



Introducing **Alenka Smerkolj**,
Secretary General of the Alpine Convention

Alenka Smerkolj started her term as Secretary General of the Alpine Convention in July 2019, being the first woman in this position. Ms Smerkolj is an experienced leader in international banking and management and has served as the Minister for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion in the Slovenian Government between 2014 and 2018. She strongly believes in people's ability to succeed if the right attitude, passion and perseverance are demonstrated.

As Secretary General, Smerkolj strives in the first place to continue the work of her predecessor for the protection and sustainable development of the Alps as a pioneer region for sustainable living in the heart of Europe. She believes in the power of teamwork, dialogue and open communication with the Contracting Parties and the Partners involved. While demonstrating this attitude, mountains can be moved. The priorities set by the Multi-Annual Work Programme 2017-2022 will further serve as *leitmotif* in the years to come.

Smerkolj entered the political scene in November 2014, becoming Minister responsible for European Cohesion Policy and Development in the Slovenian Government. In this capacity, Smerkolj coordinated, amongst others, the government's effort towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the elaboration of a national long-term vision and development strategy, aiming at the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development. In July 2016, on the personal request of the Prime Minister of the Slovenian Government, she was acting Minister of Finance for a three months term.

Alenka Smerkolj was born in Kranj, Slovenia in 1963 and graduated from the University of Ljubljana with a degree in French and Spanish. She began her professional career in 1996 at the Nova Ljubljanska Banka in Ljubljana, where she held various positions ranging from Head of Unit to Deputy Director. Before leaving her banking career in 2014 to take up her ministerial post in the Slovenian government, Alenka Smerkolj successively held the position of Director of Division of International Capital Markets and of Executive Director for Financial Markets.

Smerkolj's recent publication include book chapter (co-author) "Prototyping the Future: A New Approach to Whole-of-Society Visioning" published in the book "Realistic Hope: Facing Global Challenges", edited by Angela Wilkinson and Betty Sue Flowers, Amsterdam University Press, October 2018.