

Policy recommendations for the EUSALP

Activity 5.2

DELIVERABLE D.5.2.3

The EUSALP strategy and its governance



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 Adriatic and Ionian 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.



EUSALP participating countries

The EUSALP aims to bring a **new impetus for co-operation and investment** to the benefit of all involved: States, regions, civil society stakeholders and, above all, European citizens. It will build on a **long tradition of cooperation in the Alps**, and will seek to complement, rather than duplicate existing co-operation structures.

The Strategy will build upon three general action-oriented **thematic policy areas** and **one cross-cutting policy area**:

- **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
- **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.

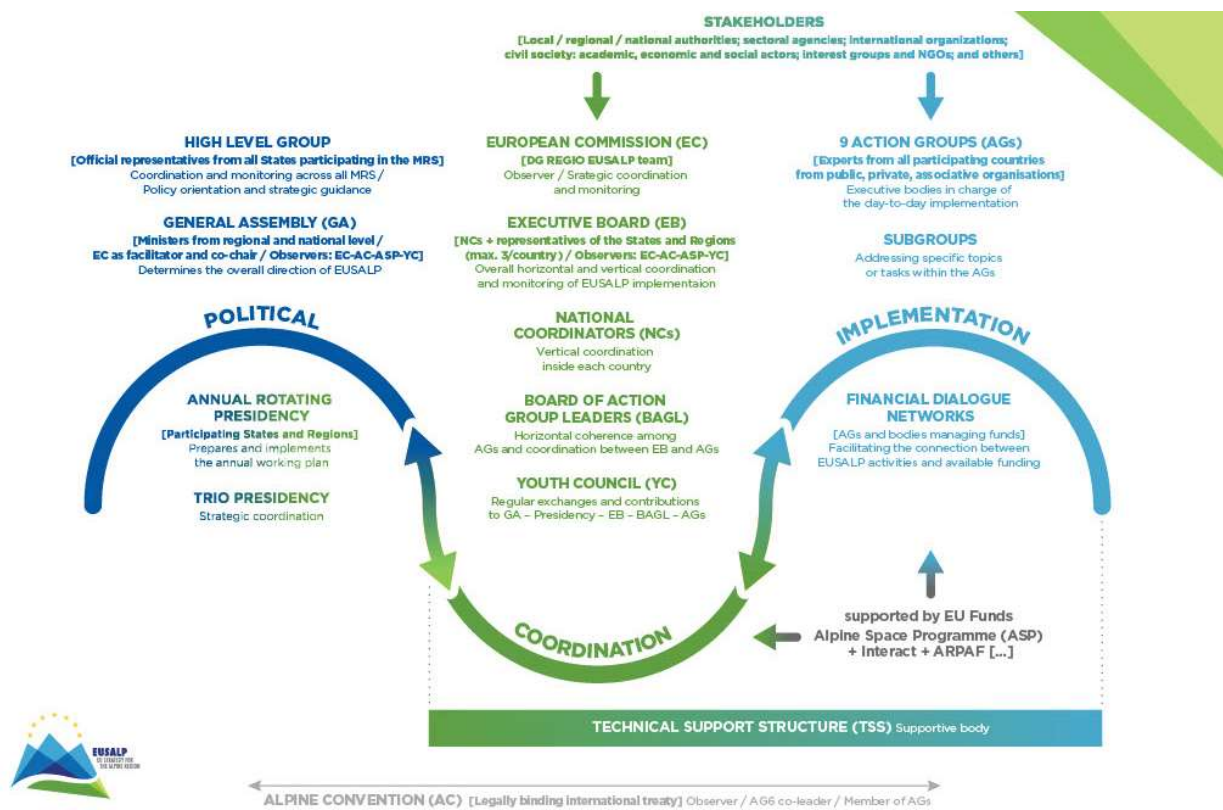
OBJECTIVE 1: Fostering sustainable growth and promoting innovation in the Alps: from theory to practice, from research centres to enterprises.

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 PROMARES 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.

Governance in macro-regional strategies is not about new funds nor bureaucracy, but how and by whom the strategies are implemented, and joint actions initiated and financed. Governance must have both a political and operational dimension, with line ministries and implementing bodies setting strategic objectives, and then making sure the work is strictly followed up. This will give clearer results and greater impact.



EUSALP Governance scheme

The **General Assembly** gathers the high-level political representatives of States and Regions involved in the Strategy, the European Commission, and the Alpine Convention as observer.

The **Executive Board** is formed by representatives of States and Regions and representatives from the European Commission, and as Observers, the Alpine Convention and the Alpine Space Transnational Programme. It oversees the

implementation of the EUSALP and it is meant to provide strategic guidance with respect to management and implementation of the EUSALP and its Action Plan.

The core of the implementation level is the **Action Groups and Action Group leaders. The Action Group leaders are the drivers of day-to-day implementation.** Their role, capacities, resources and engagement are key elements to the success of the Strategy.

The EUSALP strategy matching with PROMARES 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 Multimodal freight transport dealt with the **PROMARES Project**.

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.

PROMARES project has been fairly defined as EUSALP strategy-coherent since has been able to enhance maritime and multimodal freight transport planning competences providing a contribution on the overall knowledge of physical and non-physical bottlenecks and to enhance maritime and multimodal freight transport capacities through the use of ICT supporting transport stakeholders and policy makers in streamlining freight flows between port and the hinterland and at cross-border level through the use of ICT tools. This second objective has been achieved through the realisation of Pilot Actions: the main Italian and Croatian ports in the Adriatic and Ionian Region were able both to upgrade some ICT features of their Port Community systems and to become parts of a wider interconnected network.

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.

For the AG4 implementation initiative on modal shift, the AG4 commissioned a stakeholder analysis in the second half of 2021 to identify and show the relationship between the key actors in freight transport. Building on the results of the analysis, AG4 will organise dialogue events in different parts of the Alpine Region to gather those actors (public and private sectors, ministries, public bodies at regional levels, ports, terminals...) and identify concrete solutions. The events will form valuable input to draw policy recommendations for a coherent modal shift policy.

The stakeholder analysis was conducted with the aim to identify stakeholders and their interests to provide input to dialogue events. The expected outcomes of these events are actionable policy recommendations for effective implementation of modal shift measures organized in seven cluster topics:

■ Pricing instruments for modal shift

Financial instruments (taxes, fees, charges and tolls) vs financial support (AlpInnoCT D1.1.1, SmartLogi D.3.3.1).

■ Support measures for Combined transport

Push measures: financial instruments (taxes, fees, charges and tolls), as well as technical and regulatory constraints (orders and bans); pull measures: exemptions from bans, financial support, liberalization/permits (AlpInnoCT D1.1.1, SmartLogi D.3.3.1)

■ Identification of capacity constraints/missing links/infrastructure needs

New/upgraded lines/ terminals

■ Management of rail infrastructures

Freight train priority, European Signalling system

■ Supporting efficiency improvements (e.g. avoiding empty runs, improving load management, etc.)

Cooperation, organizational and technical measures, freight matching

■ Supporting new technologies for intermodal transport (“smart rail”, “smart CT”)

(Harmonization of) Data exchange, tracking and tracing of wagons, partial automation (shunting)

■ Overcoming barriers for small companies to make use of intermodal transport

Increased organizational and personnel costs, “critical mass” vs train load, cooperation

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.

PROMARES involved many subjects in the Adriatic and Ionian area and was able to do this, by sharing among them 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 can 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 PROMARES 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 PROMARES Lead Partner already responded to the invitation of organising a dedicated workshop of digitization. Digitisation was a key challenge for the Port of Trieste and surely is a key challenge for the whole Brenner corridor since the Strategy it is obviously oriented to it, involving actors and partners from different countries and regions in a macro regional perspective. Sharing PROMARES results will surely give a valuable input to draw policy recommendations for a coherent modal shift policy.

The EUSALP area covers not only the areas of the Alpine convention (the mountainous area) but also other regions 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 between ports and inland terminals.

PROMARES Project results surely affects the connection between the ports and hinterlands since the modules of the Port Community Systems of the main ports and hubs in the Adriatic and Ionian basin have been upgraded through the implemented Pilot Actions. Trieste and its RRT, Venice, Ravenna, Ancona, Bari & Brindisi, Rijeka and Ploče had the chance to implement specific ICT pilots on their PCSs (e.g. Suite based on data from cameras to ensure goods traceability, Integration of Railway telematics system, OCR gates, Back-up and disaster recovery systems, etc.) so as to optimise multimodal operations through digital data exchange with terminal and logistic operators. 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.

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. As a part of these efforts, the European Commission put forward a set of legislative proposals targeting the transport sector (the 'Europe on the move' mobility package). This review of Directive 92/106/EEC on combined transport of goods between Member States ('the Combined transport directive') is one of them. The Combined transport directive is the only EU legal instrument that directly supports the shift from road freight to lower emission transport modes (inland waterways, maritime transport and rail). Over the last 25 years, the directive has helped to shift a considerable amount of freight away from road. However, shortcomings in its implementation (ambiguous language, outdated provisions and limited support measures) have diminished its impact. With the proposal, the Commission seeks to simplify the rules for combined transport (CT) and to make it more attractive through economic incentives, while the overall objective remains encouraging the shift of goods from road transport to more environmentally friendly modes.

The AG4 is obviously looking with great interest the revision of the 'Combined transport directive' being the **support the modal shift from road to rail** one of its main objectives. The real need is to find a good balance on how to promote modal shift: the rail transport should be the means of transport for the long distance but then there should be a combined transport when it comes to transport and distribute the goods within the last mile.

Likewise, all the partners and stakeholders involved in PROMARES Project keep an eye on the 'Combined transport directive' revision. In fact, PROMARES addressed the issues

related to the low operational and institutional cooperation between each port and its hinterland and between logistic nodes at cross-border level that are hindering the competitiveness and attractiveness of maritime and multimodal freight and additional modal shift from road to rail/sea. PROMARES therefore paved the way for the solution of these issues through the cross-border cooperation aiming at harmonising different administrative, organisational and institutional structures on the two sides of the Adriatic Sea, by involving the competent institutions and relevant operators. The Directive revision will be an important step forward the solution of the above-mentioned issues.

When it comes to the digitization of the logistic chains AG4 believes that the major challenge is the **data exchange**. Looking at the North Sea Ports, large part of the operations is already fully digitized and all the ICT tools are already in place. The main barrier is therefore the data exchange to let the hubs work transparently together. The overcoming of this barrier would help in having a common macro-regional vision. In Europe in general seems to lack a big picture when it comes to open and data exchange and that's because operators and transport logistic companies are afraid of competition.

PROMARES project worked taking a step forward the challenge of ensuring a secure exchange of data. The approach of PROMARES is based on the idea that a consistent group of stakeholders, that insist in a common geographical area, can release winning solutions on multimodal transport field by following two fundamental steps:

- 1) being connected each other into a **common framework** that reduces the distance in terms of interests and potential conflicts and highlights the idea that a real sustainable growth is not exclusive but inclusive.
- 2) implementing **innovative soft measures** (through realisation of pilot actions) that using smart technologies can simplify the operations, increase the secure exchange of information among the stakeholders of the handling chains and therefore increase the multimodal transport of freight.

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.

A lot of the bottlenecks that block the development of Intermodality can be easily dissolved, if the political commitment is strong. For this reason, the cooperation level has to be set also at higher level: national entities like Ministries should talk each other and listen to the opportunities, coming from the implementation of **soft management measures** and from the adoption of new **smart and technological systems**. Most of the time the investment cost of these solutions is low compared to the return on the efficiency of logistic processes and thus on Intermodality.

PROMARES 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 training seminar, press articles, interviews with institutional subjects, technical conferences.

PROMARES policy recommendations for EUSALP

PROMARES – according to its Project's experience – gathers some **policy recommendations** for the EUSALP Strategy that can sustain the strategic development process to foster Intermodality and to be presented to the EUSALP Action Group no. 4 on mobility.

With the main objective to **tackle the challenges and develop more efficient and rapid intermodal and multimodal transport flows**, the following policy recommendations have been identified and represent the high-level strategical heritage left by PROMARES Project:

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°1: SUPPORTING AN INTEGRATED GOVERNANCE

*The need to sustain an **integrated governance**, that enables a factual sharing of best practices, transport planning competences, data and ICT solutions to overcome the weak coordination and communication of all stakeholders, both between each port and its hinterland and between ports at cross-border level.*

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°2: INTEGRATING PORT IT SYSTEMS

*The uppermost **importance of the Port Community Systems** in the capacity to manage effectively and coordinately both people and freight transport flows that are going in and out from the nodes of the logistic multimodal chain and the integration of the other systems of the port community.*

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°3: FOCUSING INVESTMENTS ON ICT

The powerful effect of ICT lever, compared in terms of investment cost with the physical infrastructures. Lower costs can produce bigger results especially in the first phases of a process re-engineering.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION N°4: FOCUSING ON CYBER SECURITY

*The great attention that, nowadays, has to be paid for ensuring a **solid Cyber Security** of PCSs and related suites, especially in the direction of a higher opening-up with stakeholders and new players.*

Considering the outcomes of the analyses conducted and of the interactions observed both within the project partnership and towards the institutional stakeholders interviewed, PROMARES aims at setting relevant objectives to be pursued within the above-mentioned recommendations, to contribute to the topic of the development of freight transport at cross-border level and **to be considered by all Institutions and Subjects that can determine the successful development of the maritime and multimodal freight transport:**

- OBJECTIVE_1: Create long-term and “agile” governance structures, with the scope of addressing correctly the priorities.
- OBJECTIVE_2: Reduce fragmentation by ensuring communication and coordination at national level, in order to guarantee a related and efficient cooperation at higher cross-border level.
- OBJECTIVE_3: Digitalization is a key step, but a new technology should be adopted only if it is mature (everybody can use it) and enables a better communication among stakeholders, improving their level of interaction.

Indeed, the whole experience conducted within PROMARES Project highlighted some important needs that can be considered as points of reference in the strategic definition process within national and transnational organizations:

- **SHARING INFORMATION AS COMMUNITY.** Knowledge has become fundamental, especially referred to those new technologies that can ensure successful logistic processes. Port Community Systems nowadays can embrace a higher number of players and modules, putting them together under the same I&C umbrella. Some Port Authorities or Relevant business entities are already experimenting significant benefits from the implementation of new tech applied to business and logistic processes, while some others can have more difficulties mainly due to a lack of knowledge of the better opportunities to exploit, much more than a lack of money to invest. Creating modern repositories of best practices and knowledge, e.g. by using a social network communication, can represent a possible way to facilitate the dialogue among all the subjects and to move close to a concept of Community. It is crucial to overcome the bottleneck due to the risk of losing control on data; this can be only guaranteed by a strong institutional approach on cyber-security matter.
- **TRANSNATIONAL THROUGH NATIONAL LEVEL.** It is fundamental to have effective cross-border cooperation to develop winning multimodal solutions. The cohesion of national networks has to be solid upstream to sustain a successful transnational level of cooperation. This is especially true in bigger Countries, where the fragmentation of territories, cultures and business approaches is stronger. Transnational entities such as Macro Strategies, despite their low operative impact, have an important role in terms of “moral suasion”, especially in crisis and difficult situations. Supranational entities as the European Commission can instead give a strategic direction, fixing common objectives that have to be pursued. However, in the current scenario it is essential to establish the cooperation first of all on a national level, which is the premise for a transnational one.
- **SOFT & LEAN GUIDANCE APPROACH.** The need to rely on national and supranational institutional structures that offer a guidance and address the needs and priorities of the development processes is strong but the type of sustain has to be based on a soft-skilled approach, that can be recognized as “lean” by the different stakeholders.