



## European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)

### Annual Forum

#### SUMMARY

December 10, 2020: session 15:25-16:25

#### WORKSHOP 4 - At the heart of the Alpine Green Deal: the dialogue between young people and decision-makers

##### Projet Youth Act For Alps (YAFA)

Co-written by the Regional Youth Parliament, the assembly of young people aged 15 to 25 from Provence-Alps-Cote d'Azur (PACA) Region, this project aims to encourage young alpine people to tackle the problems of their territories (global warming, desertion, difficulties to access life opportunities). The objective is to enable young people, through international meetings and discussion with key players (elected officials, economic and civic leaders, journalists, experts, scientists) to imagine innovative solutions for the future of their territory.

The debate is moderated by the EUROCIRCLE association, a structure linked to the Europe Direct Information Center, and partner of PACA Region. A group of young people from the Regional Youth Parliament introduces the workshop with a presentation of this civic engagement body for young people aged 15 to 25 from the territory of Provence-Alps-Côte d'Azur. An exhaustive presentation of the YAFA project follows:

Carried out in different stages and over several months, this project was proposed to the authorities of the European Union, within the framework of the ERASMUS + program, with the aim of obtaining the necessary funding for its realization. Designed by and for young people, this project is the subject of a sustained partnership with several youth structures spread over four European territories in the Alps: Bavaria in Germany, Tyrol in Austria, Liguria in Italy and PACA Region in France. Developed on the concept of parliamentary simulation through transnational exchanges, this project initially aims to organize meeting and exchanges between young citizens and decision-makers from the political, institutional and economic world, on the issues encountered by young people in the Alpine territories, with a focus on mobility, professional integration and entrepreneurship, as well as sustainable development. Secondly, the young people involved in this project will be encouraged to promote the success stories of concrete actions carried out from local to transnational level, in order to be able to convey at the end of the project a collection of recommendations to institutional decision-makers.

This session is therefore the first high point of the project with the meeting of several personalities:

- Mrs. Laurence BOETTI-FORESTIER and Mr. Ludovic PERNEY: regional advisers, PACA Region
- Mr. Alain DUMORT, responsible for the regional representation of the European Commission in Marseille



- Mr. Vincent CAZAJOUS, company director, founder of Cap interculturel to promote intercultural and European projects in the Hautes-Alpes.

This workshop has achieved nearly 200 participants connected by video conference, as well as over 100 viewings on the YOUTUBE platform. This mobilization is a very positive sign for the young actors of the YAFA project.

Questions and discussions focuses on:

- How to reconcile economic development, particularly tourism and the preservation of our Alpine environmental heritage?
- How to remedy the exodus of young people from Alpine territories, and how to promote the economic attractiveness of Alpine territories?
- What place can be given to young people in decisions that affect them in a territory as vast and as heterogeneous as the territory of the Alps and the EUSALP?

For the first question, Mrs. BOETTI-FORESTIER answers: "in terms of environmental and biodiversity protection, PACA Region has a PITEM (integrated thematic plan on risk prevention and management) in order to protect biodiversity, the PITEM Biodiv'ALP. It is a question of setting up, at European level and on the basis of cross-border cooperation, actions to protect ecosystems across borders. Ecological systems have no borders, so we have to work together with experts and scientists to share data and work together. I think that the work passes through cooperation and exchanges on European projects".

As regards the economic attractiveness of Alpine territories, Mr. CAZAJOUS intervenes by presenting his own experience, as a young entrepreneur: "Personally, I left the Hautes-Alpes ten years ago precisely because there were no study possibilities in what I wanted to do. I had to leave for that and it was the same for my first jobs. To start a career and have my first experiences, I had to move to big cities and then came back to the countryside. In the end, it was quite easy to get information on starting a business. I first went to the cooperatives of salaried entrepreneurs, then the cafes of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber of Trades and Crafts. It got me going well." Thus, he specifies, there are many structures, consular chambers, local authorities and state institutions, which offer personalized support for young people who want to start a business. For that, it is necessary to go "knocking on all doors". Vincent CAZAJOUS concludes by specifying that the future activity sectors in the Alpine territory will revolve around questions oriented towards ecological transition because "we are hard hit. We are affected by the drop in the level of snow at low altitude which condemns more and more stations. I think that the professions which are in the ecological transition to allow companies to adapt their activity to climate challenges will generate change".

Mrs BOETTI-FORESTIER completes the intervention by insisting on the transport and mobility offer which must be the subject of constant efforts by the authorities, because this is one of the nodes of the problems encountered by young people, and the less young of the Alps.

Mr. Alain DUMORT, as local representative of the European Commission, speaks about the participatory construction of public policies: "For us, the participatory approach is essential. We have launched a lot of what we used to call "citizen dialogues" back in the day, aimed at young people in particular, because, somewhere, it is up to you young people to take the place. We are convinced that Europe must be much closer to citizens and therefore to young people. The European Union, since we are talking about an institution, is not very popular.

She is familiar, yes, but she is not very well known. It is therefore the subject of criticism. Some are quite well founded, in particular on its slowness or its bureaucratic system, etc. This is its mode of governance, but it is still based on dialogue and debate. For you, young people, the place is the one you take through bodies such as that of your project which I salute as remarkable, but also through your actions on social networks which change things in relation to all these issues. We can see it clearly. You have more than the right to speak because in the budget that we are currently discussing, there will be an enormous number of loans. This means that one day you will have to pay back and so I almost have to apologize to people of my generation since we are giving you an alpine area which is degraded and we are also leaving you a significant debt compared to this catastrophic context, let's say it. The EUSALP continues with a French presidency since the pandemic has put things on hold. Talking to each other at distance is an example, even if it is better than nothing. However, this will never replace real relationships. In 2022, it will be the general French presidency for all meetings of the council of ministers. This will be very important and will also coincide with the launch of a major conference on the future of Europe. Within this great conference with many debates on the ground, there will be a place devoted to the Alpine space and to the major role of young people who will have to animate and continue the debate - and the fight - for a sustainable development for this region of the world.

We know that we need a very strong understanding between the political, the economic world and the citizen worlds for things to move on and, somewhere, the crises we are going through force us to go in this direction."

The workshop ends with the intervention of Mr. Ludovic PERNEY, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regional councilor responsible for youth. He remarks that: "this YAFA project is all the more important for me because it is an illustration of structured dialogue with young people. Namely, the political will to build the next orientations and public policies with young people, while obviously creating the conditions for discussion and confrontation of ideas to make the public intervention more efficient in alpine territories. This seems to be, ultimately, a strong signal that we, as political leaders and decision-makers, wish to give within the framework of the 2020-2021 French presidency to the importance of making our Alpine region work with the youth. This alongside, of course, the Burgundy-Franche-Comté region, which I will not forget and which dynamically leads this dynamic within the French partnership, but also the Tyrol region which has historically carried this strong ambition on these issues. Today, very concretely, we wanted to engage in a structured dialogue between young people and decision-makers. Our discussions were rich this afternoon, of course, we would all have preferred to meet face-to-face, but the sanitary conditions makes this impossible although we have these means of communication today. It is therefore important that we continue the beginnings of the work and reflections that you, young alpine people, are going to build up through transnational meetings with your European peers. This work will lead to a collection of all representations anchored in the reality of Alpine territories. Of course, I want to salute the dynamic partnership resulting from this project and the participation of all young people in the bodies of the EUSALP.

