



Rules of Procedure for the Action Groups of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

Version 24 October 2016

Preamble

The Joint Statement adopted in Brdo on 25 January 2016 by representatives of the National and Regional Governments of Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia and Switzerland sets the basic multilevel governance structure for the EUSALP, including the setting up of one Action Group (AG) for each of the nine thematic actions of the strategy.

The constitutional meeting of the EUSALP General Assembly (GA) underlined that the AGs are "the key implementers of the Strategy".

The first round of AG kick off meetings showed the need and the interest of having a common set of Rules of Procedure (RoP) for all AGs. Therefore, the Executive Board (EB) has adopted this common set of RoPs for the AGs.

Article 1

Scope of application

- (1) These RoPs define a framework of the AGs of the EUSALP, which can be adapted in every respect to the individual needs by the single AGs
- (2) **The core set must be applied by all EUSALP AGs.**¹

Article 2

Mandate

- (1) **All AG members with decision making capacity (DMC) as mentioned in Article 4 (2) lit. a) shall be officially nominated by the respective National Coordinator (NC)** and shall send to their AG leader (AGL) a copy of the formal letter of commitment by the institution/bodies which have proposed their membership, stating clearly that they will provide them with appropriate time and resources to fulfil their tasks in proper conditions, including member's travel expenses.
- (2) **Members who shall have DMC, but not coming from national or regional administration need to have a clear confirmation from their nominating State/Region that they are entitled to speak and to take decisions in the name of**

¹ The respective compulsory sentences are underlined and highlighted in bold. All other sentences are regarded as a flexible framework that can be adapted by the AGs. In this regard it is the aim to give the AGs a corporate frame that is open for their individual needs.

their sending State/Region and that they are in the position to mobilise relevant stakeholders and experts relevant from their State or Region.

Article 3

Chair of the Action Groups

The AG's are chaired by 1 (or 2) AGL formally appointed and duly empowered by their respective authorities.

Article 4

Participants

(1) For AG meetings to be effective, the number of participants should remain manageable.

(2) Members have a permanent or temporary participation in the works of the group:

(a) Members with Decision making capacity (DMC)

Members representing the relevant administrations within the participating countries, including regional representatives according to the institutional structure of each country, all of whom are duly empowered by their mandating administrations.

(b) Members in advisory role

- **The European Commission plays an advisory role with a view to ensuring compliance with the objectives of the strategy and consistency with EU policies and rules.**
- **Representatives of the Alpine Convention as well as those of the Alpine Space Programme are members in advisory capacity.**
- **Other stakeholders and experts, who can bring a clear contribution and added-value into the dialogue and the work of the group, in conjunction with the action concerned, can participate according to the procedure described in paragraph 4 of this article.**

(3) In accordance with the multi-level governance approach and inspired by the European code of conduct on partnership², the final composition of the AGs should take into account the expertise of relevant partners, with a view to helping decision making members take well-informed decisions.

(4) The AG may decide to invite other participants, without DMC, as guests/experts as appropriate. Upon proposal by any Member, the Chair(s) will consult the AG and, if there are no objections, will invite the proposed guest(s) to take part in the AG meeting, or in parts of it.

² C(2013)9651 final - 07.01.2014.

Article 5

Tasks

- (1) **The main task of the AGs is to implement the Action Plan**, in particular to:
- Promote and facilitate the involvement of and cooperation with relevant stakeholders from the entire macro-region. Liaise through the Stakeholder Platform, whenever deemed appropriate;
 - Organising the drafting of a working plan/programme for the AG, jointly with the members of the AG;
 - Building on the broad criteria included in the Action Plan, develop specific criteria for the purpose of selecting actions/projects within its action (further developed/complemented by the EB, as appropriate);
 - Identify actions/projects to be included in the Action Plan, ensuring that they comply with the EUSALP objectives, including with regard to cross-cutting and horizontal aspects as well as the current working plan of the AG;
 - Pinpoint relevant funding sources for the actions/projects identified, maintaining a dialogue with bodies in charge of implementing programmes/financial instruments including the relevant EU programmes managed directly by the Commission, facilitating and following up implementation of actions/projects, including monitoring and evaluation towards targets and indicators defined. Whenever relevant, review the indicators and targets set; monitor progress within the action and report on it to the EB;
 - Facilitating policy discussions in the macro-region regarding the action concerned as well as ensuring communication and visibility of the action;
 - Reviewing regularly the relevance of the action as described in the Action Plan. Proposing to the NC necessary updates, including the addition, modification or deletion of actions; conveying the relevant results and recommendations of on-going and completed actions and projects to the policy level;
 - Submitting to the EB policy proposals and recommendations, including for revising the Action Plan;
 - Proposing themes and help on preparation of meetings of relevant line ministers in close cooperation with the EB;
- (2) The AGLs are expected to:
- actively initiate and develop the AG by identifying – in close cooperation with the NCs – relevant stakeholders from the States and Regions;
 - Liaise and organise cooperation with other AGLs and NCs in order to ensure coherence and avoid to duplicate work on the strategy implementation;
 - Organise jointly with the members of the AG the drafting of a working plan/programme for the AG.

Article 6

Organisation of the work

If deemed appropriate, the AG may establish:

- Sub-structures, such as sub-groups or task forces, addressing specific topics or tasks within the AG's framework as set out in the Action Plan, with a clear mandate, limited in time where appropriate and coordinated by an AG-member;
- Cooperation with the other AGs (e.g. through common thematic subgroups, shared web space, organisation of common activities, etc.).

Article 7
Meetings

(1) **Meetings of the AG take place as often as may be necessary (physically or virtually), but at least twice a year and preferably four times a year.** Meetings shall be called by the AGLs, either in their own capacity or following a request from at least 3 AG-members from different countries.

(2) Each meeting is called with a pre-notice of at least 6 weeks. A draft agenda, prepared by the AGL together with documents to be discussed, shall be circulated at the latest 15 calendar days before the meeting.

(3) Meetings of the AG can only be attended by participants (chairs, members, and guests/experts if any) indicated in Articles 3 and 4.

(4) **At least four members with DMC from four different countries must be present in order to allow decision making according to Article 8 below.**

(5) AG meetings shall be conducted in English. Documents shall also be in English and shall be distributed by electronic means. Participants may bring interpreters at their own expenses.

(6) AGLs shall ensure that minutes are drafted and circulated within 21 calendar days following AG meetings. Participants shall be given the possibility to provide comments within an appropriate timeframe. Participants shall provide comments, if any, within 14 calendar days after reception of the minutes. Minutes shall be approved in writing at the latest within 63 calendar days following the concerned meeting.

Article 8
Decision-making

(1) Decision-making is a process where all AG-members are invited to contribute. Decisions aim to be made by consensus among DMC-members of the participating States and Regions attending the meeting.

(2) Consensus cannot be blocked by the abstention of a country delegation. If consensus cannot be reached, the AGL decides whether the decision is postponed, defeated or brought to the EUSALP EB. In any event, the Commission may ask for deferral of a decision if it deems EU interests or core objectives of the EUSALP to be at stake.

(3) In very exceptional cases, when the AGL considers a voting process would allow to unblock a situation, she/he can decide to proceed to the vote. **DMC-members coming from one country have one vote per country. When voting is decided a national coordination needs to be ensured beforehand between countries and regions. In that case, a qualified majority is needed.**

(4) The AGL can initiate a written decision-making process by sending a draft decision and the concerned documents to all members who shall have 21 calendar days to respond in writing to the AGL. Only those who have DMC are allowed to express the position of their country.

- In the absence of any reaction within this deadline, it will be taken as a silent agreement.

- If a written objection is raised, all members are informed. The matter shall be discussed between the AGL and all the members with DMC in order to find a common solution, within a reasonable time, which is suitable for all. In case no solution is found, it shall be put on the agenda of the next AG meeting.
- After the expiration of the 21 calendar days, the AGL shall inform all AG-members whether the decision is deemed to be taken or whether objections have been raised.

Article 9
Reporting

(1) **The AGL shall jointly prepare with the AG-members, an annual progress report of the past year. This report has to be adopted by each AG before end of March of the following year.** This can be done in a meeting or by written procedure.

(2) The EB will receive before end of April the individual report of each AG sent by the AGL.