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convenzione delle alpi • alpska konvencija

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PRESS RELEASE: XIV Alpine Conference

Grassau (Germany), 13 October 2016

The German Federal Minister for Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, Ms Barbara Hendricks, presided the XIV. Alpine Conference taking place today in Grassau where ministers and high level representatives of Alpine Countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland) the European Union as well as representatives from [Observer organizations](#) met to discuss Alpine specific questions on sustainable development, protection of the environment and living in the Alps. The main issues addressed were:

- **Climate change** and the implementation of the Action Plan on Climate Change for the Alps in the light of the decision by COP21 in Paris and the Alpine Convention Energy Protocol. In the last two years Germany also facilitated the exchange on experience in the research sector and coordinated the research cooperation in the Alps through the establishment of the Virtual Alpine Observatory. Special attention was also given to the topic of nearly zero-energy buildings in the Alps and the Sustainable tourism in climate protection
- **Greening the Economy in the Alps**, was the topic of the Sixth Report on the State of the Alps that was elaborated under the German Presidency and adopted by the Alpine Conference. The report emphasizes the different aspects of greening the life in the Alps from energy efficiency and low carbon economy to resource efficient economy, ecosystem services and natural capital based economy to economy supporting quality of life and well-being. The report will be available in all alpine languages shortly at the beginning of 2017.
- The next **Multiannual Work Programme** of the Alpine Conference for the Period 2017-2022 prepared under the title: “The Alps - a pioneer region for sustainable living in the centre of Europe” was adopted by the Alpine Conference. It highlights the following priority areas: Focusing on people and culture; Taking action on climate change; Valuing and Conserving biodiversity and landscape; Greening the economy; Promoting sustainable transport and Playing a leading role in EUSALP.
- Activities on the topic of **Soil conservation** that took place in the last biennium, including an in-depth assessment on approaches and future focal areas for the conservation of soils in the Alpine region prepared in light of the UN Year of Soils in 2015.

[Herzog-Friedrich-Strasse 15, A 6020 Innsbruck](#)

tel : +43.512.588.589 • fax : +43.512.588.589.20 • Email : info@alpconv.org

[Sede distaccata: Viale Druso 1, I 39100 Bolzano](#)

tel : +39.0471.055.352 • fax : +39.0471.055.359 • Email : info@alpconv.org

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- **Ecological connectivity** in the Alps was promoted by the establishment of the ecological network in the pilot regions (Achtal and Mont Blanc) nominated by the Alpine Conference, the publication „Alpine Nature 2030“ as well as through presidency support for projects (ALP.BIO.NET, MoC ALPARC/CNPA/DANUBEPARCs).

During their Presidency Germany paid special attention to close cooperation with civil society and Alpine networks which resulted also in the preparation of the AlpWeek, taking place in Grassau during the week of the Alpine Conference.

With the Alpine Conference the presidency of the Alpine Convention passed from Germany to Austria who will be chairing the Alpine Convention for the period 2017-2018. Minister Andrä Rupprechter from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management will take over the presidency. Austria will pursue the following priorities during its presidency: the role of Women in the Alps, transport and mobility, mountain farming and mountain forests, nature protection, water, climate change, energy and natural hazards. The Alpine Conference also confirmed the topic of natural hazards in the Alps as the topic of the next Report on the State of the Alps.

Statement from the Secretary General of the Alpine Convention: The Secretary General of the Alpine Convention, Mr Markus Reiterer, thanked the German presidency for all the work done during their presidency and the projects started. “Germany set the scene for a wide variety of activities deepening and promoting the Alpine Convention – from climate change to green economy; from energy efficiency to tourism. Yet, we co-started also cultural initiatives like “Reading mountains” in 2015 to promote modern Alpine literature and alpine culture in general. “I believe projects like this really bring the Alpine Convention closer to the people and spread our messages”. On the outcomes of the Alpine Conference Mr Reiterer was very positive “I am happy that we have the new Multiannual Work Programme and the priority topics for the next period and I am especially happy that many topics also correspond to the plan of activities by the incoming Austrian presidency”.

What is the Alpine Convention?

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, aimed at promoting sustainable development in the Alpine area. The Alpine Convention strives to harmonise protection and economic development with the objective to sustain the Alps as a living space for people and nature as well as an economic area.

The Alps, with their biodiversity, water and wood reserves, are the natural, cultural, living and economic environment for 14 million people and an attractive tourist destination for more than 120 million guests every year.

For additional information in English you can call: Taja Ferjancic Lakota 0043-650-588-589-1.