



EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

ITALIAN PRESIDENCY 2019

Work Programme

1. Introduction: The Alpine Region¹

The Alpine Region is among the largest natural, economic and productive areas in Europe, with over 80 million inhabitants, and among the most attractive tourist regions, welcoming millions of guests per year. While trade, businesses and industry in the Alpine Region are concentrated in the main areas of settlement on the outskirts of the Alps and in the large Alpine valleys along the major traffic routes, over 40 % of the Region is not or not permanently inhabited.

Due to the Alpine Region's unique geographic and natural characteristics, it is particularly affected by several of the challenges arising in the 21st century:

- Economic globalisation requires sustainable and continuously high competitiveness as well as the capacity to innovate;
- Demographic change leads to an ageing population and outward migration of highly qualified labour;
- Global climate change already has noticeable effects on the environment, biodiversity and living conditions for the inhabitants of the Alpine Region;
- A reliable and sustainable energy supply must be ensured in the parts of the Region which are difficult to access;
- As a transit region in the heart of Europe and due to its geographic features, the Alpine Region requires sustainable and custom-fit traffic concepts;
- The Alpine Region is to be preserved as a unique natural and cultural environment.

¹ *This description part comes from the Bavarian 2017 Work Programme*

- The different characteristics of peripheral areas, centers of different sizes, and metropolises, require a dialogue on a basis of equality and the development of an alliance aimed at sustainable development while respecting its needs.

The EU Alpine Strategy tackles these challenges with innovative actions in the fields of economy, energy, infrastructure and traffic, as well as environmental and resource protection, implemented in close cooperation between the states and regions of the Alpine Region. It thus strengthens economic, political and social cohesion in the heart of Europe. The Strategy builds on a targeted and concerted approach, the use of synergy effects and an effective use of existing EU funds and other financial instruments. Its added value consists in jointly identified priorities and in a new relationship between metropolitan, mountain-side and mountainous areas, involving all actors within the Region.

The Communication² and the Action Plan³ on the EU Alpine Strategy were adopted by the European Commission on 28 July 2015 and formally confirmed by the European Council on 28 June 2016.⁴ The Strategy concerns seven states (Austria, Germany, France, Liechtenstein, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland) and 48 Alpine regions within these states.



² COM(2015) 366

³ SWD(2015) 147 final

⁴ Council Minutes EUCO 27/16

The territory covered by the EU Alpine Strategy in comparison with the funding area of the INTERREG Alpine Space Programme and the Alpine Convention.⁵

3. Objectives of the EU Alpine Strategy

In accordance with the Grenoble political resolution of the Alpine states and regions of October 2013, the EU Alpine Strategy encompasses three thematic focuses: competitiveness and innovation, sustainable mobility, as well as sustainable use of energy, natural and cultural resources.

The Action Plan for the EU Alpine Strategy divides these three focuses into nine concrete actions, in addition to the horizontal objective of governance, which aims to improve the cooperation between institutions in the Alpine Region and the coordination of actions.

1. THEMATIC POLICY AREA Economic growth and innovation			2. THEMATIC POLICY AREA Mobility and connectivity		3. THEMATIC POLICY AREA Environment and energy			
1. OBJECTIVE: Fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the Region			2. OBJECTIVE: Sustainable internal and external accessibility to all		3. OBJECTIVE: A more inclusive environmental framework for all and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future			
AG 1	AG 2	AG 3	AG 4	AG 5	AG 6	AG 7	AG 8	AG 9
Action 1: To develop an effective research and innovation ecosystem	Action 2: To increase the economic potential of strategic sectors	Action 3: To improve the economic and social environment of operators in these strategic sectors with focus on labour market, education and training	Action 4: To promote inter-modality and interoperability in passengers and freight transport	Action 5: To e-connect people and promote accessibility to public services	Action 6: To preserve and valorise natural resources, including water and cultural resources	Action 7: To develop ecological connectivity in the whole territory of the EUSALP	Action 8: To improve risk management and to better manage climate change, including major natural risks prevention	Action 9: To make the territory a model region for energy efficiency and renewable energy
Cross-cutting policy area: governance, including institutional capacity		4. OBJECTIVE: A sound macro-regional governance model for the Region (to improve cooperation and the coordination of action)						

The objectives of the European Alpine Strategy⁶

The European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) was finally launched in the Conference of 26th January 2016 in Brdo (Slovenia). The following rotating presidencies

⁵ Image source: European Commission. Further information on the INTERREG Alpine Space Programme is available at www.alpine-space.eu, on the Alpine Convention at www.alpconv.org

⁶ Image source: European Commission

subsequently led by Slovenia, Bavaria and Tyrol, favoured a set of very articulated and demanding actions and initiatives for all the institutions involved. A first organizational structure were consolidated allowing the launch of the operational phase, starting from the establishment of the 9 Action Groups (AGs).

The Slovenian Presidency (2016) coordinated the start of the joint work and the setting up of the governance and working bodies: the General Assembly (GA), the Executive Board (EB), nine Action Groups (AG) were born and started working in 2016.

The Bavarian Presidency (2017) gave impetus to the work, strongly investing in launching and coordinating the Action Groups, and in the involvement of stakeholders in the work just started; a particular emphasis was given to the topic of information sharing. It also developed the AlpGov project, which contributes to the setting up of the first operational tools and communication.

The Tyrolean Presidency (2018) gave further impetus to the work on the lines of action of the Strategy. Thanks to the coincidence of the Austrian presidency of the Alpine Space program, the development of synergies between the two instruments was also favored under the Tyrolean Presidency. Another important step was the start of the involvement of the managing authorities of the ETC programmes and of the mainstream programming existing in the Alpine region.

The creation of the AGs was developed throughout 2016 under a strong political impetus to characterize EUSALP as a result-oriented strategy. This approach greatly affected the work of the AGs, influencing project choices that could only be financed, in the early stage, by the Alpine Space Programme. The Alpine Space Program, moreover, has demonstrated its flexibility and capability to support EUSALP by launching the ALPGOV project with the aim of financing AGs activities and, ultimately, the operation of the Strategy organizational machine.

The Slovenian (2016), Bavarian (2017) and Tyrolean (2018) Presidencies allowed the development of themes of specific interest, with many initiatives related to the three thematic objectives of the Strategy. Therefore, they worked in the field of Economy, Infrastructures for mobility and accessibility, and Environment. Particularly, in the field of environment, the urgency of problems coming from Climate change and air pollution, were emphasized, as well as soil protection and the prevention of natural disasters, as well as "Green Infrastructures".

Under the Tyrolean Presidency the vision of the "Future of the Alps" was deepened (see the Conference in Innsbruck on 5th April 2018), and therefore the need for EUSALP to address its challenges with a long-term vision.

The last three years, have been a time of experimentation, such as the AGs' work and the rotating Presidencies, but also of the effectiveness of the multi-level governance system outlined by the Milan Declaration (December 1st, 2014), based on a quite limited Executive Board, limited to representatives of the 7 States and the 48 Regions, and on a broad and

equal joint General Assembly between States and Regions, made up of the competent Ministers and Presidents of the Regions (as well as Laender, Cantons and Autonomous Provinces).

It is important to remember and underline how the driving initiative and the active participation of the Regions in EUSALP is still a unique fact in the context of macro-regional strategies, therefore, the Alpine Strategy also has the task of keeping alive the original spirit of a macro-region, strongly supported by Regions (see Resolution of Bad Ragaz, June 29th, 2012), stimulating the political commitment of its representatives.

The Italian Presidency for 2019, which will be managed by Lombardy Region in coordination with the other Italian Regions and Provinces involved in the Strategy, aims to enhance - through this "innovative" formula that combines the national and local dimensions - the multilevel system of EUSALP, with a strong "bottom-up" involvement of regional and provincial institutions and other local stakeholders, together with the strategic coordination at national level from the MFA and the Department for Cohesion policy within the Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

3. The Italian Presidency 2019 - Vision, priorities and challenges

Italy participates in EUSALP with eight Regions and Autonomous Provinces. It has a population of 23,348,554 inhabitants (29.8% of the total of 78,350,854 inhabitants), on a territory of 97.903 square kilometers (22.2% of the entire area of 441.006 square kilometers), and it is second in terms of population and territory after Germany, which participates with two Laender (Bavaria and Baden-Wurtemberg).

Through an inter-institutional agreement between the Department for Cohesion Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces belonging to EUSALP, the role of organizational coordination of the year of the Italian Presidency has been entrusted to Lombardy Region, assisted by Piedmont Region and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano. Lombardy Region therefore participates with direct responsibility in the Italian Presidency for 2019.

The 2019 Italian Presidency wishes to underline the importance of a harmonious and balanced development of all the objectives set out in the Action Plan, from the first to the fourth, enhancing the work in progress by all the AGs entrusted with implementing the ongoing initiatives, by properly cooperating with and taking into account the priorities identified for 2019.

According to some general data of the Italian regions belonging to Eusalp, an economic-social profile of the Italian context is highlighted and strongly marked by development and innovation:

- An aggregate GDP of € 708.6 billion (23.7% of the entire EUSALP area, i.e. € 2,990 billion);
- Employment of over 9.5 million employees (26.5% of the total of almost 36 million);
- R & D expenses of just over 10 billion euros (12.5% on 82.45 billion);
- Annual tourist presence of 177 million people (34.2% of the EUSALP area), which reaches over 500 million tourists in a year, making the sector one of the most active and dynamic for the countries involved.

The vision of the 2019 Italian Presidency would like to reaffirm the perspective of EUSALP as an engine for innovation in Europe, and therefore a driving force for sustainable economic development, based on the substantial contribution of the participating Regions and Provinces, reconciling the dynamism and competitiveness of its whole territory. A territory with the need to preserve and enhance the features of beauty, attractiveness and historical-cultural identity of the Alps and its surrounding territory of hills, plains, and inland areas with all their extraordinary natural and landscape heritage. This perspective also embraces and addresses, the perspective of a territorial system, the sustainable development of mobility and intermodal transport of people and goods in the Alpine Region, including their logistical and portual systems of the Northern Adriatic Sea, the Ligurian and Tirreno Seas.

Alpine mobility and Alpine and transalpine transport, in fact, are currently subject to highly dynamic changes and have to deal more and more intensively with the needs of climate protection, changes in the demographic structure, as well as new technological options for digitization, closely related to the growth of knowledge and skills of human capital in the whole macro-region. As for the mountain region, which coincides with the perimeter of the Alpine Convention, the working groups and other bodies of the Alpine Convention have developed in-depth analyses on issues such as transport, tourism, water management, rural and sustainable development, demographic changes and employment, and finally the Green Economy and Natural Hazards, identifying priorities and actions to be developed on the transnational Alpine territory by the national, regional and local authorities involved.

The real challenge, and the great potential of a process such as EUSALP, is that from collaboration, sharing and alignment between Alpine States and Regions, new solutions can be identified and concrete results to improve the quality of life and the protection of the environment can be achieved: results with concrete, effective and tangible effects for the citizens of the macro-region. The year of the Italian Presidency of EUSALP should aim to make this "result-oriented" approach explicit and focused on the concrete challenges that the macro-region is going to face. The competitiveness of the macro-regional system should undoubtedly be included among these challenges and it should be maintained and increased, relying on knowledge, skills and innovation, the essential keys to the future in the third millennium, that can be summarized in the various Smart Specialization Strategies (RIS3) and in the enhancement of their functional synergies. In particular, as a mutual challenge for competitiveness, EUSALP will have to support large companies and SMEs to face the transition to Industry 4.0 in a competitive way. It is therefore hoped that a long-term

common approach will be defined, promoting synergies between existing initiatives, with particular reference to the European Digitising Industry Strategy, the Digital Innovation Hubs, and the tools introduced at regional and national level (e.g National "Industry Plan 4.0").

Italy therefore would like to focus its presidency year on concrete issues at macro-regional level, such as the development of the competitiveness of the macro-region as a whole, primarily promoting the creation of new job opportunities in the sectors of "Green Economy" and innovative technologies, with particular attention to youth entrepreneurship. Environment and innovative technologies, including automation and mechatronics, are therefore crucial in order to reconcile economic development with the protection of natural resources, to tackle "macro-regional" problems in themselves, such as air quality which is essential for health and quality of life in the whole macro-region. At the same time, the reduction of the socio-economic gap between rural and urban areas, promoting a concrete alliance sealed by collaboration for innovation and protection, that generates new business even in the internal, mountain and remote areas of the macro-region, is crucial. This alliance could find an ideal center of attraction in the World Manufacturing Forum. This initiative, from 2019, will be permanently set in Lombardy, as an opportunity for visibility and benchmarking of EUSALP with other macro-regional areas worldwide. The competitiveness of the Alpine Macro-region in global markets will therefore also be played out by relaunching the strategic supply chains indicated in the Strategy with the modernization of traditional manufacturing value chains.

All these objectives are also reflected in the objective of building, or at least laying the foundations of **a transnational educational space in the whole Alpine macro-region**, in line with the conclusions of the European Council of 14th December 2017, in which the leaders stressed the importance of the social, educational and cultural dimension of our policies to bring European citizens together and build our common future.

The Alps, a common heritage of the EUSALP Regions and States, are the perfect "living lab" for the Green Economy and Innovation and, thanks to the cross-border cooperation in the Alpine Macro-region among the local government institutions, in collaboration with the network of schools, universities and research centers, can become the breeding ground for new, sustainable and successful development models. The work of the VI Report on the state of the Alps and the following Advisory Committee on Green Economy, established by the Alpine Convention and coordinated by Germany, shows the potential of a low carbon economy based on the valorization of the distinctive resources of the Alpine territory in a global context.

We would like to give particular emphasis to those initiatives and actions that can best achieve **the synergy between mountain areas and metropolitan areas**, between urban centers and rural and peripheral areas, envisaged as one of the fundamental pre-requisites of the Alpine Macro-Regional Strategy in the European Commission's Action Plan of 2015. At the Italian national level, instruments and territorial agreements can be valorised, including the National Strategy of Internal Areas (SNAI). It is a matter of enhancing tools and

processes that are already underway, which have many structural similarities and objectives with EUSALP. These tools are fostering concrete initiatives and actions in many areas of the country. **In the year of the Italian Presidency, the Italian Strategy for Internal Areas could be proposed as a process of interest to be followed and capitalized in EUSALP.**

4. The challenges for the Italian presidency 2019

As previously described, the Leading theme for the Italian Presidency year will be **the competitiveness of the Macro-regional system**, mainly considered according to the Green Economy, combined with the development of innovative technologies, and the enhancement of the resources and heritage of the Alpine macro-region. These are themes of undoubted macro-regional interest, to which the Action groups of Objective 1 (AG 1, 2 and 3) and three other Action groups (AG 4, 5 and 9), contribute significantly:

- AG1 (led by Lombardy): Research and Innovation as drivers of economic development;
- AG2 (led by Auvergne Rhone-Alpes and Baden-Wurtemberg): Focusing on specific sectors of the Alpine region: Bio-economy, Forestry - wood supply chain, Health tourism;
- AG3 (led by Autonomous Province of Trento): Education and vocational training to support innovation and development, starting with the harmonisation of the "dual system";
- AG4 (led by Euregio - Tyrol, Bolzano, Trento): Promotion of interoperability and intermodality in the field of freight and passenger transport sectors, responding to the challenges of mobility and transport, in support of sustainable development of the whole area;
- AG5 (led by Valle d'Aosta in co-leadership with SAB, Switzerland): Development of connectivity and access to services in remote areas;
- AG9 (led by Autonomous Province of Bolzano): Improvement of energy efficiency in the building stock, in production processes and in enterprises, with the aim of making them more competitive and creating new opportunities in the Green Economy sector.

In particular, in order to identify the main actions and initiatives related to the Green Economy and Innovation, developed by the aforementioned action groups, coordination meetings will be organized, provided for in the program of the Italian Presidency and in the interinstitutional agreement. Other specific workshops on the impact and importance of the ongoing actions will be developed or will be promoted within the specific thematic areas of the AGs in order to foster processes and / or utility services to implement the Green Economy and innovative technological development in the Alpine macro-region, involving

where possible, also the Advisory Committee on the Green Economy of the Alpine Convention.

In this coordination process which concerns the Green Economy, the coordination and involvement of the other AGs will be ensured, as their interests are certainly connected to the Green Economy. This fact, that many elements of the AGs are connected with the Green Economy, has the ambitious objective of trying to connect the activities of AGs in order to obtain a joint strategic proposal on aspects of crucial importance for the future of the Alpine territory at a macro-regional level, which involves all action groups. It will therefore be crucial to request specific support from the European Commission:

- AG6 (led by the Alpine Convention and Land Carinthia) on the protection and valorisation of natural and cultural resources, with particular reference to the reduction of land use (*see Joint Declaration on Sustainable Land Use and Soil Protection approved by AG6 and proposed to the General Assembly of November 2018*) and on actions of urban and territorial regeneration, management of water shortage and natural hazards that can affect territorial growth.
- AG7 (led by Bavaria and Slovenia) on ecological corridors and green infrastructures, with particular reference to the economic scale of such infrastructures, natural capital and related eco-system services.
- AG8 (led by Austria and Bavaria) for the prevention of natural hazards and the approach to strategies related to climate change, in particular, the aspects of economic and social impacts which have been the subject of attention for years.

Environmental sustainability in the process of economic and social development is an essential reference, indeed a constitutive element for the full exploitation of the territories and the safeguarding of non-reproducible resources.

The increasingly effective commitment in terms of sustainability, within a single strategy, is functional to growth, and evident when talking about the Green Economy: the orientation towards new "green" jobs is increasingly becoming an opportunity for economic development combined with a growing awareness and dissemination of a culture sensitive to the peculiarities and values of the territories.

The action of all the AGs, in particular those operating under Objective 3, will contribute in a positive and proactive way to strengthen the action of the Leading theme 2019, even in the context of global dynamics such as climate change. On this theme we would like to enhance and further develop the work in progress on this issue, which has the potential of being of great importance for the Strategy as a whole.

In line with the priority direction carried out by the Tyrol Presidency in 2018, particular attention will be paid to the involvement of young people in the various activities to be carried out, first of all with reference to the achievement of Objective 1 and youth entrepreneurship, but also in relation to important ongoing initiatives referred to Objectives 2 and 3. AGs are also required to consider the need to direct the sectorial actions of competence **towards**

integrated policies, considering in particular **the role of the territorial dimension in order to identify common potentialities and challenges**.

The challenges of the 2019 Italian Presidency

Six years after the Bad Ragaz Resolution, EUSALP is now fully operational, and the growing participation of the Regions in the AG work demonstrates the interest and confidence of the territories in the Strategy. There is now the need to consolidate EUSALP as a body able to cover the intermediate dimension between the European, national and regional levels, which will increasingly facilitate the identification, elaboration and implementation of joint actions and initiatives of significant impact on the whole area. The vision of the Strategy for the development of the Alpine Region as an integrated territorial structure - that is essential for the development of Europe as a whole - on the one hand, and for the life of local communities on the other, will be increasingly valorized. In this perspective, the 2019 Italian Presidency formulates proposals aligned with the ambitious perspectives of the Strategy, in order to allow an overall qualitative leap in its implementation.

To this end, it is necessary to quickly achieve **some intermediate objectives concerning the organization and operation of the strategy's operational "machine"** and which should enable EUSALP to develop the necessary operational effectiveness:

1. To focus on **joint actions and initiatives with a clearer macro-regional dimension, broad and significant impact**, based on the capitalization of the existing and the operational alignment between the actors of the process with a diversified financial support, not exclusively based on the financial allocation of the ETC programmes, but - continuing the work developed by the Tyrolean Presidency - achieving the involvement of those responsible for planning the main sources of financing;
2. **To increase the political ownership of the Strategy**, promoting meetings between the Political Leaders of the Member Institutions and strengthening the functional interaction between General Assembly, Executive Board and AGs, in particular with regard to the process of identifying concrete actions and initiatives to be promoted and launched;
3. To improve **effective coordination between the AGs, and between them and the Executive Board, to proceed with the assessment and confirmation or integration of the leadership** - already foreseen by the current rules for 2019 - and make further changes to the internal regulations, to make AG's work more effectively and consistently with the EUSALP Action Plan. In particular, it is necessary to

develop an effective method of interim evaluation and strategic sharing "in progress" on the effectiveness of the AG work programs (Workplan).

4. **To start a reflection at a high political-institutional level, on possible adaptations or modifications of the EUSALP Action Plan** (adopted by the European Commission in June 2015), in order to adapt it to the evolving needs and to the political objectives of States and Regions that belong to EUSALP.
5. Lobbying all the actors involved, in coordination with the other macro-regional strategies, in order to embed these **Strategies into the legal framework of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027; in particular, it will be crucial to stimulate the contribution of all the programs financed by the ESI Funds** that cover the same territorial area of EUSALP, encouraging a greater awareness from the relevant Managing Authorities in promoting the achievement of the Strategy's objectives.
6. **To initiate a systematic exchange of experiences, information and data with other macro-regional Strategies and with other ETC Programmes**, that can interact with the programming and activities of the Strategy, also at national level, such as the Italian National Strategy for the Internal Areas; in particular, to start a constructive and coordinated dialogue in order to allow the convergence between the new ETC Programmes 2021-2027 - including the Alpine Space Program - and the objectives of the Strategy;
7. **To promote relations with other networks of Regions and Cities, to stimulate large-scale projects that include metropolitan areas** in their interconnection between mountain and peripheral areas;
8. **To continue the commitment, already started by the previous Presidencies, to increasingly qualify the system of governance of the Strategy and - in line with the provisions of Objective 4 of the Action Plan - to study further forms of involvement of territorial bodies and civil society**, in order to let EUSALP be known not only by citizens, but to also be considered as a possible place for reflection and development of policies of greater territorial and temporal dimension;
9. **To increase the historical-cultural and educational dimension of the Alpine Macro-region**, enhancing the history and the identity and cultural peculiarities of the Alpine area, as a strategic place for meeting, cooperation and development amongst peoples. In this direction, a large-scale project aimed at information and training on the added value of EUSALP should be promoted, particularly with regard to administrators and young people, also by networking the system of universities and public and private research institutions present in the macro-regional territory.

In this context, the parallel challenge of the Regions - and in particular of Lombardy as coordinator of the Italian Presidency 2019 and of the Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces - **is to show that the regional dimension is the most appropriate level to tackle some problems at EU scale**, engaging in work both in relation to the role of the European institutions and their possible evolution, and with respect to the relationship with neighboring countries not belonging to the European Union.

The Alpine Strategy is the most recent strategy among the existing ones, born from the bottom, with a strong impulse from the Regions and a direct involvement of the territories.

The Alpine Region, on the other hand, has a long tradition of cooperation, especially linked to mountain territories. The challenge is to develop cooperation between different territories to improve competitiveness and livability for all citizens.

5. A new approach for the EUSALP action: Multi-level Governance and Multi-funded projects

EUSALP, and Macro-regional Strategies (MRS) in general, are thematic strategies with a territorial dimension. The complexity of the governance of the Strategy and the significant commitment required by the institutions involved, need an increased and real impact of macro-regional action.

The flexibility of the Strategy in identifying the needs of the Alpine region and proposing innovative solutions should fully enable the exploitation of its potential, without being constrained by a framework with limited resources, because it is essentially confined to the financial allocation of the ETC programmes concerned.

Only the emergence of **ambitious, with significant impact and far-reaching projects can significantly increase the political ownership of the Strategy, with significant impacts also on the communication and involvement of the territories**, at any level.

In this regard, **the advisory and supportive role of the European Commission, should be strengthened**: it is essential that **the AGs will be enabled to access multiple financial sources from the EU, national and regional funds, starting at the earliest stage**. Otherwise, the "budget constraint" will continue to hold back the most ambitious proposals.

A first operational goal can only be **the full embedding of MRS in the legal framework of the Cohesion Policy 2021-2027, so that the strategic convergence between EUSALP and the regional and national OPs is not only encouraged, but also made unavoidable**. The technical and operational ways to concretely build this convergence can be manifold. Without this convergence EUSALP would be frozen and, on the other hand, the main European policy for territorial development would deprive itself of a tool that would allow it to achieve results more effectively.

Essentially, embedding the MRS in the next Cohesion Policy will be a win-win game, strengthening the Strategies and giving greater impact to the Cohesion actions.

6. Involvement of civil society: promote an open and co-responsible initiative

It will be necessary to involve the civil society of EUSALP at every level in order to make it aware of the great opportunity provided by a macro-regional view of the problems, and the potentiality of the economic and social development of the area. It is important that the collaboration between the actors of the Alpine area is not limited to the the institutional bodies involved. Various initiatives should be promoted, even independently developed by different economic, social and cultural bodies operating in the Alpine territory, in coherence with the objectives and guidelines of the Strategy.

A coherent vision with the objectives outlined in the Action Plan in order **to consolidate and develop the current (in average) good quality of life in the Alpine region** has to be promoted, **making it the Innovation laboratory and the “Locomotive of sustainable development” of the whole European Union**. This should be achieved not only through the annual Forum - as usual foreseen at the end of November - but also through traditional tools such as the web portal and other social media. In order to achieve significant results in this respect, **Communication must become a management tool of EUSALP action and not a separate and subsequent function**. Each project, each institutional appointment, each operational action of EUSALP should be conceived and implemented taking communication into account from the beginning, also providing for actions in order to share objectives and initiatives with local institutions and the actors of civil society.

All events planned under the EUSALP umbrella during the year will have to become not only opportunities for technical dialogue between professionals and between them and external experts or representatives of local and European institutions, **but they should also be opportunities to increase the visibility of EUSALP and to report to public opinion on the activities done and on those that are in progress**. Space should be given to concrete projects, but also to the ideas and operational input to be addressed to the AGs and to the most involved institutions in EUSALP, above all the regional ones.

CALENDAR

Date	Event	Location
28 February 2019 1 March 2019	- Political Kick-off meeting - Board of Action Group Leaders - <u>Executive Board 1</u>	MILAN
21-22 March	Workshop on Energy and renewable sources " <i>Energy Efficiency in Alpine Enterprises</i> " (AG9)	BOLZANO
2-3 April	First Routes4EU Conference for the Alpine Region	Forte di Bard (Aosta)
10 April	Friends of Eusalp Meeting	BRUSSELS
23-24 May	- Workshops AG5-AG3-AG4-AG9 on Smart Villages as a common perspective through different visions - Event of the ESPON Programme on future scenarios and tools for territorial cooperation.	Courmayeur (Aosta)
20-21 June	Joint dialogue event - High level Conference - with the EUSBR, EUSDR, EUSAIR macroregional strategies	TRIESTE
26-27 June	- <u>Executive Board 2</u> - Board of Action Group Leaders	MILAN
July	Conference on Green Economy	MILAN
26 September	Workshop "Connectivity in the Alpine Region: focus on intermodality of transport systems and maritime dimension"	TRIESTE
16 October	3 rd Forum on Dual Education in the Alpine Region – AG3	TRENTO
23-24 October	- <u>Executive Board 3</u> - Board of Action Group Leaders	MILAN
October	Workshop on Transports (State Ministries Level), corridors and GECT Rhine-Alps	GENOA
27-28 November	- General Assembly - Forum 2019 - Main Cultural Event	MILAN
12-13 December	Trio Meeting Tyrol 2018 – Italy 2019 – France 2020	MILAN