



## Focus

### Towards EXPO 2015: giving the alpine biological heritage a global visibility

Milan EXPO is approaching, in fact in May 2015 the city will accommodate for six months the biggest universal non-commercial event, which will be attended by over 140 countries, all gathered in a huge expositive area divided in national pavilions.



**MILANO 2015**  
**1 MAGGIO • 31 OTTOBRE**

**NUTRIRE IL PIANETA**  
**ENERGIA PER LA VITA**

*Feeding the planet, energy for life* is the topic chosen for EXPO Milan 2015. A very actual title which aims to address the issue of human nutrition, with respect to the earth we live on and from which we draw its vital but exhaustible resources.

EXPO will be an important occasion to raise awareness on the Alps, the natural geographical framework of the Milan Exposition, to the many visitors from all over the world.

With a unique agricultural heritage, for its biodiversity and gastronomical traditions that have antique origins, the Alps will certainly be able to give an important contribution to the Italian pavilion, but also to the other alpine countries' pavilions.

It is for these reasons that the alpine countries, strongly supported by the Alpine Convention, identified this event as an opportunity for the realization of common actions to promote the mountains' cultural and agri-food traditions.

During the last months, on Swiss drive, the Italian Presidency of the Convention and the Permanent Secretariat have started a set of initiatives to ensure the presence and the promotion of the Alps before and after the six months dedicated to EXPO.

To the end of 2012 the Presidency had given a task force to identify possible synergies between the signatory countries of the Convention for a common action to promote the Alps. It is actually working on the organization of a "Mountain Week", the traditional meeting of the Convention to be held in 2015 within EXPO, involving the pavilions of the alpine countries.

Since 2013 some public workshops have been organized by the Presidency for collecting ideas and contributions from experts and institutional actors who collaborate with the Convention.

It is in this context that the Gorizia workshop (forthcoming March 20th) has been organized by the Alpine Convention, the Friuli Region and the Gorizia Municipality on the sidelines of the 55th Permanent Committee of the Convention.

Representatives of EXPO 2015, unitedly with the national pavilions of the alpine countries, together with the Regions and territorial administrations, but also delegates of the Alpine and Carpathian Convention and United

Nations representatives, will participate to the workshop; some good practices and actions will be shown during the work, to bring in EXPO 2015 the heritage of agricultural and gastronomic traditions of the Alps and other mountain areas, to understand which will be the mountains role within the forthcoming Universal Exposure in Milan.

### Eastern Mountainside: the latest events

#### **New mountain demography: meeting in Ostana in preparation of the 5th report on the state of the Alps**

How is life in mountains, what effects will bring the demographical changes regarding the mountain communities and what are these really about?



These were the focal points discussed in Ostana (mountainous municipality in the Cuneo province) last February 17th during the workshop on demographical changes sponsored by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention.

In Ostana considerations of the experts group on demographical changes were shared, working on the drafting of the 5th relation on the alpine status, that is sponsored by the Alpine Convention and is this year dedicated to demographical changes in mountain areas.

The mountain community (14 million people living in the alpine space) is facing since some years the demographical changes that certainly deserve to be kept under observation: in Italy, for example, the data indicate a decrease on the natural balance of the mountain communities that present yet negative values while on the other side the migratory balance is increasing.

All this brought the need to identify new strategies to stem the mountain depopulation, starting from the experience of some virtuous municipalities, such as Ostana.

The small piedmontese municipality is considered a testing laboratory for its new demographic conformation. The new citizens that have chosen to live in the mountains, are perfectly integrated with the local community that has grown thanks to the graft of youth that has left the big cities, often in couples, choosing the mountains as place to live and work in.

These changes encourage the renewal of population, above all in the small mountain towns, but on the other hand determine the emergence of new needs. It is for this reason that the Convention wanted to create a group of experts to understand how citizens and locals match these new needs and work to identify common strategies to face common problems. Targets, for example, such as the enforcement of the mountain, valley and urban areas integration starting from their natural interdependence.

The workshop, during which English, Italian and Occitan (in simultaneous translation) was spoken, has seen a large participation of the Ostana citizenship, that had the opportunity to confront itself with the experts of the Convention and other supervisors.

The emerged hints will be used for the final drafting of the Relation on Alps status, that will be presented at the end of the year.

[Link to the meeting documents](#)

## **Which role will mountain forests have in the Green Economy? In Lecco the meeting of the Alpine Convention Working Group**

The mountain forests play an increasingly strategic role in the development of environmentally friendly production processes in the alpine region. The Alpine Convention is committed to promote the value of alpine forests for the development of integrated cross-border politics. Due to the vision of Green Economy, as it is defined by the UN, it is essential to recognize and exploit the resources and specific territorial characteristics as a basis for the sustainable economic growth even of mountain regions.

To think over this topic, with a particular care for the forestry sector, the Italian Presidency of the Convention has promoted the workshop: "A green infrastructure for growth: the potential role of alpine forests within the Europe's Green Economy".

The event was held in the suggestive location in the regional Parc Eremo Monte Barro, and was organized with the collaboration of Cooperativa Eliante and Legambiente Lecco.

During the workshop methodologies, good practices and instruments for the multi-functionality development of the forestry were presented, on the pursuit of intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth targets, indicated by the European Union in the Agenda "Europe 2020".

Experts and representatives from international, national and territorial institutions and associations have enlivened the debate with the public and local stakeholders illustrating data, suggesting strategies and common projects about the role of forestry resources inside the transition to mostly eco-friendly productive processes, about the renewable energies sector, the development of ecosystem services of mountain forests, and the development of sustainable forestry tourism.

The open-door event was preceded by the meeting of the Mountain Forests Working Group, that was made for implementing the protocol implementation of the Alpine Convention dedicated to the forestry politics.

[Link to the meeting documents](#)

## **Climate Change: international workshop in Vienna**

The working group of the Carpathian Convention on Adaptation to Climate Change was held in Vienna and was organized by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP Vienna) as *ad interim* Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and was hosted by the Austrian Ministry of Environment.

The Presidency of the Alpine Convention has promoted the event in the framework of the initiatives for the adaptation to climate change and expects forms of regional cooperation for the identification of common guide lines, ensuring the local participation of own experts to the working group.

During those days work was done on the drafting of a desirable joined message about the local adaptation to climate change, to be submitted to the respective Conference of the Parties Convention: the Carpathian Convention at Mikulov meeting (September 2014), the Alpine Convention at Turin Conference (November 2014).

## **Western Mountainside: upcoming events**

### **March 20th-21st: meeting in Gorizia for the 55th Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention**

On March 20th and 21st the Conference Centre of the Trieste University (in via Alviano) will host the 55th Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention. The work will be supervised by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention for the 2013-2014 biennium. The Permanent Committee meeting will be preceded by the

international workshop “Bring the Alps to EXPO 2015: mountains, aliments, environment and culture on the way to Milan.”

**April 23rd-24th: discussion on international experience about mountain cooperation in Sarnano**

The Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, together with The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), the European Academy of Bolzano, the Italian Contact Point ESPON, the Camerino University, CAI national, the Sarnano CAI section and the Municipality of Sarnano, promotes the convention: “The Alpine Convention and the Carpathian Convention: comparing experiences. The Appenines, a european mountain range”, that will be held on April 23rd and 24th 2014 in Sarnano (MC), within the activities for the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Sarnano CAI section.