

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EUSALP

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Contents

The EUSALP strategy	5
The EUSALP governance	7
The EUSALP strategy matching with SUSPORT project	9
The cross-border strategy of the SUSPORT project.....	12
SUSPORT policy recommendations for EUSALP.....	13

The EUSALP strategy

A European Union (EU) macro-regional strategy is a policy framework which allows countries located in the same region to jointly tackle and find solutions to problems or to better use the potential they have in common (e.g. pollution, navigability, worldwide business competition, etc.). By doing so, they benefit from strengthened cooperation, with the aim of making their policies more efficient than if they had addressed the issues in isolation¹.



The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) is a macro-regional strategy adopted by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council in 2016. The Strategy was jointly developed by the Commission and the Alpine Region countries and stakeholders, which agreed to work together on the areas of common interest for the benefit of each country and the whole region.

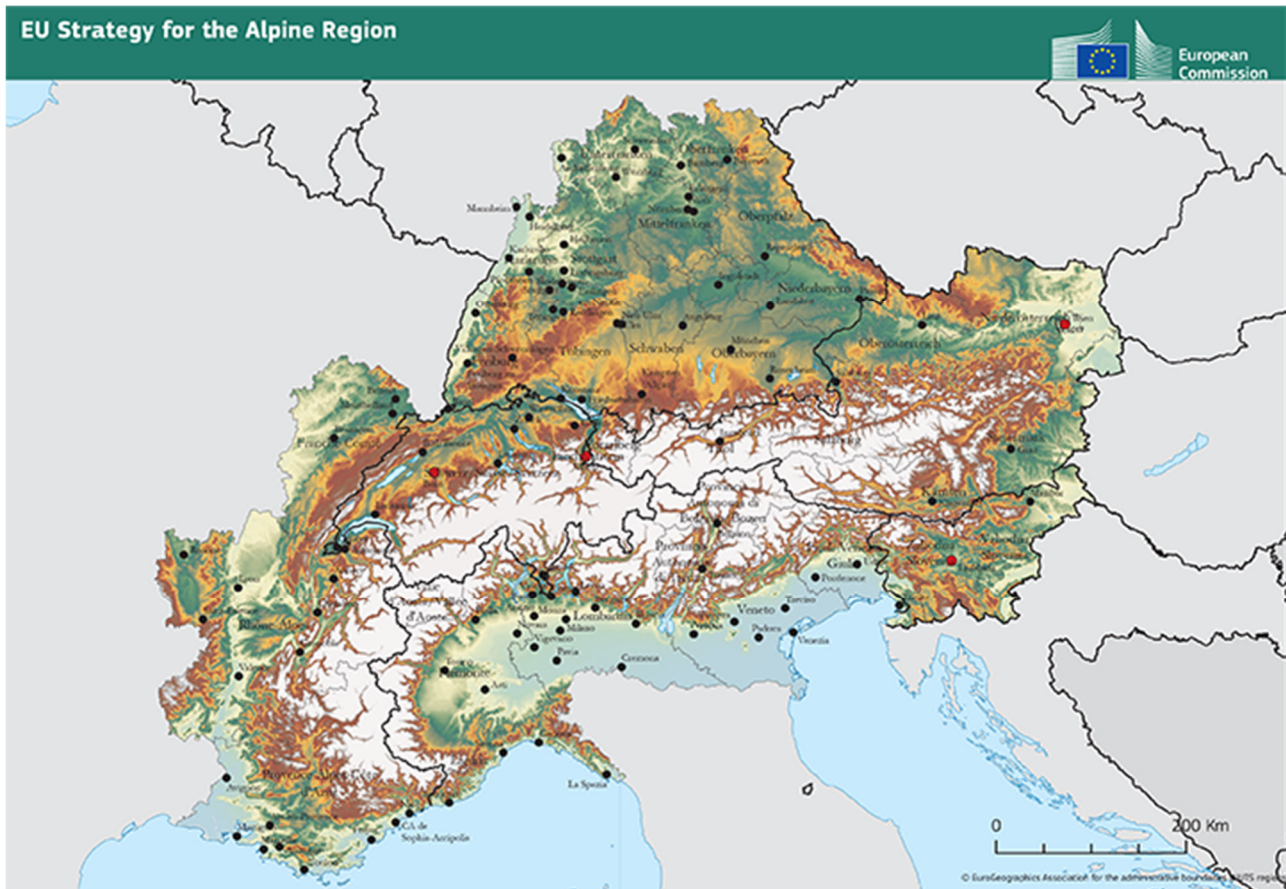
The EU Strategy for the Alpine Region is one of the four EU macro-regional strategies, besides the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR - 2009), the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR - 2011) and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR - 2014).

The EUSALP covers seven Countries, of which 5 EU Member States (Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia) and 2 non-EU countries (Liechtenstein and Switzerland), and 48 Regions.

The Alpine region is one of the largest economic and productive regions in Europe where about 70 million people live and work, as well as it is an attractive tourist destination for millions of guests every year. However, it faces several major challenges:

- Economic globalisation requiring the territory to distinguish itself as competitive and innovative;
- Demographic trends characterised by ageing and new migration model;
- Climate change and its foreseeable effects on the environment, biodiversity and living conditions of the inhabitants;
- Energy challenge at the European and worldwide scale. Its specific geographical position in Europe as a transit region but also as an area with unique geographical and natural features.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/alpine_en



EUSALP participating countries

Better cooperation between the regions and States is needed to tackle those challenges. The Strategy builds upon three general action-oriented **thematic policy areas** and **one cross-cutting policy area**²:

1st Thematic Policy Area: Economic Growth and Innovation

OBJECTIVE: Fair access to job opportunities, building on the high competitiveness of the Region

2nd Thematic Policy Area: Mobility and Connectivity

OBJECTIVE: Sustainable internal and external accessibility to all

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/alpine_en

3rd Thematic Policy Area: Environment and Energy

OBJECTIVE: A more inclusive environmental framework for all and renewable and reliable energy solutions for the future

Cross-cutting Policy Area: Governance, including Institutional Capacity

OBJECTIVE: A sound macro-regional governance model for the Region (to improve cooperation and the coordination of action).

The **main challenge** of the Strategy should be to **tackle the economic, social and territorial imbalances existing in the Alpine Region, stimulating an innovative and sustainable model of development**, able to conciliate the promotion of growth and jobs, and the preservation of natural and cultural assets in the area.

As its main objective, the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region aims to ensure that this region remains one of the most attractive areas in Europe, taking better advantage of its assets and seizing its opportunities for **sustainable and innovative development** in a European context.

The Strategy will focus on areas of (macro) regional mutual interest. Therefore, the priority areas and specific objectives selected should reflect genuine commitment to working together to achieve common solutions to challenges or unused potential.

OBJECTIVE 1: Fostering sustainable growth and promoting innovation in the Alps: from theory to practice, from research centres to enterprises.

OBJECTIVE 2: Connectivity for all: in search of a **balanced territorial development through environmentally friendly mobility patterns, transports systems** and communication services and infrastructures. (Coherence with SUSPORT project)

OBJECTIVE 3: Ensuring sustainability in the Alps: preserving the Alpine heritage and promoting a sustainable use of natural and cultural resources.

OBJECTIVE 4: Improving cooperation and the coordination of action in the Alpine Region.

The EUSALP governance

The EUSALP governance structure is formed by a General Assembly, a standing Executive Board and implementing bodies.

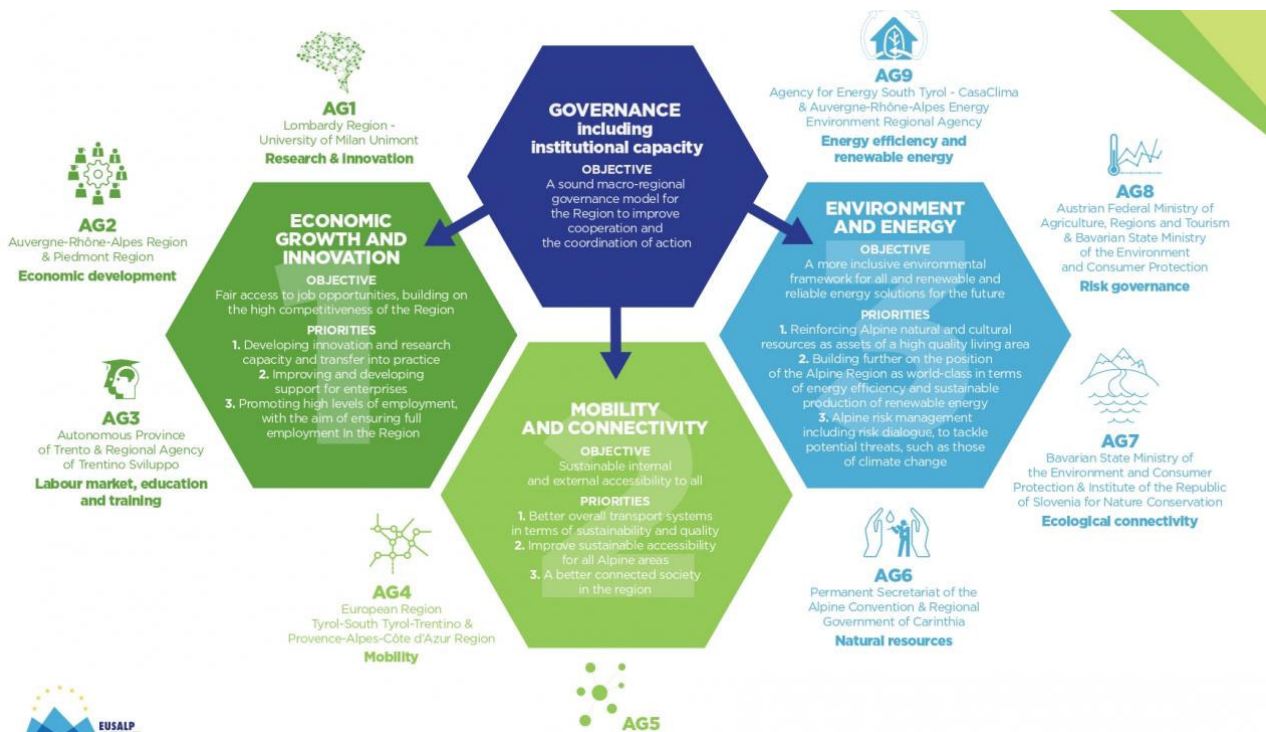
The General Assembly, responsible for laying down general political guidelines, includes high-level political representatives from the participating states and regions; the Commission; and the Alpine Convention as observer.

The Executive Board is made up of representatives of states and regions, and includes representatives from the Commission, and the Alpine Convention and Alpine space transnational

programme as observers. The board oversees the implementation of the EUSALP and provides strategic guidance as regards management and implementation of the strategy and its action plan.

The nine Action Groups and a Board of Action Group leaders (AGL) form the core of the implementation level. As AGLs are meant to be the drivers of day-to-day implementation, their capacities, resources and engagement are key factors in the success of the Alpine strategy.

The Commission, for its part, acts as an independent facilitator and participates in the overall coordination of the strategy, while there are also national coordinators in place and a yearly rotating Presidency. All these structures were swiftly initiated during the first year when the actions groups began work, meeting several times per year³.



EUSALP objectives and priorities

³ [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/646109/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)646109_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/646109/EPRS_BRI(2019)646109_EN.pdf)

The EUSALP strategy matching with SUSPORT project

The **EU Strategy for the Alpine Region - EUSALP** – focuses on areas of (macro) regional mutual interest. Therefore, the priority areas and specific objectives reflects genuine commitment to working together to achieve common solutions to challenges or unused potential. EUSALP, as already mentioned, it is structured on three Thematic Policy Areas and Priorities of which the **2nd Thematic Policy Area: “MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY”**, **Objective: Sustainable internal and external accessibility to all, with its Action Group 4 – MOBILITY** – which promotes inter-modality and interoperability in passenger and freight transport, **is strongly related with the topic of enhancing port environmental sustainability and energy efficiency** dealt with the **SUSPORT Project**.

Transport is one of the main causes of climate change – almost thirty percent of all greenhouse gases in the Alps can be attributed to transport – and both passenger and freight traffic volumes are rising continuously. Road transport in particular causes negative externalities such as air pollution, noise and traffic congestion. This makes mobility one of the biggest challenges for the social, economic and ecological development of the Alpine regions. A coordinated approach giving way to a coherent strategy is required to tackle these challenges in order to ensure a sustainable development for the Alps.

AG4 works towards the following objectives:

To promote inter-modality and interoperability in passenger and freight transport by supporting and fostering the removal of infrastructure bottlenecks, by bridging missing links, coordinating planning and timetables of public transport, **modernizing infrastructure and enhancing cooperation**. AG4 is addressing this objective by focusing on infrastructure for sustainable transport in passenger- and combined transport as well as interconnecting public transport systems, focusing on operations and information and ticketing services.

To support the modal shift from road to rail. The Alpine regions are particularly sensitive to negative environmental and social impacts caused by the excessive traffic flow of freight and passenger transport through the Alps. In order to tackle this challenge, the AG4 promotes the harmonization and implementation of modal shift policies with a focus on toll systems.

To develop cooperation and greater integration between the existing bodies and structures in the field of transport. The close collaboration of the AG4 with different actors involved in the transport and mobility sectors of the Alpine Regions guarantees an improved coordination and ensures consistency between existing initiatives in order to avoid duplications and encourage the alignment of funding. Strong links have already been established with the Alpine Convention, the Suivi de Zurich Process, as well as the iMONITRAF! network.

SUSPORT project has been fairly defined as EUSALP strategy-coherent since has been able to enhance environmentally friendly transports chains providing a contribution on the overall

knowledge on improving the environmental sustainability and energy efficiency in ports in the Programme area by improving cooperation of key stakeholders – institutions and long-term management activities in this area of work on both sides of the Adriatic Sea. These objectives have been achieved through the analysis of the territorial needs, as well as existing best practices and the realisation of concrete Pilot Actions. The main Italian and Croatian ports in the Adriatic and Ionian Region were able both to lower the externalities of ports with the implementation of pilot action and to strengthen the transnational institutional cooperation thanks to the adoption of a memorandum of understanding among the project partners, extended also to the Port of Koper, with the aim of strengthening the transnational institutional cooperation for enhancing port environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

The EUSALP Action Group 4 - Mobility - offers a platform to coordinate and harmonise the activities of Alpine regions and countries for a sustainable transport and mobility system. Its mission is to build a common understanding of transport policy and mobility, to define common objectives and to launch specific activities and projects.

The logistic system has to be seen in a holistic way and the platform provided by EUSALP should get all the stakeholders of the logistic system together.

One of the main AG4 aim, implementing this activity, is also to bring to this dialogue events the results of projects where the relevant stakeholders have been involved. The real challenge here is to get all those actors at one table to create a good synergy.

SUSPORT involved many subjects in the Adriatic and Ionian area and was able to do this by sharing objectives, experiences and best practices. The Project in the last phase has also made the effort **to establish an enlarged cooperation network**, by involving institutional stakeholders that have the interest and the power to sustain the concept of a permanent transnational network, even larger than the cross-border one Italy-Croatia.

A SUSPORT representative is therefore a good candidate to be involved in the upcoming dialogue events to be organised within the AG4 implementation activity of stakeholder analysis and involvement.

The EUSALP area covers not only the mountainous areas of the Alpine regions but also other territories touching the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas, that means that the above-mentioned AG4 challenges concern the freight transport crossing the Alps but also the ports. Therefore, **the Strategy is active** in the connection between the ports and the hinterlands but **also inside ports and inland terminals**.

SUSPORT Project results surely improved the cooperation and provided a greater integration between the existing bodies and structures in the field of transport. Each player was able in fact to develop ad-hoc **solutions** according to the specific needs and context; the impact was then different but for sure shared within the framework of the Project and therefore

well-known and **potentially replicable in the transport infrastructures and inland terminals of the Alpine regions.**

Based on the results of the cross-border action plans and the pilot actions, **a cross-border strategy** containing list of priority measures, advice on actions to be implemented, governance structures, timeframe and impacts has been realized to enhance port environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

PPs, key stakeholders and invited institutions commit to mainstreaming the cross-border strategy even further by signing an **MoU, giving birth to a concrete long-term cross-border cooperation network on port sustainability and energy efficiency.**

Under the Paris Agreement, the EU has committed itself to cutting its domestic CO2 emissions by at least 40 % till 2030 and move towards a low-carbon economy.

All the partners and stakeholders involved in SUSPORT Project keep an eye on this goal. In fact, SUSPORT addressed the issues related to environmentally friendly transports systems providing a contribution on the overall knowledge on improving the environmental sustainability and energy efficiency in ports in the Programme area.

SUSPORT project worked taking a step forward the challenge of lowering the impact of ports in the externalities affecting also the Alpine Region due to the logistic chain of goods transportation: ports of the Programme area do not have a common model of environmental planning and energy efficiency, and adopt mitigation measures in a non-coordinated way, with a non-homogeneous result in terms of environmental protection. SUSPORT strengthened the institutional capacity and cross-border governance of the ports of the Programme Area, enhancing their environmental sustainability and energy efficiency.

A major challenge for EUSALP is also the commitment of political stakeholders. The AG4 deals with passengers and freight transport and the latter are usually the more political ones and the most difficult to solve. The dialogue events foreseen by AG4 should not be political; they should rather be mostly technical but as a following stage the results of the events will be presented and must led to a political discussion with political commitment.

SUSPORT has facilitated the fulfilment of this scope, by generating a lot of studies and analysis on territorial needs, technologies, pilot actions, strategies and by creating events of dissemination such as workshops, press articles, technical conferences.

SUSPORT activities tested that objectives can be achieved by applying a mix of new technologies (e.g. the replacement of public lighting system, electric cars, cold ironing), renewable energy sources (e.g. photovoltaic panels) and ITsystems. In this context, also monitoring devices and data analysis play a key role: they allow the control of the air/water quality and the main sources of pollution (e.g. maritime and road trafficinside the port), thus, feeding better action plans.

The cross-border strategy of the SUSPORT project

The whole experience conducted within SUSPORT Project highlighted some important needs that can be considered as points of reference in the cross-border strategy to improve environmental sustainability and energy efficiency in ports and, as highlighted in previous chapters, in the EUSALP area:

PILLAR 1: DECARBONISATION:

- Enlarging the on-shore power supply also known as “cold ironing” action to improve air quality in the ports;
- Analyse possible carbon pricing mechanisms, such as carbon taxes or emissions trading schemes, to incentivize port users and operators to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions;
- Assess the energy production through renewable sources;
- Encourage the use of low-carbon transportation modes, such as electric and hybrid plug-in vehicles, by port employees and visitors;
- Encourage the use of alternative fuels in port operations and transportation;
- Develop a green port certification programme that recognizes ports for their achievements in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting environmental sustainability, being coherent with the EU strategies;

PILLAR 2: ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

- Implement an efficient Environmental Management System, including the so-called carbon management;
- Implement carbon management programmes to measure, report, and verify their greenhouse gas emissions;
- Report environmental and carbon performance of the ports through sustainability reports, environmental impact assessments, and carbon footprint reports;

PILLAR 3: HARMONIZATION OF POLICIES AND ACTIONS:

- Promote the adoption of common standards and guidelines, and advocating for the integration of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency into relevant policies and regulations at the national and EU levels;
- Develop a common framework for environmental sustainability and energy efficiency that is agreed upon by all participating ports and provide the basis for the standardisation of environmental protection measures;

- Enhance the alliance between the ports to promote collaboration and knowledge sharing on environmental sustainability and energy efficiency;
- Conduct comparative analysis of the environmental sustainability and energy efficiency policies and actions of different ports in the same region or across borders.

These pillars of the SUSPORT cross-border strategy **can be considered as points of reference** in the strategic definition process within national and transnational organizations and also as hints for the development of future Projects **in the field of environmental sustainability of the Alpine region**.

SUSPORT policy recommendations for EUSALP

SUSPORT, according to its Project's experience and the cross-border strategy to improve ports environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, gathers some **policy recommendations** for the EUSALP Strategy that can sustain the strategic development process to foster the modernization of transport infrastructures and enhancing cooperation in the logistic sector, to be presented to the EUSALP Action Group no. 4 on mobility.

With the main objective to **enhance logistic infrastructures environmental sustainability and energy efficiency**, the following policy recommendations have been identified and represent the high-level strategical heritage left by SUSPORT Project:

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°1: SUPPORTING AN INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE

There is a need to **sustain an integrated governance**, that enables a factual sharing of best practices, analysing the situation, and developing action plans in the field of environmental sustainability and energy efficiency, to overcome the weak coordination and communication of all stakeholders, both in increasing competences at the local level and mutual learning among ports, inland terminal and other logistic infrastructure of different countries, and joint medium and long-term planning.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°2: REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS

There is a need to sustain the objective of significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving climate neutrality by introducing more ambitious policies aimed at reducing dependence on fossil fuels and in synergy with the commitment to eliminate pollution. The activities planned and included in the action plan with this objective contribute to the fight against climate change through the implementation of **green interventions allowing to guide the ports, inland terminal and other logistic infrastructure, as part of the overall logistic chain, towards that ecological transition that will lead to a zero-emission system**.

Among the main initiatives regarding the related policy, the followings can be highlighted: the transition to new technologies and alternative fuels with low or zero "carbon footprint", the promotion of sustainable transport methods within the port such as a port-shuttle system

or hydrogen powered trucks to transfer containers in the port area, the introduction of carbon capture and storage, etc.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°3: FOCUSING ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY & PROMOTING THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

Great attention, nowadays, has to be paid for taking successfully energy optimization related measures aimed at improving energy efficiency and promoting the use of renewable energy. These measures are involving works, facilities, structures, and actions as a result of investments made with the aim of **improving energy efficiency and produce energy from renewable sources**.

Among the main initiatives regarding the related policy, the followings can be highlighted: the transition to new energy-saving lighting systems, solar panels and smart grids, electric and hybrid vehicles, the introduction of on-shore power supply (cold ironing system), photovoltaic systems, and the employment of alternative energy sources such as LNG and biomass, etc.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°4: INCENTIVE SCHEMES AND NEW RULES

Public institutions have an important role to play in engaging actors in the logistic community to be more environmentally friendly and facilitate through initiatives the implementation of best environmental practices and the encouragement of measures aimed at improving energy efficiency and promoting the use of renewable energy. Within this overall framework of policies, which aim to increasing environmental sustainability and energy efficiency through the introduction of rules, priorities, facilitations, incentive mechanisms etc., the contribution to reducing GHG emissions is potentially high.

Among the main initiatives regarding the related policy, the followings can be highlighted: incentive schemes to support port operators investing in less energy intensive facilities/equipment and/or renewable energy sources, new rules or discounts on berth fees for efficient, low CO_{2eq} vessels, etc.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°5: EUSALP AG4 2023-2025 OBJECTIVES

In the framework of the new 2023-2025 EUSALP AG4 workplan, a decarbonization strategy for **ports and inland terminal** can be considered as part of Objective n°1 “Smart clean logistics and policy measures in freight transport to support modal shift (rail and combined and multimodal transport)”.

These infrastructures play an important role in the overall environmental impact of the logistic chain affecting the Alpine region as well; thus, the opportunity to engage them to stimulate an innovative and sustainable model of transport and a more inclusive environmental framework for all as well as renewable and reliable energy solutions for the Alpine logistic nodes of the future.