. These risks pose a [major challenge to local and regional authorities](#) in the Alps. A complex web of governance structures exists. At the European level, mechanisms are already in place for cross-border emergency support: when a crisis hits, countries can request and offer aid, with well-coordinated processes. However, beyond formal regulations, informal collaborations and creative measures are also essential to build resilience. To prevent repeating mistakes seen in other regions, coordination at multiple levels is key. Spatial planning in particular can help determine appropriate land use, especially in areas prone to natural hazards.

Many solutions, including nature-based solutions, require cooperation and open dialogue, as they impact land use and ownership.

Slovenia’s Water Council is a good example, where diverse stakeholders gather to explore water management solutions. In this forum, regulations on land transactions and usage have been established through open discussion, fostering a balance between economic needs and environmental protection. Some areas, like those with torrents and wild rivers, demand especially careful planning as options are limited. Effective solutions in these regions require listening to all voices involved. It’s vital to [engage all stakeholders](#), and equally important to communicate clearly with the public so they understand how climate risks may impact them personally.

The impact of a changing climate on local stakeholders is especially significant in the (winter) tourism sector. The development of transition strategies, away from snow-dependency requires an engaged and convinced community. Lack of snow is often highly emotional for communities in Alpine valleys, it is connected to people’s livelihood, their childhood memories – their identity.

To eventually become climate resilient destinations, a long term process is required, with many small and big actions that lead towards a common vision.

The Resilience Decision-Making Digital Tool, resulting from the [BeyondSnow project](#), will support the local level in making first steps on that path. Building a resilient Alpine region is about more than policies – it’s about fostering open, respectful, and inclusive dialogue at every level. This will enable diversity in collaboration and decision making, rather than polarization and conflicts.

/Life Quality



“Communication is a key
to make changes.”

Aleš Zdešar, Triglav National Park

The cultural heritage and the landscape can be understood as the atmosphere for the quality of life in the Alps.

Initiatives like the European Capital of Culture help to show the diverse culture and how important it is to connect not only within the Alps, but within Europe and beyond. A good example for cooperation is Nova Gorica/SI, who was selected as European Capital of Culture 2025 and actively involved its neighbour city Gorizia/IT as a partner. They focus on their history as a border region with a past marked by conflict and war.

It is important to know the history in order to prevent repeating the same mistakes in the future.

Furthermore, to maintain a high quality of life in the Alps it is important to create new tourism opportunities that are environmentally friendly, such as a walk of peace to combine cultural heritage with nature tourism.

Future-oriented alternatives to our economic model are increasingly emerging and deviate from the current system's hyper focus on returns and unlimited growth. One of these is the Economy for the Common Good (ECG), where money isn't the goal of economic efforts, but just the means to achieve a greater outcome.

Measuring the quality of life, the well-being of all and of nature as economic success is the only way into a sustainable future;

to this end, the ECG designed the common good product (national economy) and the common good balance (corporate management).

The only Slovenian national park Triglav has many access points, mainly attracts summer tourists and offers around 50 different (sport) activities. A challenge in the region is maintaining and increasing the number of permanent residents, which can only be achieved by limiting or reducing the tourism pressure. Communication is a key to make changes.

Triglav National Park calculates carrying capacities for two purposes: to manage/keep a good Quality of Life (for local residents) and to try to decrease the impact on ecosystems and species. The park administration offered willingness to support interested municipalities by providing information about the calculation of carrying capacities.



“At school, we do not learn that there are many possible paths and a big diversity of approaches. It is important to get active and create a life that we like to live!”

Tutor Parmentier,
Filmmaker of “Activist” and former Yoalin traveller

Biodiversity, climate, and life quality are three interconnected challenges that define the Alpine region and demand urgent action. These issues cannot be addressed in isolation; they require boldness, innovative thinking, and collaborative efforts to create lasting solutions!

Climate protection and adaptation measures can lead to conflicts in relation to biodiversity. Therefore, it is important that solutions, e.g. to minimize natural hazards, are based on collaborative planning and take ecological, social and economic aspects into account.

Different and new perspectives are needed, as we no longer have enough resources to continue dealing with them in the way we do now. The solution is not only to build new infrastructure (e.g. retention basins), we need complex solutions to enable people and biodiversity to live together.

The [Yoalin](#) project presented reflections about life quality and tourism in the Alps, traveling the Alps by public transport leaving few traces behind. The young travelers recommend to “discover the area at your doorstep a bit better, instead of flying away. Not everybody needs to see every famous spot. Be ambassadors and be a

good tourist: bring your refillable bottle, buy unpacked food, make smart decisions – mobility-wise and behaviour-wise and try to see the full picture of your “touristic decisions”.”



/About the AlpWeek



The AlpWeek is an international event co-organised by the leading Alpine organisations committed to mountain protection and sustainable development. The 2024 event focused on biodiversity and ecosystems, climate change, and quality of life, aligning with the Alpine Conference's Multi-Annual Work programme (2023-2030).

Organisers: Alliance in the Alps, Alpine Town of the Year, CIPRA International, CIPRA Slovenija, Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, Interreg Alpine Space, ISCAR Alpine Research, Posoški Development Center, WWF as well as Go!2025 Nova Gorica and Kulturni Dom Nova Gorica. The AlpWeek 2024 was financially supported by the Slovenian Presidency of the Alpine Convention and the Cariplo Foundation.

#AlpWeek #AlpsInOurHands

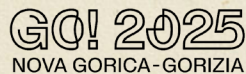
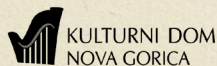
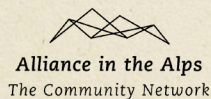
/Looking further



“I dedicate my time to people and nature, using my personal example to convince people about the need to cooperate, to act wisely, to think about side-effects of our behaviour.”

Ingrid Fischer,
President Alpine Town of the Year Association

Organisers:



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