

2nd EUSALP Landscape Conference

Water and Alpine landscapes in times of climate crisis

1. Framework and topic
2. Draft programme

1. Framework and topic of the 2nd EUSALP Landscape Conference

Commonly referred to as "*Europe's water tower*," the Alps supply freshwater to vast downstream areas, contributing to 40% of water supply in Europe. Alpine waters define a distinct landscape and are essential for providing drinking water, household use, agriculture, hydropower generation, and recreational activities. However, this vital resource is increasingly threatened by the impact of climate change, which is jeopardising the loss of natural water storage, due to the rapid retreat of snowpacks and glaciers. In addition to climate pressures, conflict and competitions for water use are intensifying.

The 2nd EUSALP Landscape Conference will gather experts, policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders from the Alpine region and beyond to discuss the challenges and opportunities related to water management and landscape transformations in times of climate crisis. It will provide a forum for dialogue to reflect on how water-related transformations are affecting Alpine landscapes and how emerging or existing challenges and conflicts can be addressed through integrated governance and sustainable landscape management.

The following questions could be tackled:

- How is climate change transforming the water systems and landscapes of the Alpine region, and what are the consequences for ecosystems and cultural heritage?
- What types of conflicts emerge or intensify between different water users and land users (e.g. agriculture, hydropower, tourism, conservation), and how can they be understood in a landscape context?
- Which innovative solutions are being/can be implemented to safeguard both landscape integrity and water security?
- What governance approaches – at local, regional, national, cross-border and macroregional levels – can help mediate conflicts and support water-wise landscape development?

Date: 30 September 2025
Venue: EURAC Research, Viale Druso/Drususallee 1, 39100 Bolzano/Bozen (IT)
Target audience: Experts and general public
Languages: English
Moderation: Fred Luks
Organisers: AG6



2. Programme 30 September 2025

08:30 - 09:00 **Registration**

09:00 - 09:20 **Welcome addresses**

- Alenka Smerkolj (Secretary General of the Alpine Convention)
- Robin Mannhorst (EUSALP Youth Council)
- Prof. Roland Psenner (President EURAC research)

09:20 - 09:50 **Keynote**

Re-thinking landscape qualities in times of climate crisis in the Alpine region

- Prof. Ladina Koeppel – University of Applied Science Eastern Switzerland, Institute for Landscape and Open Space

Can climate-adapted landscapes be described as the traditional cultural landscapes of the future? As climate change transforms hydrological cycles and the landscape, we will explore how we can design landscapes that are both resilient and culturally meaningful, addressing issues such as the tension between innovation and traditional aesthetics, the need for interdisciplinary collaboration, and the importance of participatory approaches in planning climate-adapted landscapes.

09:50 - 10:20 **Online Presentation (European Commission)**

The new EU Water Resilience Strategy

- MEAS Joachim – DG ENV
- GRANDE FRAILE Rameses – DG REGIO

This presentation explores the newly adopted EU Water Resilience Strategy, with a focus on restoring and protecting the water cycle. It also examines how the Mid-term Review of Cohesion Policy, which aims to align Cohesion Policy with new EU priorities and strengthen cohesion across regions, will help promote secure access to water, sustainable water management and water resilience, looking also at its integration with other initiatives addressing landscapes and water resilience.

10:20 - 11:00 **Coffee break & family photo**

11:00-11:45 **Panel discussion**

Different landscapes, one resource: dialogue between Macro-regional Strategies

The panel will explore how the various European Macro-Regional Strategies (MRS) have addressed water-related challenges over time, examining their governance structures, implemented activities, and efforts to capitalise on project results to enhance better water governance.

The panel will highlight the role of the MRS in fostering cooperation on water management. This includes supporting the development of new projects, facilitating the exchange of results from existing initiatives across different macro-regions, and promoting synergies to enhance collective impact.

11:45-13:00 **Presentation and Roundtable**

Water Governance in the Alpine Region

Water governance entails a complex mechanism of coordination and requires cooperation of stakeholders across different sectors and interests. These include ensuring equitable access,



maintaining water quality, safeguarding ecological integrity, addressing scarcity, and managing the impacts of climate change and population growth. Effective water governance is crucial for achieving sustainable development goals and requires strong institutions, sound policies, and stakeholder participation.

This session gathers experts' insights on groundwater, headwater management, cross-border cooperation, and participatory governance tools, followed by an interactive roundtable. Together, participants we will explore pressing governance challenges, the role of EUSALP, and ways to bridge local to transnational perspectives for resilient and equitable Alpine water management.

- River Contract for the Ticino (Ticino Initiative)
- Groundwater Governance (Interreg Alpine Space project MARGIN)
- Resilient Alpine headwaters (Interreg Alpine Space project WATERWISE)
- Cross-sectoral Framework for Socio-Economic Resilience to Climate Change and Extreme (Horizon CROSSEU)

13:00-14:30 **Lunch break (standing lunch)**

14:00-15:30 **Workshop**

Forests and Fields: What role do they play in the Water Resilience Strategy in the Alps?
(Co-organised by MAMF Working Group of the Alpine Convention and EUSALP TF-MFSUT)

The workshop investigates how mountain agriculture and forestry can shape the Water Resilience Strategy for the Alpine region, tackling droughts, floods, and other shared challenges. The discussion will lead to recommendations for policymakers and decision-makers, addressing water challenges in forestry and agriculture.

15:30-16:00 **Summary and closing remarks**

16:00-17:00 **Networking Coffee**