

New solidarity between the Alps and surrounding areas

CIPRA position paper on an EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

SUMMARY

Various political actors in the Alpine space are pushing for the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). The International Commission for the protection of the Alps CIPRA, with over one hundred member organisations, possesses a wide-ranging network in all Alpine countries that extends beyond the Alps and into the surrounding metropolitan areas. CIPRA is therefore representing the interests of sustainable, eco-friendly Alpine policies in the process of preparing a macro-regional strategy for the Alps. CIPRA sees the EUSALP as an opportunity to make the whole of Europe aware of the issues facing the Alpine space. It should however also be considered that behind the discussion lies the fundamental question of what a general future strategy for the Alps should look like.

It is not clear what the legal status of the Alpine Convention's core area will be in the context of the EUSALP, or what the relationship between the core Alpine area and the surrounding regions will be. Could urban centres outside the Alps determine whether and where in the Alps the Winter Olympics should take place, for example? These and other questions must be clarified in the course of a dialogue between the key actors in the Alps.

Certain questions and principles regarding the future of the Alps are of special importance for CIPRA:

- A sustainable development as defined Alpine Convention has to be the basis of the EUSALP
- The population and all relevant actors in the Alpine region have to be included at an early stage.

In CIPRA's view the EUSALP would only be meaningful if the Alpine Convention placed a high value on it. The achievements of the Alpine Convention for sustainable development in the Alps may not be put at risk. Alpine Convention and EUSALP should complement each other and benefit from synergies and may not compete. The Alpine Convention also requires constant renewal and amendment: CIPRA sees the EUSALP as an opportunity for this purpose.

The EUSALP will cover a broader swathe of themes and approaches than the Alpine Convention. It is vital that actors, organisations and institutions, municipalities, cities and regions within the area covered by the Alpine Convention are involved as strong partners in the development and implementation of a future macro-region.

CIPRA welcomes the current initiatives for strengthening cooperation between actors in the Alps and the surrounding areas. Organisations and representatives of civil society must be involved in this co-operation. At the centre are actors and their activities, not the geographical area covered.

However, if it is necessary to define an area of coverage for the EUSALP, CIPRA would suggest a zoned model consisting of a *core Alpine area* and an *Alpine cooperation area*. The stronger orientation of cooperation activities towards top-level functional relationships must not however mean the Alps simply being tacked on to metropolitan regions as peripheral areas; rather, the actors and agencies in the core Alpine area must make decisions regarding solutions to Alpine-specific problems.

The EUSALP offers the opportunity to face future challenges together, both throughout the Alps and beyond. CIPRA believes that certain subject areas are particularly affected. There is a need for greater agreement and cooperation, particularly in the fields of energy and climate protection, dealing with trans-Alpine traffic and promoting sustainable methods of transport, managing natural resources and preventing natural hazards, natural and sustainable tourism, issues relating to young people and the elderly, and developing new forms of decision-making.

Schaan/LI, January 2014