



## Focus

### Three days of work for the alpine delegations in Brescia: meeting of the 56th Permanent Committee.

The Alpine Convention met in Brescia to discuss the results of the two years of Italian Presidency and in preparation for the XIII Conference of the Alps. Works began on the 23rd morning with the meeting of the Presidents of Working Groups and Platforms, which discussed the progress of the implementation of mandates for the 2013-2014. Some of the topics took on the meeting were then discussed during the workshop dedicated to *"The guidelines for local adaptation in mountain regions: the prospects for the Alps and beyond?"* that has been organized in collaboration with the Lombardy Region and the Chamber of Commerce of Brescia.



In the following two days were instead carried the institutional work of the 56th Permanent Committee. An important moment of confrontation between the delegations, as well as with the Observers, to discuss the activities carried out so far and begin to assess the issues that will be pointed out to the attention of the XIII Ministerial Conference of November in Turin.

In Brescia Alpine delegations discussed several topics included in the program of the Italian Presidency. Relations of the two Task Force promoted by the Presidency were presented: Alpine Digital Agenda, intended to provide an input to overcoming the digital divide in mountain areas. Sustainable Tourism, established in response to the need to identify indicators on sustainable tourism for the mountains in order to overcome the lack of updated information regarding this promising sector of the Alpine economy. An update on the work of the Alpine Convention has been presented to contribute to the process of defining the EU macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region, in particular participants discussed of the consultation phase for the stakeholder that has been defined in June by the different actors involved in the strategy itself, including the Alpine Convention as an observer.

The Committee also addressed the demographics changes in the Alps, analysed with the scientific support of ISTAT, they will constitute the subject of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps (RSA V). The organization of a Mountain Week dedicated to mountain products at EXPO Milano 2015, scheduled thanks to the efforts carried out by the Convention in order to seize the opportunities offered by the Universal Exposition for enhancing the agricultural products of the mountain. Finally, the contribution to be brought to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Lima: a joint statement with the Carpathian Convention on measures of local adaptation in mountain areas.

In its Program the Italian Presidency made an effort in promoting the principles of the Alpine Convention for cross-border cooperation in mountain areas and for the enhancement of harmonious development between the high mountain territories and the plains joint to them: the Permanent Committee of Brescia was an important opportunity to analyse these two years of work, to evaluate the expected results and to prepare for the future of the Alpine Convention

### Reports on the state of the art of the Working Groups and Platforms



Large space has been dedicated in Brescia to reports on the state of the art of working groups and platforms. Based on what was discussed at the meeting of the 23rd morning, the respective Presidents have presented to the Permanent Committee the actions carried out in the latter two years and the first proposals for the new mandates that will be defined at the Conference in Turin. The expert groups play a central role in addressing the implementation of commitments took under the Alpine Convention. The reports showed how, thanks to the work of co-ordination of the Presidency, the groups have effectively collaborated in addressing issues of common

interest, sharing information and analysis and organizing joint meetings. Below is a brief overview of the reports outcomes:

> **Planalp.** It does a fruitful activity for the evaluation of strategies for the protection of the Alpine region, deepening the theme of governance of natural hazards and climate change, even through the exchange of knowledge and best practices with other expert groups of the Convention. It collaborates, for instance, with the Water Management Platform Plans in defining the plans for the management of flood risks. The work of the platform will be published in a volume that will also be presented at the Alpine Conference.

> **Water Management.** The Platform is working on the analysis of the management of flood risk in Alpine countries through the organization of workshops and the strengthening of networks of experts to exchange information. The experts have been working on a joint paper on 'implementation of the Floods Directive 2007/60 in the Alpine countries which also offers case of studies, it also focused on local adaptation to climate change in the Alpine countries proposing some adaptation actions and initiatives already locally taken. The Platform has also planned the organization of the Fifth International Water Conference [[link](#)], which will be held in Trento on 25-26 September 2014.

> **Ecological network.** The main topic of the mandate of the Platform concerns ecological connectivity, the platform works with the Alpine Space program in support of regional and cross-border activities of the Member States for the protection of the landscape, it continues to provide support to the activities in some pilot regions. At the next Alpine Conference, it will present the initiative of European cooperation on ecological networks, in collaboration with Greenalp.

> **WISO.** The mandate of the Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates and Society Platform provides a monitoring both genetic and cross-border mobility of bears, wolves and lynxes, it has also begun to study the ibex. It achieved good result making the Alpine Convention a place of interaction between different initiatives, both European and local, for the management of large carnivores. The next mandate will focus on the social aspect

of the management of large carnivores, with the aim of helping in the identification of principles for the co-existence of protected species and man with an innovative and multidisciplinary approach.

> **V RSA on demographic change.** The ad hoc Working Group for the preparation of the Fifth Report on the State of the Alps is finishing its work and the document will be presented at the end of 2014. Data submitted by the delegations have been processed and the analysis of issues and good practices are almost complete. During the Permanent Committee in Brescia Mr Saverio Gazzelloni, from ISTAT, presented a Progress Report, prepared by the working group with the support of the Secretariat and the Presidency.

> **Transport.** The Group has worked in particular for the implementation of the Transport Protocol. It is completing the construction of an interactive map of road networks and rail routes thanks to the data provided by the delegations. The experts are also working for the promotion of sustainable mobility in the Alps through the Alpinfonet Project (funded by Alpine Space) which aims to facilitate the use of public transport for tourists who visit the Alps. Experts are also focusing on the topics of sustainable transport in sparsely populated or isolated alpine areas and of logistics (delivery system) in urban areas.

> **Mountain farming Platform.** It has considered the nature of its mandate as a continuation of the previous one. The mandate of these two years has addressed the issue of food security, namely of the origin of Alpine products and it presented a paper on the labelling of agricultural products.

> **Mountain forests.** The Working Group has been engaged in the collection and aggregation of data on alpine forest ecosystem services from the national inventories. The experts are finalizing a document containing analysis on the status, threats and opportunities of mountain forests and on the value of their ecosystem services in the context of the green economy. The document contains final thoughts on the desirability of enhancing the use of wood in the alpine forests in the framework of the Green Agenda and improve the cooperation, the production of regional data and the exchange of information useless to the industry.

> **UNESCO.** The study Alpine sites and the UNESCO World Heritage, produced by the Working Group, contains information about the UNESCO listed sites to the World Heritage List and an analysis of cross-border locations or serial potential candidates that also contains the criteria for feasibility. The study is based on information received from Delegations.

> **Energy.** The platform works on three issues concerning the usage, the production and the distribution of energy. The last meeting of the expert group will be held in September to close the report to be submitted to the Alpine Conference. The work has highlighted the need to improve the interaction between local authorities, in order to promote the exchange of experiences and information on the management of energy and the production of clean energy.

## Eastern Mountainside: the latest events

### Events related to the XIII Alpine Conference were presented in Turin

In the morning of 25 July, at the prefecture of Turin, the press conference for the presentation of the events related to the XIII Alpine Conference was held. During the press conference, the President of the Permanent Committee, along with prefect Paola Basilone, has presented to the participants the events that will be gathering the eight Alpine countries' Ministers of the environment on 21 November at the National Museum of the Mountain. Among the authorities who took part in the event are: city councillor Stefano Gallo, representing the Mayor Fassino; the responsible for the institutional sector of Compagnia di San Paolo, Massimo Coda, who also coordinates the project "Turin and the Alps"; regional councillor for mountains, Alberto Valmaggia; province councillor Marco Balagna and the Director of the Museum of the Mountain, Aldo Audisio. The press conference was closed by Umberto Martini, General President of the Italian Alpine Club, which will host the Turin events in November.

The participating authorities have highlighted their great satisfaction with the city of Turin, landmark of the Alpine region once again proposing itself as seat for international relations, hosting a summit dedicated to mountains. The conference in November will foster consideration of issues related to the development of the Alpine region and the 14 million people inhabiting it, remarking once again the historical commitment of Italy and Turin towards mountainous territories.

For the second time after 12 years, the Alpine Conference will be chaired by the Italian Minister of the Environment who will host his counterparts from Austria, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, the Principality of Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland and the European Commissioner for the Environment to discuss sustainable development of the Alpine Arc as well as the related social, economic and environmental issues. The Conference will be preceded by a meeting of the Permanent Committee, the executive body of the Convention, and divulgation activities.

Along with the ministers of the Contracting Parties, ministers from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, representing the Carpathian Convention, and entities with observer status within the Alpine Convention will be present. Moreover, several youths from the Alpine territories will be hosted by the delegations of their respective countries, in order to allow the values and principles of the Convention to be passed on to the *new generations*.



### The Alpine Convention in Liguria, between land and sea: the 20th Compliance Committee in Genoa

The 20th Compliance Committee of the Alpine Convention has met in July. It was hosted by at the Liguria Region seat, in the amazing background of the city of Genoa, and it dealt in particular with the implementation of the Tourism Protocol. The choice of holding this important technical meeting in Genoa embraces the Italian Presidency's framework of action aimed at strengthening the presence of the Alpine Convention in the

territory and dialogue with local authorities: Liguria as well, with its Alps of the Sea, is significantly contributing to mountain transboundary cooperation.

During the meeting the President of the Permanent Committee and the Secretary General of the Convention greeted regional councillor for environmental education Sergio Rossetti, who forwarded greetings from the local authorities. Mr Rossetti expressed joy and pride for hosting for the first time in Liguria the Alpine Convention, whose expertise with transboundary environmental cooperation certainly offers local authorities the opportunity to go into integrated cooperation processes. The Liguria region is definitely interested in the Convention's method, as it proposes itself as a guiding organ for a wide range of cross-cutting issues. For this reason, the upcoming work of the Convention will be followed with growing interest, particularly in the field of valorization of the territory as heritage for the future generations.

### **Monitoring and managing protected species: the WISO Platform meeting in Venzone**

A three-day scientific-institutional meeting of the Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates And Society Platform (WiSo) was held in Venzone, a distinctive medieval town in the province of Udine. The meeting was the third occasion gathering experts from the Platform of the Alpine Convention and was set up to take a look back on the work done during 2013-2014 period and to establish future objectives and programmes.



In particular, the experts have discussed actions to take for the genetic and migration monitoring of bears, wolves and lynx. These actions are aimed at assuring the conservation of these fascinating carnivores in the Alpine territories, therefore contributing to the safeguard of the Alpine ecosystem.

The meeting participants had the chance to examine some of the projects for the conservation of the three protected species: the RowAlps project, the Dinalp Bear project and the Life Arctos project for the safeguard of bears, WolfAlps e SloWolf dedicated to wolves, ULyCA DinAlp for the lynx. To this extent, the meeting in Venzone also was an opportunity to exchange views with the EU Environment Directorate on the work carried out within the European framework to preserve these protected species. Among the actions taken into account for future work of the WiSo Platform, great emphasis was given to the need to improve the information flow among the several actors involved in the monitoring and conservation processes in order to facilitate common interpretation and behaviour in the management of the species as well as in the coordination of safeguarding actions. Moreover the opportunity to work on the social aspects of the management of large carnivores was stressed, so that a balance for the coexistence of protected species and men can be found.

As declared by the President of the Platform, Claudio Groff, the gained results, particularly in the last months, are promising for a fruitful agreement within the framework of the Alpine Convention, which has been becoming a meeting point for European and local initiatives dedicated to the study and management of large carnivores in mountainous contexts.

### **We Are Alps 2014 the Italian Presidency joins the initiative of the Permanent Secretariat**

From 3 to 10 July We are Alps took place, a tour of European journalists around the Alps following a path dedicated to the issue of family farming.

Journalists from Austria, Germany, Lithuania, Slovenia, Switzerland and Italy were led by the Secretary General of the Alpine Convention and crossed the Alpine Arc from west to east, from Italy to Austria, passing through Switzerland, to meet the local populations and focus on the life styles, tradition and cultures. Particular attention was paid to those families who keep alive mountain agricultural traditions, which is the chosen theme to celebrate 2014 as the international year of family farming, as declared by the UN.

The participants have used sustainable means of transportation: trains, buses, bicycles, walking paths, thus respecting the indications of the protocols of the Alpine Conventions.

The Italian Presidency as well has taken part in the event, during the two days in Valtellina dedicated, in particular, to the production of Bitto and of the red wines of Valtellina. In Morbegno and Alberedo the participants have visited some producers of the Bitto cheese, named after the river flowing in Morbegno, whose high quality production combines modernity and tradition; while in Sondrio they were hosted by the Fojanini Foundation, committed to land conservation, particularly in the



valorization of terraced land for the cultivation of grapevine. During the meeting with the Mayor of Morbegno Andrea Ruggeri and the town council, the President of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention has highlighted the importance of this kind of initiatives which, through the work of journalists and professionals of the communication sector, brings the public closer to the institutions and vice versa.

Agelini has addressed the challenges the institutions face for the promotion of territorial brands and the work done by the Alpine Convention in the field of mountain agriculture, stressing that it can contribute not only from a socio-economic point of view but also by maintaining alpine ecosystems.

The title chosen for the initiative We are Alps is meant to give value to those who still live and guard the mountains. This isn't just a matter of belonging to a geographical area but also to a system of values and traditions which deserve to be supported and safeguarded. The project aims at enhancing the awareness of the challenges and opportunity of the Alpine region and uses the Alpine Convention as a tool for a balanced development of a territory shared by eight countries. Journalists have met farmers, entrepreneurs, new inhabitants of the Alps, experts and local administrators. The path is meant to let the public know of products which, in the familiar Alpine environment, have become cases of excellence, particularly in the wine and dairy production sectors as well as the cereals and sausages.

[See the full programme of the event.](#)

### **Western Mountainside: upcoming events**



#### **EU macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region, on-line consultations opened**

It is open to the public consultation of stakeholders on the EU Strategy for the Alpine region, at the same time within the 7 participating countries and the European Commission website. The consultation will run until 16th October and the results will be presented at the International Conference of the Stakeholders in Milan (1-2 December 2014).

A useful action that aims to involve citizens, institutions and organizations of the Alps interested in the definition of the European strategy process that will be an interesting occasion for aggregation of the territories of the Alps. To participate in the consultation you can visit the page dedicated to EUSALP at the [following link](#).

#### **In September important event in Trento to discuss the management of water in the mountain**

"Water in the Alps - and beyond; adapting alpine and mountain river basins to climate change" will be the topic of the Fifth International Water Conference, organized by the Water management Platform and by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention. Conference to be held in Trento on 25-26 September 2014 will be the occasion for the exchange of experiences in different mountainous regions of the world (Alps, Carpathians, Caucasus and Central Asia) about the various measures of adaptation to climate change; it also represents

an opportunity for the development of synergies and cooperation between these different regions. In order to participate please fill the following [online form](#) by August 31.



### **The travel of Constructive Alps through Italy is ongoing, the exhibition on display in Cortina d'Ampezzo**

Until August 31, it will be possible to visit the traveling exhibition Constructive Alps in Cortina. Thanks to the collaboration between the Italian Presidency, the Foundation Dolomites UNESCO and the Museo delle Regole d'Ampezzo, the path to presentation of projects of sustainable

architecture for mountain will be exhibited at the Museum of Palaeontology Rinaldo Zardini as part of the tour across alpine cities promoted by the Italian Presidency.

In June, the exhibition was housed within the famous structure -MuSe- Museo delle Scienze di Trento. Constructive Alps has been placed in the session "Innovare in Trentino" and connected to the exhibition *Wood. Legno edilizia e tecnologia* that shows the characteristics of the material wood, offering an original view of its applications in the field of technology, energy and architecture.

### **In Trento "Between the rocks and the sky"**



Finally, we report an interesting initiative that will take place in Vallarsa (Trento), August 21 to 24: Tra le rocce e il cielo

Festival organized by the namesake association in partnership with Accademia della Montagna del Trentino. The Festival is dedicated to those who want to experience the mountains in a conscious way, it offers a rich [program](#) of events and debates on the four main themes: Art, Native languages, Life and History of the Mountain, as well as, documentary, historical and artistic exhibitions that will frame the event throughout the month of August.

The Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention will participate to the Festival with the participation of Luca Cetara, responsible of the scientific secretariat, who will speak on Friday 23 at a conference dedicated to the theme Living the Mountain that changes. Climate change and new ways to experience the *Alps*.