

## **Alpine Convention spotlights climate protection**

Austria hands over presidency to France and reaffirms the demand for a uniform minimum CO<sub>2</sub> price in Europe.

Austria's Presidency of the Alpine Convention ends with the XV. meeting of the Alpine Conference on 4 April 2019 in Innsbruck. For two and a half years, work was carried out under the motto "Protect and Utilise" in the sense of protecting the Alps while at the same time sustainably developing the living, recreational and economic environment. "We have made intensive use of these past two and a half years. For us, climate change was in the focus of our work. In the Innsbruck Declaration adopted today, we call for joint efforts with the aim towards climate-resilient and climate-neutral Alps by 2050", explains Elisabeth Köstinger, Federal Minister for Sustainability and Tourism and President of the Alpine Conference. Today, France took over the Presidency of the Alpine Convention from Austria. "I'm pleased that today we can pass the baton on to France. At the R20 summit in Vienna last year, Austria and France jointly made an important foray in the field of climate protection and demanded a uniform European minimum price for CO<sub>2</sub>. Among other things, this entails equal opportunities for renewable energy production," Köstinger added.

## **France as an important partner in climate protection**

France's State Secretary for the Environment, Brune Poirson, thanked Austria for the committed and efficient presidency of the Alpine Convention, which has addressed the climate and environmental protection and the sustainable development in this region. "I would like to thank the Austrian Presidency for focusing on climate protection during the Alpine Conference. Since the R20 summit last year, when Austria and France positioned themselves Europe-wide with the demand for a European minimum CO<sub>2</sub>-price, we have been pursuing a common goal, which we still advocate. Water and biodiversity will be the other priorities for us. Both areas require the decisive involvement of local actors, whom we must support in their actions, similar to climate protection," said State Secretary Brune Poirson.

## **Climate Neutral Alps 2050 - an important milestone for Germany**

The Alpine Convention will continue its efforts in the field of climate protection. Germany handed over the presidency to Austria in 2016 and proclaimed the Alpine region a pioneer in climate protection. "Melting glaciers, dwindling snow reliability, shifting climate zones are just a few examples of the impact of climate change," so Svenja Schulze, Germany's Federal Minister for the Environment. "The vision formulated at that time of turning the Alps into a model region was pursued jointly under the Austrian Presidency - regarding energy

production, transport, tourism, mountain forests and agriculture. To this end, we have formulated a comprehensive strategy with the Alpine climate target system 2050 adopted today. This strategy must now be consistently implemented."

### **Alpine Convention as a pioneer**

The XV. meeting of the Alpine Conference took place in Innsbruck, underlining the importance of the Alpine Convention for the region. "For us, as state in the heart of the Alps, the sustainable development of the entire Alpine region as a living, recreational and economic space has the highest priority. The provisions of the Alpine Convention are inextricably linked to these development goals. On behalf of Tyrol, I would therefore like to express my sincere thanks for the good cooperation," explained Günther Platter, Governor of Tyrol, at the press conference.

The Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, based in Innsbruck, plays a vital role in the efficient coordination of the Alpine Convention family. "Thanks to the Austrian Presidency for its excellent cooperation and commitment. The Innsbruck Declaration on Climate-neutral and climate-resilient Alps, adopted by the ministers at the XV. session of the Alpine Conference, illustrates the cohesion and commitment of the Alpine Convention. Climate protection requires cross-sectoral approaches and transnational cooperation. The Alpine Convention is a real pioneer herein", concluded Markus Reiterer, Secretary General of the Alpine Convention.

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