

Foreword

The programme of the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention 2025-2026 was developed in harmony with the priorities of the **Multi-Annual Work Programme (MAP)**¹ of the Alpine Conference 2023-2030, which identifies three priority areas for action:

1. the conservation and enhancement of Alpine biodiversity and ecosystems
2. climate action
3. quality of life in the Alps

The Italian Presidency will follow the current **Slovenian Presidency (2023-2024)**, whose actions focus on quality of life in the Alps and address all the MAP priorities. The Slovenian Presidency also added two original points of view: ensuring the participation of civil society and investing in climate and environmental education.

Building on this vision, the Italian Presidency will offer continuity in the implementation of the MAP and the results of the Slovenian Presidency. The programme will be characterised by four priority macro-themes for which there are currently nine possible objectives, three of which are of primary importance and therefore require more targeted action.

The achievement of the objectives and, in general, the execution of the entire programme which was already shared in advance with all the Contracting Parties, will be facilitated by the direct cooperation at national level between the Italian Delegation, the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, and all the entities that are members of the National Coordination Board². This collaboration can be carried out through the organisation of events, the direct participation of experts in the Thematic Working Bodies, the development of documents and other technical materials, and much more in the implementation and execution of the programme³.

At the international level, willingness to collaborate or new ideas for work were gathered through bilateral consultations with the other Alpine Convention Delegations in their respective locations⁴.

Areas of Action

Given the premises and the consultations carried out⁵, the areas of action for the Italian Presidency are built on those of the MAP and consider some significant results of the work carried out to date in the Convention. They are:

1. **Biodiversity (BD)**
2. **Climate change (CC)**

¹ Approved by the XVII Alpine Conference of Brig 2022.

² Established by a Ministerial Memorandum of Understanding of 15/11/2012, it is assigned the task of a) carrying out preparatory and support activities for the management of the two-year Presidency period through the definition of thematic priorities and objectives; b) participating in the fine-tuning of the relevant decisions that the Italian Delegation will take at the Alpine Convention negotiating tables; c) contributing and/or participating in the organisation of scheduled events.

³ To this end, all the bodies that are members of the National Coordination Board are invited to propose their availabilities to support the programme and related direct and indirect modalities in order to make the Italian Presidency Programme as harmonious as possible.

⁴ The following meetings were held: Switzerland: 27 May 2024; Liechtenstein: 28 May 2024, EU (DG Regio/DG Envi.) Brussels 31 May 2024; France: 2 June 2024; Munich: 3 July 2024; Austria: 17 July 2024; Germany: 18 July 2024; Slovenia: Ljubljana 23 July 2024.

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- National Coordination Board, Verona, 2 May 2023;
- 77th meeting of the Permanent Committee to the Alpine Conference, Bozen 7-8-9 Nov.2023: Agenda item B4;
- National Coordination Board, Rome, 11 March 2024;
- National Coordination Board, Milan, 9 May 2024;
- 78th meeting of the Permanent Committee to the Alpine Conference, Maribor 15-16 May 2024: Agenda item B6.
- National Coordination Board, online, 10 September 2024;

3. *Population and Alpine culture (PAC)*
4. *Cooperation with other mountain regions (CM)*

1. Biodiversity (BD)

1.1 Thanks to the consolidated experiences gained through the Italian Presidency of the **Alpine Biodiversity Board (ABB, established by the Alpine CoP of Innsbruck 2022)** since 2019, the priority aims to enhance Alpine biodiversity, highlight the vulnerability of ecosystems, and capitalise on the contribution of mountain regions to the achievement of the global biodiversity objectives defined by the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**. By the end of 2024, the ABB is expected to prepare a **'technical input paper'** to complement the **'policy brief'** that the current Slovenian Presidency is working on to guide efforts and define targets for Alpine biodiversity and its monitoring as part of a specific Action Plan to be drawn up as soon as possible by the ABB. The ABB will continue⁶ to work on the technical aspects to support the Contracting Parties in the pursuit of the objectives fixed through the joint actions of two internal operational groups, namely:

- **ABB (AlpsLife Core Group)**: directly involved in the **AlpsLife project** presented in the framework of the Interreg Alpine Space Programme on pan-Alpine interoperability between the various biodiversity monitoring schemes and data. This will result in a system to ensure that policy and management decisions in the Alps are supported by specific and transnationally consistent indicators, as well as the possibility of identifying habitats/species for which urgent conservation and restoration actions are needed.
- **ABB (Plenary)**: tasked with elaborating a specific **Action Plan for Alpine Biodiversity** (Objective BI - Key Objective 1) on the basis of the four pillars of monitoring, restoration, connectivity, and biodiversity conservation identified in the 'policy brief' prepared by the current Slovenian Presidency.

In addition, collaboration on issues directly relevant to the theme of biodiversity will continue with the other Thematic Working Bodies of the Convention, including the Large Carnivores, Wild Ungulates and Society Working Group (WISO) which, together with the ABB, is working on the ecological management of the species concerned with strong reference to the economic and social aspects, and the Transport and Spatial Planning Groups for a focus on connectivity and the importance of ecological corridors, multifunctional green infrastructures and green bridges.

BD - Key Objective 1: Elaboration by the ABB of an Action Plan for Alpine biodiversity aimed at identifying a set of sectoral and cross-sectoral actions to achieve priority objectives for Alpine biodiversity harmonised with the global (CBD) objectives.

2. Climate change (CC)

2.1 Adaptation to climate change has been primary interest for Italy since the Italian Presidency during 2013-2014. Since then, in cooperation with relevant scientific, national, and international partners, emphasis has been placed on adaptation to CC in mountainous environments and at sub-regional and local levels in regular discussions with the Contracting Parties. The Alpine Convention has a Climate Action Plan (**CAP 2.0**)⁷ that lays out a set of sectoral and cross-sectoral actions to achieve climate neutrality and resilience in the Alpine region. Furthermore,

⁶ As part of the 2025-2026 mandate draft to be approved by the XVIII Alpine Conference.

⁷ The Climate Action Plan 2.0 was elaborated by the Alpine Convention's Alpine Climate Board (ACB) with contributions from the Contracting Parties, Observers, Thematic Working Bodies, and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. The Plan identifies a series of sectoral actions aimed at making the Alpine Convention area as a whole climate neutral and resilient, considering the ecological, social, and economic context of the area. To do this, it adopts a series of thematic implementation paths, in the concrete application of which the Alpine Climate Board and most of the other Working Bodies of the Convention are involved.

both the Budoia Charter⁸ for local adaptation to climate change in the Alps (2017) and a Budoia Charter Implementation Project (2019) and related Handbook for Local Authorities (2024) were prepared in cooperation with national and international networks of Alpine municipalities (Alliance in the Alps) and primary scientific institutions (Eurac Research, *Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente* (Lombardy Foundation for the Environment)).

CC - Objective 2: Promotion of a dialogue on local adaptation initiatives for Alpine municipalities aimed at valorising the actions carried out in Alpine countries and at sharing consolidated and experimental principles and methodologies at a pan-Alpine level⁹. This should foster, also in marginal municipalities, conscious local adaptation, the implementation of the Alpine Climate Action Plan 2.0, and the development of resilient Alpine communities and centres according to policies in line with overarching adaptation plans.

2.2 Adaptation is also a central theme for the **Natural Hazards Working Group PLANALP**¹⁰ which, since 2004, has been working on the development of common strategies for the prevention of and adaptation to natural hazards in the Alps. In recent years, particular emphasis has been placed on the state of glaciers and the degradation of permafrost. This has been the subject of both scientific research projects and awareness-raising campaigns, also in view of the disastrous events that have occurred in recent years, as well as the initiatives of the Observers and regions of the Convention on the subject¹¹. These issues will be explored in greater depth, in cooperation with ISCAR, at the next Forum Alpinum¹².

CC - Key Objective 3: Elaboration by an Italian-led drafting group, in cooperation with PLANALP, of the 11th Report on the State of the Alps dedicated to Alpine glaciers and the effects of their degradation on high-altitude and lowland environments, including the effects on permafrost and water cycle dynamics.

2.3 Adaptation to CC in the agricultural and forestry sectors is a primary interest of the Mountain Agriculture and Mountain Forestry Working Group (MAMF) and the Alpine Biodiversity Board (ABB), led by Italy. It is one of the actions foreseen in the Alpine Convention CAP 2.0 and continues to be the subject of specific attention in the MAMF mandate¹³.

CC - Objective 4: Implementation of some of the CAP 2.0 actions related to the adaptation of the agricultural and forestry sectors to the impacts of climate change in the context of fulfilling the MAMF mandate.

2.4 Environmental education, particularly on climate change, for schools (and in general, for pupils between the ages of 5 and 19) is a central point of the 2023-2024 Slovenian Presidency of the Convention and remains essential for Italy, which had already dedicated special attention to the involvement of the young post-graduate generations in

⁸ The Budoia Charter is a voluntary declaration of commitment of municipalities and other sub-regional authorities located in the Alpine area to implement climate change adaptation actions in their territories. Approved in the framework of the International Assembly of the network of municipalities Alliance in the Alps (2017), it has seen implementation throughout the Alps, mainly in Italy.

⁹ As far as Italy is concerned, application areas could be identified starting from the national experience with 'green communities' in the Alpine area. ¹⁰ The Working Group on Natural Hazards (PLANALP) of the Alpine Convention was set up to develop common strategies to prevent natural hazards in the Alps and to discuss ways to adapt. The next Chair of this group will be held by Germany.

¹¹ For example, the Fondazione Montagna Sicura (Safe Mountain Foundation) and RAVA have been monitoring glaciers, avalanches, and other high-altitude hazards for years and have carried out studies and projects at various levels; the Lombardy Foundation for the Environment has coordinated the CLIMADA project on the Adamello glacier; thanks to an Alpine Space project, the PermaNET network for monitoring permafrost throughout the Alps has been active for years; CIPRA and the Italian Glaciological Committee have published a report on the state of Alpine glaciers presented in 2024.

¹² The Forum Alpinum is a scientific conference that aims to promote international cooperation in research on topics of relevance to the Alps. Since 1984 it has been organised by the International Committee for Alpine Research (ISCAR). Italy is represented in it by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Both organisations are already members of the National Coordination Table.

¹³ Subject to approval by the 18th Alpine Conference.

its previous Presidency.

CC - Objective 5: Promotion of education and awareness of climate change impacts in the Alps among younger generations through training proposals and concrete initiatives to involve pupils¹⁴ in the activities of the Italian Presidency 2025-2026.

3. Population and Alpine culture (PAC)

3.1 The Fifth Report on the State of the Alps (RSA 5th) produced during the previous Italian Presidency 2013-2014 dedicated to demographic changes in the Alps offered an overview of demographic changes and other social changes in the Alps. Based on a bilateral Italian-Austrian initiative, the University of Turin and the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Innsbruck launched a review to update the data contained in RSA 5 in 2023. Thanks to a collaboration with the Italian National Institute of Statistics ISTAT, the data on demographic trends in Alpine municipalities can now be updated, which can guide policies for sustainable development, climate mitigation and adaptation, attention to the younger generations, combating the abandonment of rural and mountainous areas, and encouraging processes of new population growth in the metropolitan-mountainous areas. The updating of RSA 5 will see an extension of the selected good practices to identify possible project responses to the phenomenon of demographic change affecting the Alpine territory.

PAC - Objective 6: Integration and updating of demographic, social, and economic data from RSA 5 to guide policies for sustainable development in the sphere of climate change, for the promotion of mountain and rural territories, and for their repopulation.

3.2 During its last mandate, the Compliance Committee carried out important survey work on the laws, policies, and implementation measures applied in the Alpine countries in connection with the 2006 Alpbach Declaration on Alpine Population and Culture¹⁵. This study shows the importance of having a common strategy for Alpine culture to enhance and promote, for example, regional development to facilitate stronger cooperation between the sectors of agriculture of quality, typical of mountain, in particular of trade and tourism as well as other economic sectors and services. In this sense, the intention is to accept the German delegation's invitation to collaborate on a 2025-2026 initiative on sustainable tourism, e.g. through specific conferences or events. Furthermore, the potential for synergies with the European recognition for the Alpine border town of Nova Gorica-Gorizia as the European Capital of Culture for 2025 and the start of the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention could not be overlooked. Numerous institutional initiatives relating to Alpine material and immaterial culture and population have previously been carried out within the Convention, mainly on Italy's initiative. For this reason, work is in progress to draw up a preliminary paper to be presented at the AlpWeek¹⁶ in September 2024¹⁷. The paper will be discussed with stakeholders during a dedicated side event of the Italian Delegation in order to start identifying relevant themes and objectives for a strategy on the topic. The drafting of a 'Strategy for Alpine culture' will aim to periodically identify relevant priorities, thematic and transversal objectives to orient policies, programmes, and projects in the Alpine region.

¹⁴ For example, through the promotion of resilient and climate-neutral behaviour among young people in the 15-18 age group and their families, and the involvement of professional institutes specialising in 'Enogastronomy and Hospitality' in the composition of climate-friendly Alpine menus at Alpine Convention meetings and conferences.

¹⁵ This [Declaration](#) follows the developments of a specific Working Group chaired by Italy dedicated to the Alpine population and culture and includes an important initial selection of topics characterising these aspects.

¹⁶ AlpWeek is an international event co-organised annually by the main Alpine organisations (Alliance in the Alps, CIPRA, etc.) committed to the protection of the mountains and their sustainable development. In the current year it is being co-organised with the Slovenian Presidency of the Alpine Convention in Nova Gorica to mark the 20th anniversary of the first edition held in Kranjska Gora in 2004.

¹⁷ Starting with the AlpWeek side event planned for 25 September 2024, to be developed in cooperation with the municipality of Gorizia.

PAC - Key Objective 7: Elaboration of an Alpine Culture Strategy articulated in thematic and transversal actions through an *ad hoc* group including experts competent for the territories of the different Contracting Parties.

PAC - Objective 8: Promotion of cultural initiatives inspired by the Alps on the occasion of the celebrations and initiatives to be implemented as part of the events for Gorizia-Nova Gorica European Capital of Culture.

4. Cooperation with other mountain regions (CM)

4.1 Since the Italian Presidency in 2001-2002, the Alpine Convention has been promoting dialogue and the exchange of experiences with mountain regions beyond the Alps in order to foster common principles and actions for the sustainable development of these territories; the support given to the creation and development of the Carpathian Convention and the Mountain Partnership is a successful example. In fact, the scientific community widely agrees that mountain areas provide vital ecosystem services for nature and for human life but are also among the areas most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. While mountains are extremely rich in biodiversity, they are often disadvantaged from a social and economic point of view. Therefore, international cooperation actions to preserve and enhance ecosystems as well as support the communities and economic activities present in these areas can foster innovation, awareness, and the resilience of these territories. The mountain cooperation initiatives of the Alpine Convention and its Contracting Parties over the past years have involved mountain chains all over the world, thanks in particular to the initiatives of some Contracting Parties such as Italy: from the Carpathians, where there is an international convention modelled on the Alpine Convention, the Mountain Partnership, the Apennines, the Dinaric Alps, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean area, to the Himalayan and Andean regions. In recent years, collaboration on international mountain cooperation has mainly taken place through relations with international bodies such as UNEP, the Mountain Partnership at the FAO, the Carpathian Convention, IUCN, CBD, and others.

CM - Objective 9: Continuation of international mountain cooperation initiatives through the valorisation of recent results of Alpine Convention initiatives in different mountain regions around the world and of particular innovative value with the Northwest African mountain region (Morocco-Algeria-Tunisia).