



## Common main topics - EUSALP

### Decision paper

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#### Preamble

One of the main objectives of the Italian Presidency 2022 was to review the list of common implementation priorities of EUSALP, to raise the political profile of the Strategy by making it more effective and focused. The implementation priorities shall echo best to the current challenges in the Alpine macro-region. A trimming of this list was welcomed by the French and Swiss delegations at the Executive Board meeting, held in Bolzano on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October. Furthermore, the Slovenian delegation proposed to add the topic of circular economy as an additional cross-sectoral topic.

As a follow-up and taking note of the policy recommendations of the EUSALP Action Groups, the Presidency proposed to reorganise the common implementation priorities with few main topics. The latter facilitate the future structuring of the work carried out in the framework of EUSALP. This proposal was presented during the Executive Board-Board of Action Group Leaders meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

The Presidency emphasises the importance that the main topics are in line with the main European funding programmes. To ensure continuity, the Presidency invites the future Trio Presidency to further elaborate on main topics so far defined.

#### Five common main topics

Climate change is becoming the greatest global challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Human beings bear the main responsibility for climate change. The Alpine region is particularly exposed to climate change as the year 2022 has shown fundamentally with historically high temperature peaks. The region was challenged by falling levels of freshwater reservoirs, drying riverbeds, glacier collapse and also forest fires. On the global scale this will foster imbalances that unfold into economic crises, increase of social inequalities, migration, as well as unknown challenges and threats to global security. At the same time, the Russian aggression against Ukraine accelerated the European energy crisis and an economic recession affecting the lives of all EU-citizens. How to combine energy security, economic prosperity, biodiversity protection and sustainable spatial development in line with climate change mitigation and adaptation is the key question to tackle in the next years.

EUSALP has to face the challenges of addressing the causes of climate change and mitigating its consequences. The best way of handling this double challenge is to strive to make the Alpine region “carbon-neutral” in the shortest possible time. The greenhouse gases zero-net emission target will contribute to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the Alpine region. Pursuing this goal – in close coordination with the EU energy and climate targets as well as legal frameworks, such as the Green Deal and the REPowerEU plan and EU financial programmes – is crucial for its success.

To overcome the manifold and intertwined challenges, the Presidency is convinced that it is necessary to strengthen the cooperation in EUSALP in order to:

- increase energy efficiency and significantly reduce energy consumption.
- increase the use of renewable energies.



The cooperation in EUSALP can contribute with joint pilot initiatives, conferences, best practice examples and cross-border projects. The horizontal and vertical knowledge transfer of successful initiatives multiplies positive impacts in public policies and creates a virtuous circle for a decarbonised and sustainable Alpine region.

A stronger focus on the energy transition will help to address current issues – arising from the repercussions of the war in Ukraine – and tackle the key challenge of climate change.

In this view, the Italian presidency suggests strengthening its regional cooperation in these five common main topics:

- a) becoming a carbon neutral macro-region in the shortest possible time (energy transition).
- b) expanding and strengthening circular economy in short supply chains.
- c) promoting a sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources, especially water.
- d) strengthening the sustainable, carbon neutral and emission free mobility.
- e) strengthening the region's socio-economic prospect by investing in digital solutions and smart villages.

## Decision

The General Assembly agrees with the five common main topics.

