

# FAQ – “VIA ALPINA EXPLORER”

## **What is the Via Alpina?**

It is a transalpine long-distance hiking trail that currently runs along five routes through all eight Alpine countries. Its extensive network of paths allows hikers to discover the diverse and regional specialties of the Alpine region on foot. The Via Alpina stands for soft tourism and creates ecological, economic and socially balanced added value for the regions along the way. In 2022, it will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> birthday as an implementation project of the Alpine Convention and will undergo further development: the route will be revised (the five routes will become one transalpine Via Alpina), its digital presence will be modernized and eight scholarships will be awarded.

## **Has there ever been anything like the “Via Alpina Explorer 2022” before?**

Yes, from 2011 to 2013 the “Via Alpina travel fellowships” were awarded by the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. Due to organizational changes, this was no longer possible as of 2014.

## **What other projects are planned for 2022?**

We are launching a crowdfunding campaign at the beginning of February 2022. This will support us in the further development and visual modernization of the Via Alpina.

In September 2022, the AlpWeek will take place in Brig/CH. There we will celebrate our 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, present the current state of development of the Via Alpina and strengthen its alpine-wide network with workshops, exchange rounds and other activities. All eight scholarship holders will be invited.

## **How can I apply?**

You can find the application form at [www.cipra.org/via-alpina-explorer-2022](http://www.cipra.org/via-alpina-explorer-2022).

## **Is there a minimum age for participation?**

Yes, applicants must be at least 18 years old.

## **Do I have to hike a specific route?**

Yes, each of the eight scholarship holders should hike at least one section of 200 to 255 km on the [adapted red route of the Via Alpina](#). Our goal is for the eight explorers to hike the entire red route together (about 1,877 km). The individual stages are defined by us. All starting and arrival points are accessible by public transport, therefore the length of the stages may vary. In the application form you will find all eight stages and you can tell us which one you would like to walk the most. **We would especially welcome applicants who wish to walk the whole route.**



- Route 1 (approx. 233 km): Trieste/I – Podkoren/SI  
Route 2 (approx. 250 km): Podkoren/SI – Antholz Mittertal/I  
Route 3 (approx. 255 km): Antholz Mittertal/I – Lermoos/A  
Route 4 (approx. 203 km): Lermoos/A – Sargans/CH  
Route 5 (approx. 230 km): Sargans/CH – Kandersteg/CH  
Route 6 (approx. 225 km): Kandersteg/CH – Runaz/I  
Route 7 (approx. 218 km): Runaz/I – Mont-Dauphin/F  
Route 8 (approx. 254 km): Mont-Dauphin/F – Monaco

### **Is there a time period in which I have to hike the defined route?**

Yes, you have to hike the route in summer 2022, at the latest by the [Alpweek](#) (6. – 7.09.2022). The Via Alpina can usually be hiked from the beginning of May to the end of September, depending on snow conditions.

### **Do I have to hike the entire section at once or can I split it up, for example in 3 to 4 weekend hikes?**

You can hike the section entirely at once or split it up on several days/weekends.

The most important for us is that you hike the route this summer, between May/June (depends on the conditions) until the [AlpWeek](#), which takes place on the 6th and 7th of September 2022. You will be invited to the event, so you would need to make sure to have finished your walk until then.

### **Will all my expenses be covered?**

We provide each scholarship holder with the sum of €1,500. How you divide the money for the hike is up to you. You are responsible for any additional costs.

### **Am I insured during my trip?**

Each scholarship holder is responsible for their own insurance during the trip. CIPRA International and the Albrecht von Dewitz Foundation are not liable for any accidents. We recommend that each scholarship holder insures him/herself through membership of an alpine association (or further afield) for any emergencies.



## What are my tasks as a Via Alpina Explorer?

- It is important to us that during your hike you **communicate via social media, your blog, with a film or in other ways for the Via Alpina about certain topics that are compatible with the purpose of the foundation of our sponsors:**  
“In accordance with its statutes, the VAUDE Sport Albrecht von Dewitz Foundation promotes education and public relations as well as research and development in relation to the environment and ecology as well as topics of Alpine safety including mountain rescue.” ([Project work – VAUDE Sport Albrecht von Dewitz Foundation](#))  
Topics could include climate change, glacier shrinkage, overtourism, flora and fauna, alpine safety (condition of trails, securing with wire ropes, trail construction), mountain rescue, ecological travel and traffic, or your own topics/current challenges.  
While submitting your application, you will be asked to write a sample post. This should give us an insight into your communication style and how you would represent the Via Alpina during the summer of 2022.  
It can be a short text, a poem or any other form of your choice. There are no limits to your creativity!
- **You document and communicate to us special aspects along the trail** such as regional specialties, special accommodation types, faults in the signage or sections that are difficult to walk – a reality check along the red Via Alpina.
- **You treat nature and the environment with respect during your journey, minimise your CO2 footprint, use public transport and above all use local and regional products.** This is important for us because we are committed to a sustainable life in the Alps that will also be attractive and rewarding for future generations. This includes a balanced natural environment and an intact landscape. Help us to protect the diversity and beauty of the Alpine region.

## What is the deadline or timeframe in which the final product of the hike has to be presented?

During the summer, it would be great if you can already be present via posts on social media. If you want to do a “bigger” project, you can finish it after the summer, no worries!

As we will invite the Via Alpina Explorers to the AlpWeek and potentially plan to include them into a workshop session or similar (*to be defined*), it would be great if you could at least present your project during a live session with all the “Explorers” so that others can have an insight on what you have done during the trip. The final product doesn’t have to be finished until that.

## Do I have to go alone?

No, you do not have to go alone. However, only one person can receive the scholarship. Whether you go with your partner, child, dog, cat or dinosaur is up to you.

## What languages should I speak?

The main language is English, so you should have a basic knowledge of this language. During your trip you can also communicate in your native language.



### **What is my benefit as a scholarship holder?**

- You will receive €1,500 and a trekking bag (sponsored by [VAUDE](#)) for your trip.
- We invite you to the anniversary event of Via Alpina at [AlpWeek 2022](#) in Brig/CH.
- You are on the trail as an explorer for the only long-distance hiking trail that crosses every Alpine country.
- You will have access to a community of hikers and committed young people such as the CIPRA Youth Council (CYC), who are committed to sustainability in the Alps and beyond.

### **How are the Explorers selected?**

The jury consists of members of the Alpine Convention, CIPRA International and the Albrecht von Dewitz Foundation. They decide on the basis of the following criteria:

- allocation according to Alpine countries (eight countries, eight Explorers).
- openness to new adventures and international exchange
- interest and ability to accompany your journey incl. focus topic in a publicity-effective way (e.g. via social media, film shoot, book project, etc.)
- age distribution
- interest in sustainable topics

### **What is the Hiker's Agreement?**

After you have been selected by the jury, we will sign a Via Alpina Explorer Agreement. This regulates your and our tasks during the hike, as well as the terms of payment.

### **How will I receive further information after I have been selected?**

After the jury has selected the eight scholarship holders, we will contact them personally by e-mail. In April 2022, we will organize an online kick-off event to share exact details, questions and further information.

Throughout the summer, the CIPRA International team is available via [international@cipra.org](mailto:international@cipra.org)