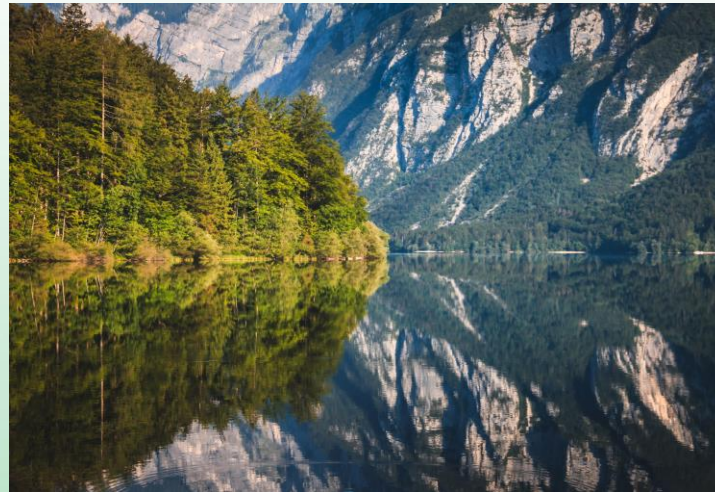



How the Alpine Convention deals with mountain forests



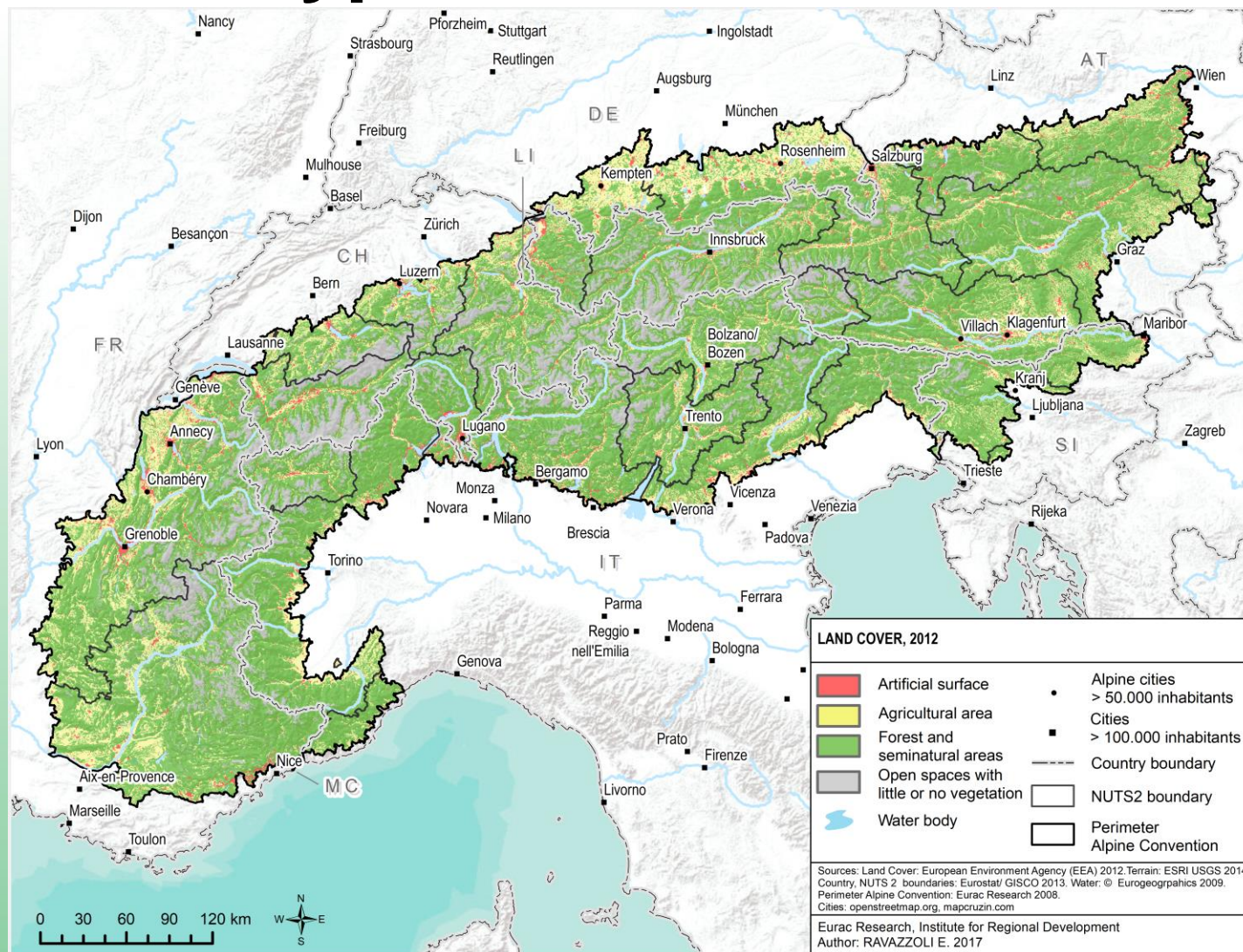
Wolfger Mayrhofer
Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention

**FAO/EUSALP Conference on „Protective Functions
of Forests in a Changing Climate“**

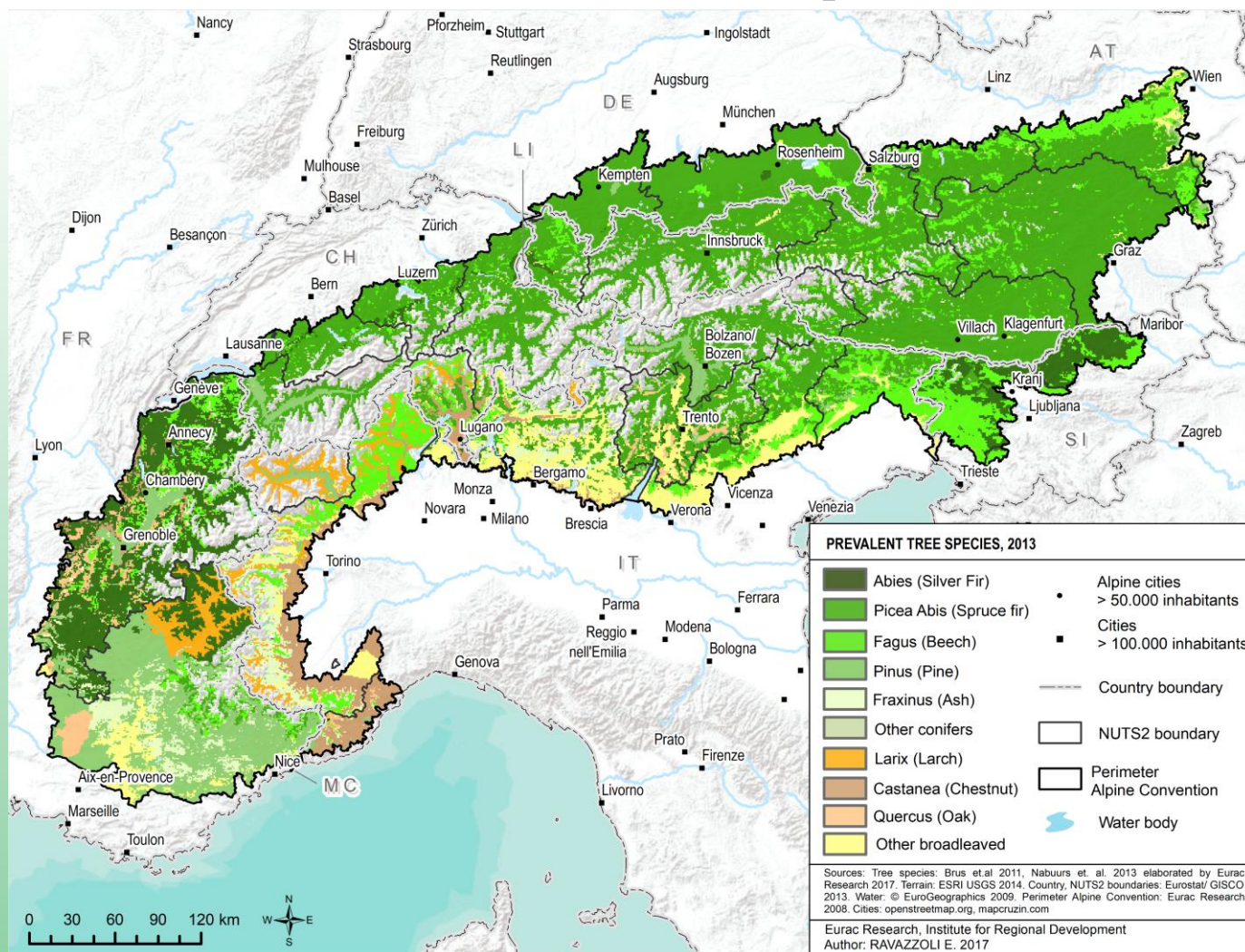
26.09.2019, Innsbruck

- 
- An aerial photograph of a mountain range, likely the Alps, showing snow-capped peaks and green forested slopes. The image is used as a background for a presentation slide.
- Basic facts concerning forests in the Alpine Region
 - Mountain forests in the Alpine Convention and its Protocols
 - Activities of the Alpine Convention related to mountain forests in a changing climate

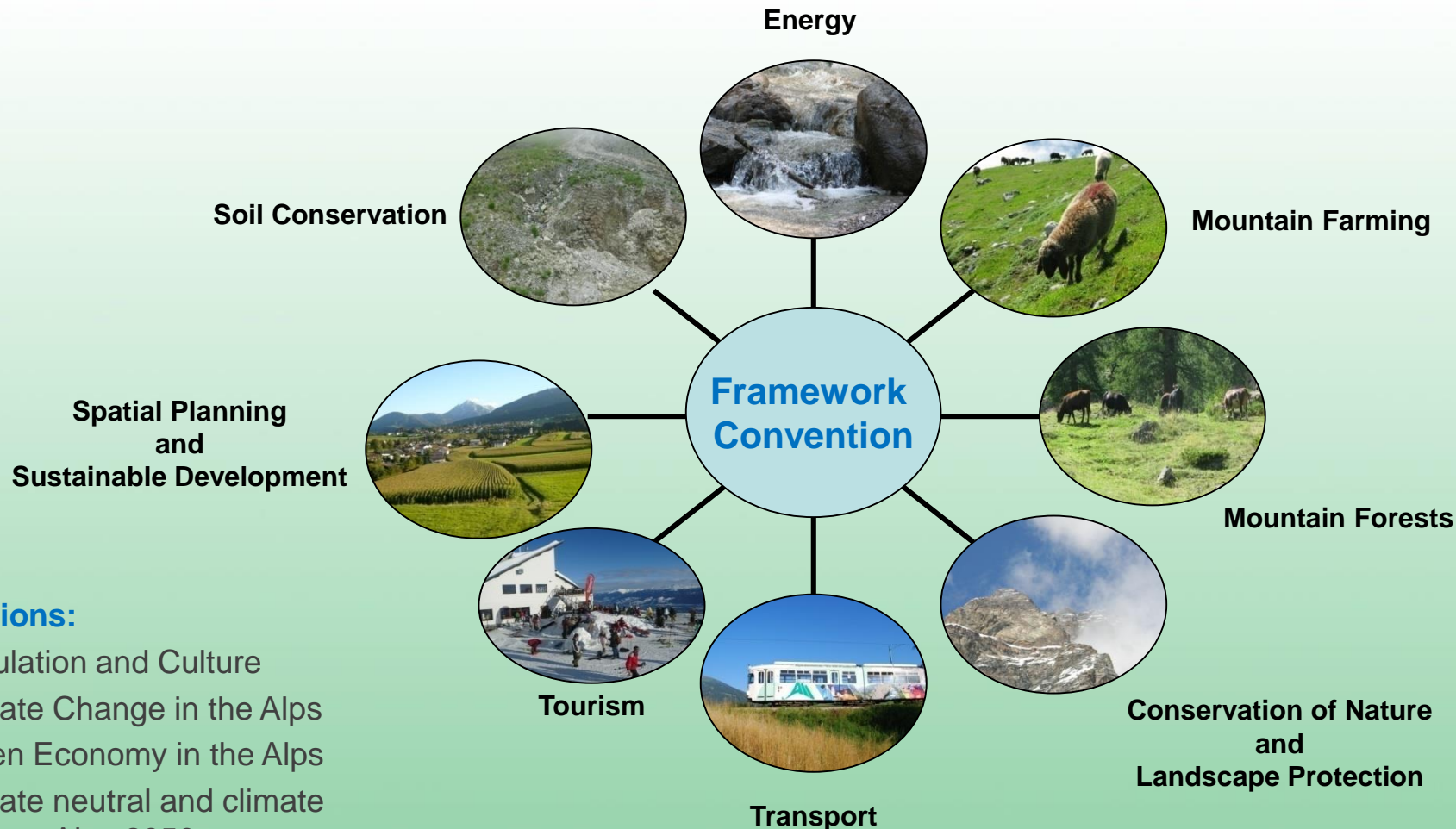
Types of land cover



Prevalent tree species



Framework Convention & Protocols



Declarations:

- Population and Culture
- Climate Change in the Alps
- Green Economy in the Alps
- Climate neutral and climate resilient Alps 2050

Alpine Convention

General objectives related to forests

Framework Convention, article 2 para. 2(h):

The Contracting Parties shall take appropriate measures related to mountain forests with the objective to **preserve, reinforce and restore the role of forests**, in particular their protective role, by **improving the resistance of forest ecosystems** mainly by **applying natural forestry techniques** and **preventing any utilization detrimental to forests**, taking into account the less favorable economic conditions in the Alpine region.



Mountain forests in the Protocols of the Alpine Convention

The sustainable management of mountain forests is a cross cutting issue.

Relevant **provisions** can be found **not only in** the specific **Protocol on Mountain Forests** but also in the Protocols on

- Spatial planning (e.g. Art. 9),
- Nature and landscape conservation (e.g. Art. 10),
- Soil protection (e.g. Artt. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14),
- Mountain farming (e.g. Art. 13),
- Tourism (e.g. Art. 20) and
- Energy (e.g. Art. 6).



Protocol on Mountain Forests

Fundamental obligations

- **Preserve mountain forests** as a near-natural habitat and improve their stability
- **Manage mountain forests** in a careful, sustainable way close to nature
- Adopt methods of **natural reforestation**
- Ensure that **forests** are **well-structured** and **layered**, with **tree species suited for their location**
- Use **autochthonous forest reproduction material**
- Avoid **erosion and soil compaction**
- Provide sufficient **incentives and compensation** for forestry activities
- Take into account the objectives of the Protocol on Mountain Forests in **other policies**

Protective functions of mountain forests (Art. 6 of the Protocol)

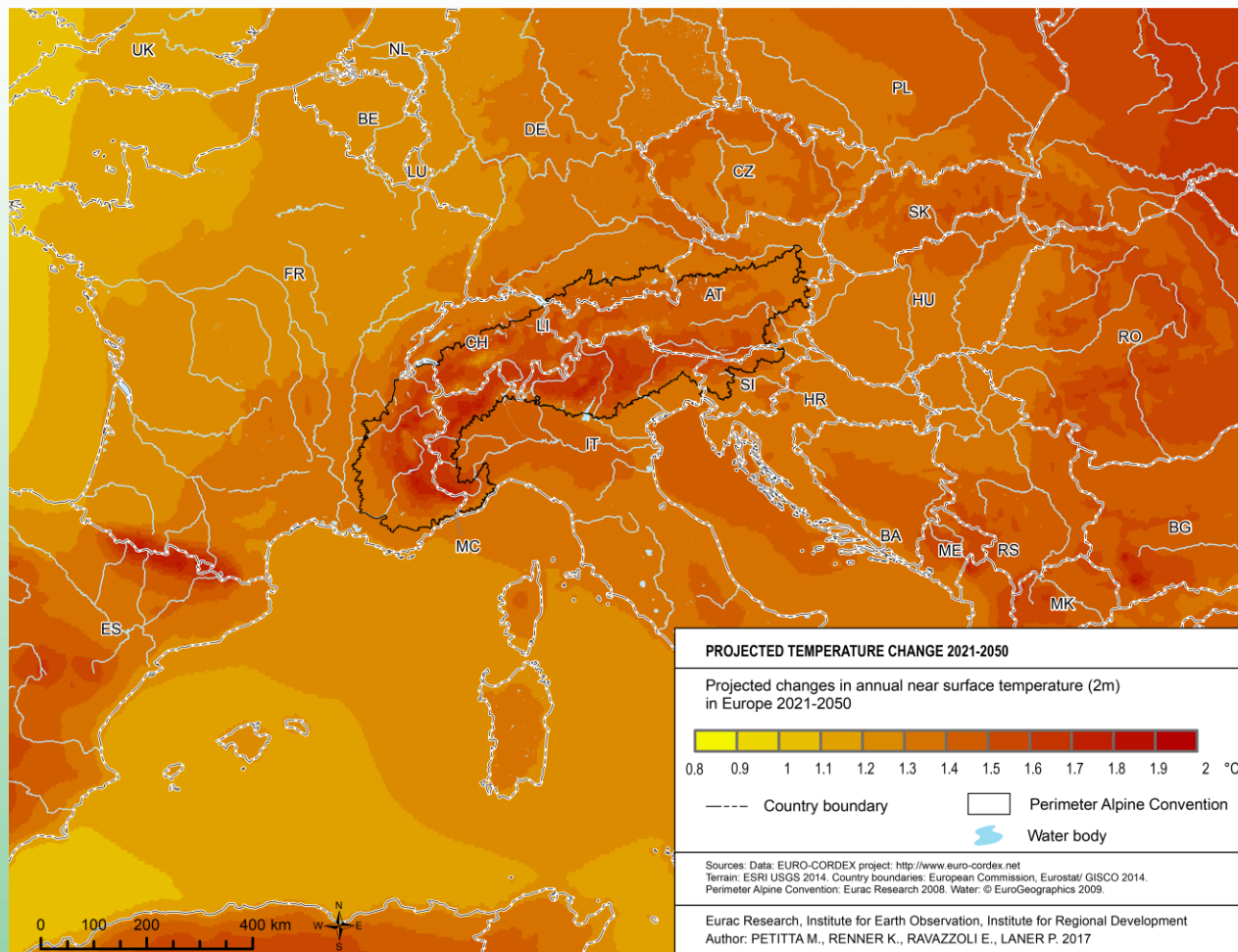


For mountain forests having a highly protective function for their locations and, in particular for inhabited areas, for transport infrastructures, for farmed lands, etc., the Contracting Parties undertake to give priority to that protective function, focusing the forest's management to that purpose. **These forests must be conserved on site.**

Other important provisions (Art. 7, 8, 10 of the Protocol)

- Economical function of mountain forests
- Social and ecological functions of mountain forests
- Natural forest reserves

The Alps in a changing climate





Alpine forests in a changing climate

- Increased risk from **dry periods** and **extreme events**
- **Trees** become **more vulnerable** to **pest diseases**
- Changes in **productivity** and in the **composition of tree species**
- Increased risk of **avalanches** and **other natural hazards**

The response of the Alpine Convention to the challenges of climate change

Declaration of Innsbruck on climate neutral and climate resilient Alps 2050

- Climate Target System 2050
- 7th Report on the State of the Alps on natural hazard risk governance
- Commitment to develop further the Alpine Region as a model region for comprehensive and integrated climate mitigation and adaptation



Climate Target System 2050

Mountain Forests Targets

- Potential of **protective mountain forests** is fully used.
- Mountain forests are adapted to climate change and maintain their positive role as **carbon sink**.
- Conversion of forest ecosystems to **close-to-nature forests** is achieved, using endemic forest species adapted to climate change.
- A prioritized **forest management** is fully implemented to balance different regional uses under changing climate conditions (wood products, biomass, non-wood forest products), supported by an effective system for monitoring the health condition of mountain forests. Priority is given to the production of long-lived wood products.



Current activities of Contracting Parties

- **Alpine Climate Board:**
 - Update of the Climate Action Plan for adoption at the XVI Alpine Conference
 - Support to the operationalization of the Alpine Climate Target System 2050
 - Support to the Alpine Partnership for Local Climate Action
- **Working Group Mountain Farming and Mountain Forests:**
 - Contribution to the operationalization of the Alpine Climate target system 2050
 - Collection of best practice examples regarding regional wood and non-wood forest products and local value chains



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
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