



PRIORITIES OF THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENCY ALPINE CONVENTION 2016–2018



MINISTERIUM
FÜR EIN
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ÖSTERREICH


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"PROTECT AND UTILISE"

THE BASELINE

THE ALPS COVER a surface of about 195,000 km². They extend over 1,200 km, from the French Maritime Alps to the Karawanks. More than 14 million people live in this region. Therefore, a strong international cooperation is essential for effective politics.

For now 25 years, the Alpine Convention has been providing the starting point of this cooperation. Signed on 7 November 1991 in Salzburg and in force since March 1995, it is the backbone for the endeavours to preserve and develop the Alpine area as living, economic and cultural space. The elementary properties of the Alpine Convention are its integrative approach and holistic policy, reaching from environmental protection via regional development up to culture including the social dimension.

Some 65% of the Austrian territory is located in the area of application of the Alpine Convention. Eight federal provinces, i.e. all but Vienna, are directly involved, three of them – Vorarlberg, Tyrol and Carinthia – are even wholly included in the territory defined by the Convention. Overall, half of the Austrian municipalities, with more than 3 million inhabitants, lie in the area where the Alpine Convention applies. Besides Austria, the Contracting Parties of the Alpine Convention are Germany, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland.

The Presidency of the Alpine Convention changes every two years, rotating in a pattern initially defined. Austria is taking over the Presidency from Germany and will transmit it to France after two years according to the schedule.

THE ALPINE CONVENTION AND ITS OPERATING MODE

THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE, executive organ of the Alpine Convention at technical level, will continue with its regular pattern of four meetings. Two of them will take place in the locations of the Permanent Secretariat, Innsbruck and Bolzano-Bozen. Further dates are indicated in the table below:

PERMANENT COMMITTEE	DATE	LOCATION
63 th Permanent Committee	4 – 6 April 2017	Bolzano-Bozen
64 th Permanent Committee	3 – 5 October 2017	Gmunden
65 th Permanent Committee	7 – 8 March 2018	Innsbruck
66 th Permanent Committee	June 2018	n. c.
67 th Permanent Committee + XV th meeting of the Alpine Conference	4th quarter of 2018	Tyrol/Ambras Castle

The Permanent Committee is seconded by the Compliance Committee which, on one hand, verifies the implementation of the provisions of the Alpine Convention and its Protocols and on the other hand, within a referral procedure, deals with requests related to potential disrespect of provisions.

COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE	DATE	LOCATION
25 th Compliance Committee	Spring 2017	St. Gallen
26 th Compliance Committee	Autumn 2017	Vienna
27 th Compliance Committee	Spring 2018	n. c.

CONTINUATION OF ONGOING ACTIONS

THE WORKING GROUPS AND PLATFORMS, instituted on specific topics and also for the implementation, are maintained. The meetings of Chairs of all Working Groups and Platforms, initiated by the Italian Presidency and happening yearly, will be perpetuated.

The continuation of the work on the **European Union Macro-regional Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)** plays a central role. Here, the various activities of the Alpine Convention, starting with the Lead of the EUSALP Action Group 6 (“To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources”) up to the direction of the dedicated Working Group of the Alpine Convention, will be supported and followed.

With the international architecture competition “**Constructive Alps**”, now being held for the fourth time and largely carried by Switzerland and Liechtenstein, this time again outstanding climate-friendly buildings in the Alps will be honoured. In the view of preparing an **Action Programme Green Economy in the Alpine region**, relevant activities, such as the staging of regional workshops, will be carried forward under the direction of Germany.

The very first activity of the Austrian Presidency will be the organisation of the literature event “**Reading mountains**” around International Mountain Day. Here the cultural diversity of the Alps including their language diversity will be emphasized through literature. Life in the Alpine area and the corresponding challenges will be communicated in an artistic way. In order to continue involving and supporting young people, in 2017 the **Youth Parliament** will meet in Austria.

PRIORITIES OF THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENCY

UNDER THE MOTTO "PROTECT AND UTILISE", the Alpine Convention will bring in all its experience, its networks and contacts. Austria is not reinventing everything, but instead bundles current issues from different areas together and cares for the integrative view of the Alpine Convention and its protocols.

Priorities:

--- "Women in mountain regions"

The focus lies on the question of how women can influence, maintain and improve the activities in the Alps at ecological, economic and cultural level. An international conference on the issue will take place directly before the Austrian national day of women farmers. It will be a unique opportunity to welcome representatives from other mountain regions of the world and exchange experiences.

EVENT: Ministerial conference (German/English)

DATE: 18 –19 April 2017

PLACE: Alpbach

--- "Does mountain agriculture have a future?"

In accordance to the regional priority of the Minister, a Conference of the regions will take place in Autumn 2017. This event will serve to initiate an exchange of opinions and thoughts on the future of mountain agriculture, with special attention to the specificities of the regions. In the view of the current new negotiations on the CAP, a "message" from the Alpine area should be aimed for.

EVENT: Conference of the regions (min.)

DATE: Autumn 2017

PLACE: Salzburg/Mittersill (tbc)

--- Regarding mountain forests, a technical conference on the interaction between environment and forestry, not least on the basis of the Protocol on Mountain Forests and in the view of the implementation of the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) is planned.

EVENT: Conference (techn.)

DATE: 2017/18

PLACE: Styria (tbc)

- In **Nature Protection**, the topic of “Protected areas management outside of National Parks” has been agreed together with all federal provinces.

EVENT: Workshop (techn.)

DATE: 2017/18

PLACE: Carinthia (tbc)

- The topic of **Water** is at the heart of the “Forum Alpinum 2018”. This forum aims among others goals at a comprehensive examination of the topic Water. On one hand, the review process for the evaluation of the use of small hydroelectricity in the Alps shall be concluded and on the other hand the specificities of the Alpine rivers shall be worked out. The objective shall be the formulation of a broad Declaration with clear political stipulations and missions, to be adopted by the Alpine Conference.

EVENT: Conference “Forum Alpinum”

DATE: Spring 2018

PLACE: Tyrol

- **Climate change** affects the Alps particularly strongly.

The global Paris climate agreement opened a new era in climate policy. From the point of view of the Alpine Convention, it is necessary to intensify international cooperation on this topic and to raise the significance of climate change mitigation and adaptation within the framework of the Alpine Convention. Here we intend to use at best the Alpine Convention as a regional platform radiating all over Europe. The work within the Alpine Convention shall be structured and the existing experience in the Alpine region be used for new ideas, proposals and approaches, but also for the implementation required at national level.

EVENT: Various activities, such as the national “Climate day”

DATE: Spring 2018

PLACE: Salzburg (City)

--- **VIIth Report on the State of the Alps**

The Report on the State of the Alps dedicated to the topic “Natural Hazard Risk Governance” opens a unique opportunity to dedicate ourselves intensively to this topic in the Alpine area, and thus improve and support national as well as transnational risk governance processes. The “PLANALP” Alpine Convention Platform will be broadened to this effect. Furthermore the Platform constitutes the perfect link to EUSALP Action Group 8 (“To improve risk assessment and to better manage climate change, including major natural risk prevention”), also under the responsibility of Austria. The objective is to improve risk governance, identify best practices and elaborate solutions.

- The “**Renewable Alps**” initiative will be continued and support will be provided to Germany on the questions of energy efficiency in the hotel and gastronomy sector.

- In Autumn 2017, an alpine-wide event on the topic of “**Sustainable mobility in tourism**” will present best practice examples from the whole Alpine area, also putting the focus on positive impacts on health.

EVENT: Mobility day on the topic “Sustainable mobility in Tourism”
DATE: Autumn 2017
PLACE: Werfenweng (tbc)

- A common project with the “**Alliance in the Alps**” municipalities’ network will be carried out together with Germany in order to reinforce the city-countryside relationship.



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