



## **EUSALP Workshop on Communication**

**26 June 2018 - BRUSSELS**

Communication has been defined as one important part of EUSALP's activities, and many steps have been taken towards a coherent communication approach. A draft Communication Strategy has been outlined for the period 2016-2019 in the framework of the AlpGov project. ERSALP is developing tools to implement the objectives defined in the strategy. In September 2017, a conference on media and communication in Slovenia brought together media practitioners and experts from all four macro-regional strategies. The participants called for a horizontal media and communication pillar for macro-regional strategies to give the subject greater importance.

At the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Forum in Munich on 22 November 2017, the Executive Board stressed that communication has to be seen as a constant process. Furthermore, it emphasized that all actors within EUSALP should continuously contribute to this process. In this sense, the Tyrolean EUSALP presidency wants to play an active role in facilitating the communication of EUSALP, in close collaboration with the existing communication structures.

Therefore, as a follow-up of the conference in Slovenia, it is proposed to organize a workshop in Brussels for communication specialists from the national and regional administrations. The workshop should help implement the communication strategy that stresses that 'each Member State shall have its own communication program and relative actions but they should be linked to communication activities as part of the overall Strategy'.<sup>1</sup>

The communication strategy specifies that press and communication offices deliver content, participate in and promote EUSALP events and stay informed about and promote EUSALP's main actions and projects.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, the aim of the workshop is to provide an opportunity for networking among communication specialists from the national and regional administrations. In addition, the workshop addresses the European Commission and media practitioners. Thereby, the event wants to foster exchange, create Alpine-wide linkages and pool the knowledge of specialists all over the Alpine arc.

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<sup>1</sup> EUSALP Communication Strategy, Second Draft September 2017, 3.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 18.

At the same time, the workshop could set the starting point for a communication platform that helps to increase the visibility and facilitate implementation of EUSALP, by also including more modern communication tools such as social media. It is also important to learn from experiences in other macro-regions, to exchange and to check what conclusions can be drawn from this.

The EUSALP draft Communication Strategy has not been formally agreed on by the Executive Board, and before it can be, some important issues must still be addressed by the Board (e.g. the common messages that all key partners would like to convey in the macro-region, to which target groups, over what period, the need for a coordinated approach, etc.).

**Therefore, the workshop also aims at proposing solutions or options to the still pending issues mentioned, if need be.**

The members of the Executive Board are called upon to name and invite communication specialists from their respective administrations. To gain Alpine-wide impact and coherence, it is important that experts from all Alpine countries take part. In addition and to foster synergies with the conference on media held in Slovenia, the workshop will invite participants to the conference. Finally, communication experts from other macro-regional strategies are welcome to contribute their experiences and to discuss joint steps.

In order to ensure a thorough follow-up and to move into implementation phase, results of the workshop should be presented to and discussed by the Executive Board in July and be fed into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum in November.

### ***Format***

The workshop will comprise two thematic sessions that allow the broad discussion of challenges related to communication and the development of joint approaches. The aim is to pool the ideas, experience and expertise of *all* participants.

Therefore, the workshop will follow an interactive format. In a first panel, the workshop will collect the strengths and weaknesses of the existing EUSALP communication system. The two previous and the ongoing presidency of EUSALP will share their experiences with communicating EUSALP. They can elaborate on what worked well and where they detected problems. Members of the communication teams of other macro-regional strategies will contribute their best practices and lessons learnt. Afterwards, the participants are called upon to divide into smaller groups. Each group should think about strengths and weaknesses of as well as opportunities and threats for EUSALP communication. The expertise collected will be clustered and prioritized. The aim is to gather a limited number of the most important strengths, weaknesses and challenges to build on in the second panel.

The second panel translates the analysis of the status quo into a vision of the future state of communication. Again, the participants are divided into groups to develop ideas on how to utilize the strengths and tackle the weaknesses of EUSALP communication. Following a simi-

lar approach as in the first panel, the ideas are clustered to concretize them. The panel will select the most important ideas in plenary. To ensure that these ideas are not only considered, but actually realized, the workshop will translate them into concrete measures. The participants will discuss a time schedule and responsibilities to facilitate their implementation. The clear laying down of responsibilities should guarantee that words are put into action.

At the end of the workshop, all participants should feel that their ideas were taken into account, that they could seriously contribute their specific expertise and that something shared and concrete will be carried forward during the coming months. Ideally, the participants see themselves as an integral part of EUSALP communication. In the long term, a network of communication specialists from all over the Alpine arc can provide a solid basis for the communication of EUSALP.

**As a follow-up**, the results will be summarized and sent to all participants. They will be discussed by the Executive Board in July and thereby feed into EUSALP governance structures.