



Position Paper - EUSALP Youth Council

Sigmaringen, 28.07.2023

The EUSALP Youth Council is an official body of the European Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) that aims at building bridges to enact youth-led change in the Alpine region.

The Youth Council aims to represent the alpine youth, their ideas, and their opinions in EUSALP. Its mission is to bring the youth of the different alpine regions together and build a bridge between them and politics. The proposal of concrete political action to the EUSALP body as well as the direct implementation of projects are tasks of the Youth Council. The responsibilities of the Youth Council also include consultation with the Executive Board and the General Assembly of EUSALP as well as close cooperation with the nine action groups of the EUSALP, to ensure that the youth's voice is heard in the decision-making process. Finally, members of the Youth Council are invited to actively work in other projects within the EUSALP Youth framework. The EUSALP Youth Council also represents EUSALP towards other youth organisations and acts as a multiplier to widen youth integration in the Alpine Space.

This position paper defines the priorities of the Youth Council's work. In the following, objectives, priorities and concrete projects are defined for each thematic group (TG) of the Youth Council, as well as the members of the respective TG are listed.

TG 1: Economic Development

In recent years, more and more ski resorts in all Alpine countries have had to close their doors due to a lack of snow. As a result, many locals are exposed to precarious jobs during the winter season. More generally, climate change considerably affects the Alpine economy, in which tourism plays an important role. As EUSALP Youth Council members and ambassadors for our regions, we want to help find solutions to support the diversification of tourism activities and the economic transition of the Alps.

More generally, we would like to promote the attractiveness of the Alpine space, in particular towards students and young professionals. One of our goals is precisely to encourage dialogue and cooperation between academic institutions and local companies, in order to facilitate the integration of young adults in the Alps' labour market.

Missions

- Avoid mass tourism in the Alps and bring tourism back “to the roots”. Tourism should not damage the authenticity of the landscape and regional traditions.
- Promote economic alternatives in the Alps to make them less dependent on tourism and climate change.
- Fitting the education system in the alpine regions to the demands of the Alpine labour market.
- Improve the attractiveness of the Alps for students and young professionals.

Key activities

- Help ski resorts transition and find alternatives to winter tourism (collaborate with Beyond Snow Interreg project and TranStat AG2 project).
- Collaborate with AG3 on the dual systems activities and “Discover mountain jobs” project.
- Institutional collaboration in higher education to highlight skilled workers in alpine-specific industries and create a network between local companies, educational institutions and Youth.
- Search for positive examples and innovative ideas of mountain countries that are improving the attractiveness of the Alps for students and young professionals.

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Alpine Space

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TG 2: Mobility and Connectivity

We know that transportation is one of the most important sources of greenhouse gas emissions in the European Union and in the Alpine Region. Therefore it is very important for us to be able to travel within the alpine region and limit our carbon footprint. However, we note that it is for the moment difficult to move without a car in a lot of mountain areas, and especially in the cross border regions due to the fact that the public transportation is under the responsibility of different stakeholders.

Missions

- Improving cooperation between all European stakeholders of mobility with the objective of an integrated network and to avoid waste of money and to make sustainable freight and public transportation attractive and efficient.
- Discuss the attractiveness of public transportation with mobility stakeholders and encourage youth targeted offers.
- Collect data about mobility in the Eusalp region to inform policies makers and alpine citizens about this topic.
- Support pitch your project initiative in relation with the mobility topic and help them to reach their goals,
- Encourage companies to at least partially fund public transport for their workers by showing the benefits of it
- Encourage the youth to use public transport as a means to visit the Alpine region.

Key activities

- Improve the efficiency of EUSALP events by providing a car sharing document and support for alternative journeys
- Work and discuss with the mobility stakeholders of the alpine region to know the main problems and explore the solution with a global vision
- Help the Alptick project in his implementation

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TG 3: Environment, Resources and Energy

Energy and environmental issues are amongst the most crucial matters in the Alpine region today. How we create a more sustainable Alpine region that protects its natural heritage and resources while pushing for an energy transition towards renewable energies in the face of climate change are part of the key challenges facing us today. Recent events like weather extremes, drought periods, landslides all show the urgency to react immediately. It is of utmost importance to protect the Alpine region's rich natural and cultural history whilst preparing the Alpine space for future events caused by extreme climate, so that future generations can also appreciate their region to the fullest.

Respectively, the youth have an important role in helping to shape the approach of the Alpine region in these areas, making it crucial that they are engaged with these topics. Thus, the role of TG3 and the EUSALP Youth Council is to further engage with the youth on environmental issues and the topic of circular economy, in order to connect EUSALP's institutions with the voices of the youth in this regard.

Missions

- Greater identification amongst the youth with their cultural and natural heritage
- Connecting the youth with environmental issues in the Alpine region and acting as a bridge between young people and experts on the themes of energy and the environment
- Cooperating with the EUSALP's Action Groups on the thematic area of Resources, Energy and Economic Development
- Promotion of sustainable behaviors and circular business models in harmony with the environment in the Alpine Region

Key activities

- Support sheppards with regards to their work environment in the Alpine Space
- Jurying the 2nd edition of the EUSALP energy award
- Cooperate with EUSALP on projects related to smart villages
- Issue a circular economy project to the pitch your project event
- Raising awareness for environmentally conscious behaviour across the Alpine Space
- Youth engagement events on energy and environment (AG9)
- Putting emphasis on the Cross-Cutting priority of Circular Economy

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TG 4: EUSALP Youth specific tasks and overarching projects

As active members in different local and international youth organizations and as youth councilors in the EUSALP Youth Council, we realized a loss of effectiveness in youth participation due to different reasons. There are different youth initiatives and organizations in the EUSALP region and beyond which all act separately facing their problems for themselves. We see the potential of synergies due to the same challenges and want to discuss how youth participation can work efficiently and impactful in EUSALP and in general.

Missions

- Improve cooperation and organization of youth initiatives in the alpine area
- Act as the interregional connection and point of contact for local youth initiatives (i.e. in terms of structure and topics)
- Raise awareness and educate young people about participation possibilities, current political issues – meet as equals, with humor and in-person
- Providing information about youth initiatives and offer to review proposals of (EUSALP) politicians
- Facilitate the exchange of ideas between youth in the EUSALP regions, focusing specifically on rural areas

Key activities

- Continue acquiring and updating information on existing youth initiatives in the Alpine area through various means and a common effort to collect and structure information on youth participation in the different Alpine countries.
- Finalise the YAPP platform while developing an adequate communication strategy to enhance visibility
- Creation of a network between local and interregional youth initiatives in the Alpine area enabling a better cooperation between youth initiatives and politicians
- Restructuring of the educational activities of Youth.Shaping.EUSALP and proposal of summer camp activities, workshops
- Organise events to increase cooperation between relevant stakeholders related to youth initiatives
- Officialiate collaboration with AG3 targeted at furthering the integration of the voices of young people under the framework of “strategic flagship initiatives”

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