

SmartCommUnity Project

AG9 Meetings

Report on the AG9 meetings and their relationship with
SmartCommUnity activities

The INTERREG Alpine Space SmartCommUnity project | OCTOBER 2025

University of Ljubljana (Lead partner)

Poliedra - Research and Consultancy Centre of Milan's Polytechnic University on Environmental

ANCI Liguria

Standortagentur Tirol GmbH

Verband Region Südlicher Oberrhein

ITC – Innovation Technology Cluster Murska Sobota

Association for the networked development of territories and services

Autonomous Region of Valle d'Aosta

Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria

Region Lucerne West

Swiss Center for mountain regions

Software Competence Center Hagenberg GmbH

Project ref. Interreg Alpine Space SmartCommUnity, ASP0100041

Deliverable No. D.1.6.1

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Publishing date 05/11/2025

The Project is co-funded by the
European Union through the
Interreg Alpine Space programme



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Introduction

Within the framework of the SmartCommUnity project (*“Building on the concept of Smart Villages towards a transnational and EUSALP-integrated Smart Community in the Alps”*), the Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria (eNu) has played a key role in linking project outcomes to Alpine macro-regional policy structures.

Within the SmartCommUnity project eNu aims to strengthen regions by fostering digitalisation, smart community development, climate protection, renewable energy use, and climate change adaptation.

In this context, collaboration with the **EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP)** and particularly with **Action Group 9 (AG9) – “Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy”** is of high strategic relevance.

EUSALP connects 48 regions in 7 countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Slovenia, Switzerland) with more than 80 million inhabitants and provides a shared policy framework for cross-border cooperation in innovation, environment, energy, mobility and governance.

Through its active participation, **eNu acted as a key interface** between the SmartCommUnity partnership and the EUSALP governance structures. This was achieved by **regularly reporting on SmartCommUnity during the AG9 meetings throughout the entire project period.**

As shown by the attached photos and meeting programmes, AG9 partners were continuously involved in the project’s activities and discussions.

This strong integration ensured that SmartCommUnity results were presented and discussed within the AG9 network, allowing valuable feedback and knowledge exchange.

At the same time, the expertise and policy know-how from AG9 members could flow back into the project, thereby enriching its outputs and aligning them with Alpine macro-regional strategies.

Such two-way exchange represents a good practice for EU cooperation projects, as it strengthens policy impact, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability of project results.



Integration of SmartCommUnity into the EUSALP Action Group 9 Work Plan

EUSALP Action Group 9 (AG9) aims to make the Alpine region a **model area for renewable energy and energy efficiency**. It promotes cooperation and knowledge exchange between public authorities, research institutions, and energy agencies to accelerate the energy transition in the Alps. AG9's mission is grounded in the EU Green Deal, the REPowerEU Plan, and the Energy Union Package, focusing on reducing carbon dependency and fostering resilient, low-carbon Alpine communities.

According to its **2023–2025 Work Plan**, AG9 is structured around five key thematic areas:

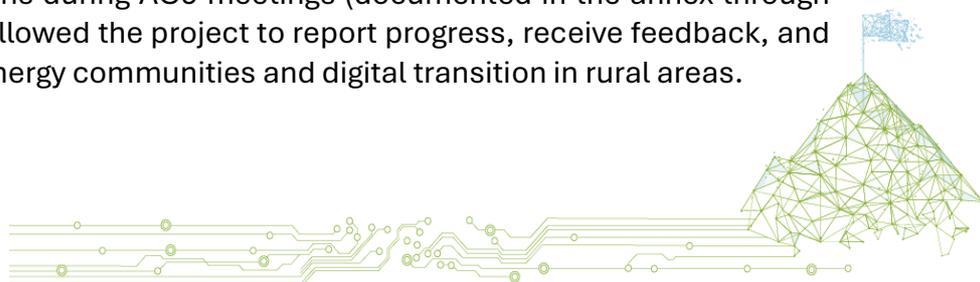
- Establishing an **Energy Observatory** for harmonised data collection across Alpine regions;
- Promoting the **use and production of green hydrogen**;
- Supporting **energy communities and smart communities**;
- Improving **energy efficiency in SMEs and the building sector**;
- Advancing **CO₂ compensation schemes and awareness-raising** for sustainable energy policies.

AG9 serves as an important policy and networking platform that brings together representatives from ministries, regional and local authorities, universities, and energy agencies to align strategies and exchange good practices. The group is co-led by CasaClima (Italy) and AURA-EE (France) and involves members and observers from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and Slovenia, as well as the European Commission (DG REGIO, DG ENER), the Alpine Convention, and the Alpine Space Programme.

A major recognition of the **SmartCommUnity project's strategic relevance** was its **inclusion in the official EUSALP AG9 Work Plan 2023–2025**. Within the AG9 subgroup on Energy Communities and Smart Communities, led by the Energy Agency Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria (eNu), SmartCommUnity is explicitly mentioned as a **flagship cooperation activity**.

The Work Plan highlights SmartCommUnity as part of the cross-cutting priority *“Promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region”*, fostering collaboration between AG9 and AG5. This makes SmartCommUnity one of the few Alpine Space projects officially embedded in the macro-regional strategy framework – an exceptional achievement for project visibility and policy alignment.

Through eNu's active engagement in AG9, the SmartCommUnity partnership was able to ensure **continuous exchange with policy-level stakeholders** across the Alpine macro-region. Regular presentations during AG9 meetings (documented in the annex through photos and programmes) allowed the project to report progress, receive feedback, and co-shape discussions on energy communities and digital transition in rural areas.



This two-way integration between SmartCommUnity and AG9 generated concrete synergies:

- Project results were directly communicated to regional and national policy actors;
- AG9 expertise and policy know-how were integrated into the project's outputs;
- The project contributed to the AG9 flagship priorities, notably by supporting smart rural communities and sustainable digitalisation.

Being referenced in an official EUSALP work plan is a **significant policy impact indicator** for a transnational Alpine Space project. It demonstrates that SmartCommUnity has gone beyond pilot-level cooperation and has become part of the strategic governance framework for energy transition in the Alpine Region.

Figure 1: Excerpts from the EUSALP AG9 Work Plan 2023-2025 (page 5, page 8, page 11). The complete work plan is available for download here: <https://www.alpine-region.eu/action-groups-publications/ag9-work-plan-2023-2025>

3. Energy communities and smart communities in the EUSALP

Leader: Energy Agency Friuli Venezia Giulia and Energy and Environment Agency Lower Austria

Goal: To capitalize and disseminate project results, to develop common project proposals in cross-border and transnational programmes, to showcase good practices and pilots in the field of energy communities and smart communities. AG 9 leads activities on energy communities, while AG 5 has the lead on smart communities. Both AGs collaborate through the ASP **SmartCommUnity** project and the cross-sectoral priority "Promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region". Synergies emerge from this cooperation and ensure cross-fertilization in the respective AGs.

4. Energy efficiency in enterprises and the building sector

Leader: Energy Agency South Tyrol - CasaClima

Partners : Energy Agency Friuli-Venezia Giulia; Action Group 2

Goals: To map relevant projects and instruments, to develop checklists and policy recommendations, and to improve awareness among stakeholder through a public event.



PRIORITIES 2023-2025

5. Key issues and activities

Action Group 9 will focus its activities in the perspective of the current needs and policy objectives on European, national and regional level. The AG will actively reach out to relevant projects funded under different programmes.

a. Promote Smart Villages/Smart communities and digitalization of the energy sector

The goal of this activity is to promote a network of smart rural areas with a common smarter and greener vision for their communities. The activities in the period 2023-25 include:

- 2023-2025: Regular updates on the results of the Alpine Space [SmartCommUnity](#) project and support to the AG5 concerning the refinement of the smart community concept in the cross-cutting priority "Promoting digitalisation for local communities and economic players in the Alpine Region" led by AG5.
- 2024: Based in the project results best practices will be identified and knowledge transfer will be intensified.

During the previous budget period 2014-21, Alpine Space projects have addressed this topic, in particular the Smartvillage and Alpgrids projects.

Activities in the Work Plan period 2022-2025 will include:

- Capitalization and dissemination of AlpGrids, Smart village results, and ongoing projects such as [SmartCommUnity](#)
- Common project development in cross-border programmes (France-Switzerland, Alcotra (France-Italy), ...)
- Showcasing of good practices and pilots through the EUSALP Energy Award 2024 that could be organized under the umbrella of the Slovenian Presidency
- Development of policy recommendations 2024 and presentation during the EUSALP Energy Award 2024

eNu's Role and Activities

Throughout the project, **eNu has played a pivotal role in connecting SmartCommUnity with the EUSALP governance framework**, ensuring continuous knowledge exchange, policy alignment, and stakeholder engagement. Acting as a bridge between the SmartCommUnity partnership and **EUSALP Action Group 9 (AG9)**, eNu enabled the project to reach key actors from policy, regional and national energy agencies, universities, and public administrations across the Alpine Region.

Through its active participation, **eNu ensured regular and effective exchange** between SmartCommUnity and AG9, presenting project outputs, collecting feedback, and facilitating their integration into AG9 activities and policy work. This ongoing collaboration contributed to the inclusion of SmartCommUnity in the **EUSALP AG9 Work**



Plan 2023–2025, under the thematic priority “*Promoting energy and smart communities*”, thus positioning the project as a recognised initiative supporting Alpine-wide energy transition objectives.

Participation in AG9 Meetings (2022–2025)

Between 2022 and 2025, eNu continuously **reported on SmartCommUnity developments during AG9 meetings and workshops**, providing updates on pilot activities, digital solutions, and policy recommendations. These regular contributions ensured **high visibility and policy uptake** of project results within the Alpine macro-regional governance structures.

Attached documentation (meeting programmes and photos) demonstrates that AG9 partners were consistently involved in the project’s discussions and outputs, creating valuable two-way knowledge exchange. This integration not only improved the project’s strategic relevance but also enabled AG9’s know-how to inform SmartCommUnity’s work on energy communities and smart rural areas.

Dissemination and Stakeholder Engagement: the “*Climate & Me*” Exhibition

In addition to its policy engagement, **eNu showcased SmartCommUnity and EUSALP AG9 themes to a broad public audience** through the travelling exhibition “Climate & Me”. The exhibition highlights everyday climate action and regional energy transition solutions and has been visited by thousands of citizens across Austria and in other European countries.

As part of this outreach activity, SmartCommUnity materials and insights were presented in the context of Alpine cooperation, illustrating how digitalisation and energy communities contribute to climate resilience in the Alpine Region. This dissemination measure extended the project’s impact beyond professional networks, reaching schools, municipalities, and regional decision-makers, and raising awareness of Alpine-wide energy and digital transformation efforts.



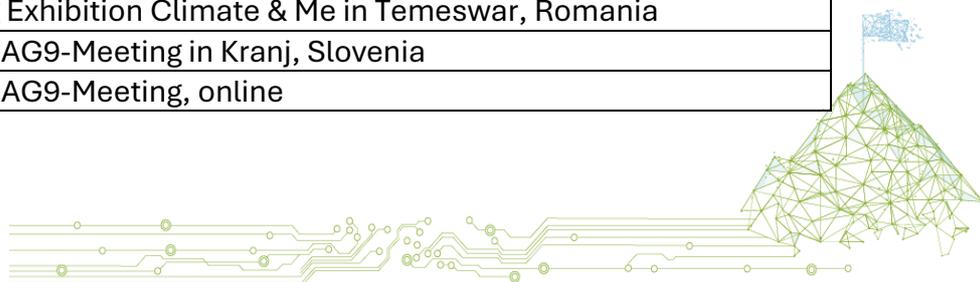


Figure 3: Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Elzach, Germany, together with PP Verein Region Südlicher Oberrhein (04.04.2024)

Overall, eNu’s role as an **active AG9 member, national energy agency, and dissemination multiplier** has been instrumental in ensuring that SmartCommUnity’s results are not only technically sound but also **politically anchored, widely visible, and socially relevant** across the Alpine macro-region.

Figure 4: eNu’s participation in AG9 Meetings (2022 - 2025) and international openings of the exhibition “Climate & Me”

13.12.2022	EUSALP AG9-Meeting, online
13.01.2023	17 th EUSALP AG9-Meeting, online
23.01.2023	Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Bratislava, Slovakia
09.03.2023	18 th EUSALP AG9 Meeting in Moûtiers, France
22.05.2023	Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Bijeljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina
02.06.2023	Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Győr, Hungary
06.07.2023	EUSALP AG9-Meeting, online
12.07.2023	Workshop to identify topics for the EUSLAP chairmanship 2025 in Vienna, Austria
04.10.2023	EUSALP AG9-Meeting in Innsbruck, Austria
31.10.2023	Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Veszprém, Hungary
11.12.2023	EUSALP AG Meeting Alpine Space, online
26.03.2024	EUSALP AG9-Meeting, online
04.04.2024	Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Elzach, Germany (together with PP VRSO)
09.10.2024	Opening Exhibition Climate & Me in Temeswar, Romania
13.-15.11.2024	EUSALP AG9-Meeting in Kranj, Slovenia
27.03.2025	EUSALP AG9-Meeting, online



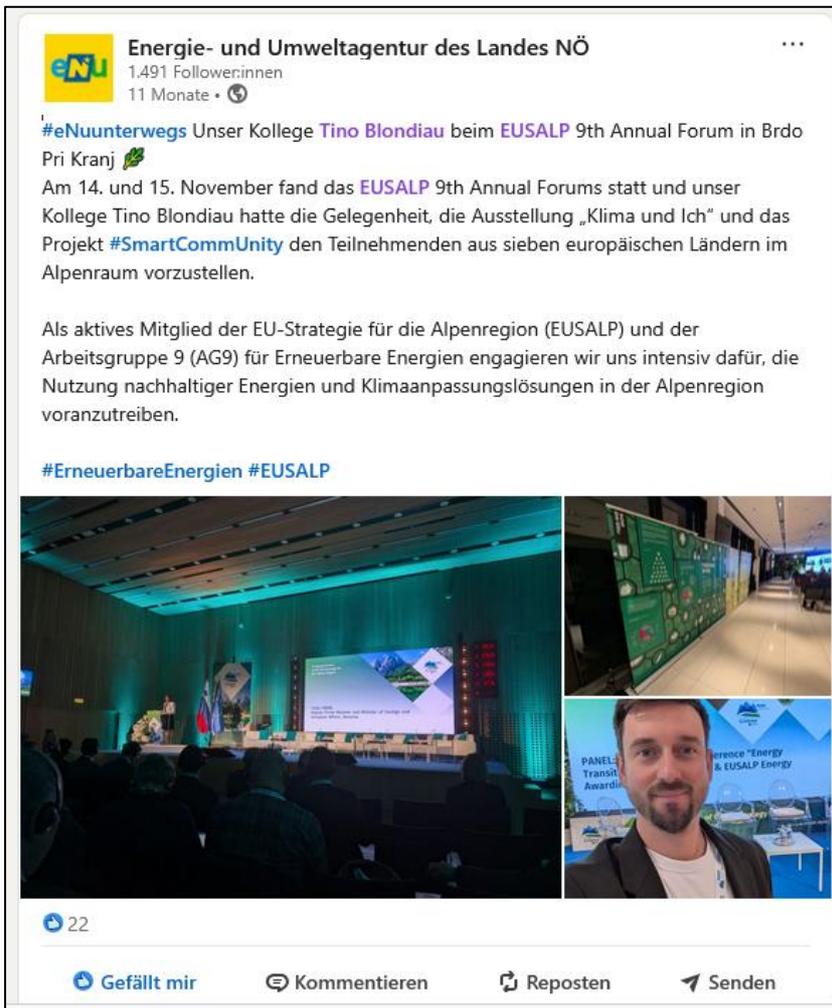
22.05.2025	EUSALP AG9 Workshop on Policy, online
15.09.2025	EUSALP Workshop „State of the Territory“ in Innsbruck, Austria
22.09.2025	EUSALP AG Meeting Alpine Space in Vienna, Austria

Social media presence



Figure 5: LinkedIn-post from eNu about the Workshop to identify topics for the EUSLAP chairmanship 2025 (Vienna, 12.07.2023)





eNu Energie- und Umweltagentur des Landes NÖ
1.491 Follower:innen
11 Monate • 

#eNuunterwegs Unser Kollege **Tino Blondiau** beim **EUSALP** 9th Annual Forum in Brdo Pri Kranj 🌿

Am 14. und 15. November fand das **EUSALP** 9th Annual Forums statt und unser Kollege Tino Blondiau hatte die Gelegenheit, die Ausstellung „Klima und Ich“ und das Projekt **#SmartCommUnity** den Teilnehmenden aus sieben europäischen Ländern im Alpenraum vorzustellen.

Als aktives Mitglied der EU-Strategie für die Alpenregion (EUSALP) und der Arbeitsgruppe 9 (AG9) für Erneuerbare Energien engagieren wir uns intensiv dafür, die Nutzung nachhaltiger Energien und Klimaanpassungslösungen in der Alpenregion voranzutreiben.

#ErneuerbareEnergien #EUSALP



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Figure 6: LinkedIn-post from eNu about the EUSALP AG9-Meeting in Kranj, Slovenia (13.-15.11.2024)



Annexes

1. Minutes of the 17th EUSALP AG9 meeting, 13.01.2023, online
2. Agenda of the 18th EUSALP AG9 Meeting, 09.03.2023, Moûtiers, France
3. Minutes of the EUSALP AG9 Meeting, 06.07.2023, online
4. Agenda of the EUSALP AG9 Meeting, 26.03.2024, online
5. Supportive presentation of the EUSALP AG9 Meeting, 26.03.2024, online
6. Minutes of the EUSALP AG9 Meeting, 15.11.2024, Kranj (Slovenia)





Minutes of the 17th EUSALP AG 9 meeting

13th January 2023, 10:00 – 12:00

online

Participants:

1	Benjamin Auer	Energy Agency South Tyrol - CasaClima
2	Ulrich Santa	Energy Agency South Tyrol - CasaClima
3	Etienne Vienot	Energy and Environment Agency Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes
4	Nathalie Morelle	Alpine Convention
5	Giacomo Luciani	DG Regio
6	Patrick Biard	Energy and Environment Agency Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes
7	Valentina D'Alonzo	EURAC Research
8	Tino Blondiau	Energy and Environment Agency Lower Austria
9	Nuno Madeira	Alpine Space Program
10	Stefano Sala	Technical Support Structure
11	Maren Meyer	Energy Agency South Tyrol - CasaClima
12	Martina Arteni	Energy Agency Friuli Venezia Giulia
13	Francesco Locatelli	Energy Agency Friuli Venezia Giulia
14	Silvio De Nigris	Piedmont Region
15	Peter Jamer	Region Vorarlberg
16	Nora Leszcynski	CIPRA International
17	Francesca Verardo	IRE Liguria

Agenda:

Welcome and opening of the meeting

News of interest to the Action Group

1. Outcomes of the EUSALP General Assembly, November 2022, Trento
2. Swiss Presidency 2023 Programme

Elaboration of Work Plan 2023-2025

1. Energy data collection (CERVINO), Valentina D'Alonzo, EURAC & Francesca Verardo, IRE Liguria
2. Energy efficiency in enterprises (CAESAR II), Benjamin Auer, ACC
3. Energy efficiency in buildings, Benjamin Auer, ACC
4. Cross-sectoral activity: Hydrogen (Amethyst), Etienne Vienot, AURA-EE
5. Energy communities, Martina Arteni and Francesco Locatelli, APE FVG
6. Cross-sectoral activity: Smart Villages, Tino Blondiau, eNU Lower Austria
7. Cross-sectoral activity: Renewable energy roll-out and landscape protection; ACC
8. Cross-sectoral activity: CO2 compensation, Maren Meyer, ACC
9. Communication: Energy Conference 2023-2025 & EUSALP Energy Award, Maren Meyer; ACC

Any other issues

1. Follow-up: meeting of task force leaders to finalize work plan
2. Announcement: 8-9 March: AMETHyST public event and 18th EUSALP Action Group 9 meeting, Etienne Vienot, AURA-EE

End of the meeting

Minutes:

WELCOMING OF PARTICIPANTS AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Ulrich Santa and **Patrick Biard** welcome the participants and adopt the agenda.

ITEM 1: NEWS OF RELEVANCE TO THE AG (MAREN MEYER)

1. Outcomes of the EUSALP General Assembly

Maren Meyer presents the results of the EUSALP General Assembly (GA) that was held on 24th of November in Trento in the framework of the Annual Forum 2022. She informed that the under the Italian Presidency, the representatives of the Regions and States of the EUSALP agreed to set up a Rotating order of presidencies starting from 2023. Each Alpine country will preside the strategy within the six-year cycle and Liechtenstein will at co-preside a presidency within each cycle. She pointed out that the General Assembly members confirmed the EUSALP Action Group leaders for the 2023-2025 period. For EUSALP AG9, Patrick Biard and Ulrich Santa were reconfirmed. She explained that one of the main objectives of the Italian Presidency was to review the list of common implementation priorities of EUSALP with the goal to sharpen its political profile out of the ambition to better echo the socio-economic and environmental challenges in the macro-strategy. Accordingly, the GA adopted a decision according to which the MRS shall focus on 5 main topics in the years to come:

- 1) energy transition with the goal to become carbon-neutral;
- 2) circular economy;
- 3) sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources esp. water;
- 4) sustainable mobility;
- 5) digitalization esp. in rural areas.

2. Swiss Presidency programme

Maren Meyer pointed out that the Swiss Presidency will focus on the three topics of circular economy, water and transport/mobility. Over the Presidency year, Switzerland will organize three main events on these topics as well as the EUSALP Annual Forum in October. She asked TSS officer Stefano Sala, whether the Presidency had informed the TSS about how the Presidency intended to collaborate with the AGs, e.g. in co-organizing side-events. **Stefano Sala** confirmed that he would ask the Presidency on how AGs are expected to contribute.

ITEM 2: ELABORATION OF WORK PLAN 2023-2025

Benjamin presented the list of the main priorities of the 2023-2025 work programme. Followed by more detailed presentation of each single activity.

1. Energy data collection (CERVINO), Valentina D'Alonzo, EURAC & Francesca Verardo, IRE Liguria

Francesca Verardo and Valentina D'Alonzo present the project goals and activities, and ask the AG members and observers for support with the following activities:

- engage volunteers from each country to become part of a working group to accompany the compilation of the database for regional energy data and validate the visualization tool (based on the tested French open-source platform *Terristory*);
- establish contact with data owners in the Alpine regions (NUTS 2 Level).

Francesca Verardo informed that within the year 2023 the following activities within the project are planned and asked the EUSALP AG9 members to support the activities:

- Workshop to test the tool in February 2023
- Presentation of the finalized tool during the Annual Forum in October 2023
- Elaboration of details how to establish the EUSALP Energy Observatory (spring 2024)

2. Hydrogen (Etienne Vienot, AURA-EE)

Etienne Vienot explained that the EUSALP H2 focus group will organize 3 meetings per year. The activities in the field of hydrogen will be established through the ASP AMETHyST project. The main events and activities planned so far:

- 8th March 2023: participation conference/study visit for kick-off meeting
- 2023: presentation of H2MA project (ASP) by Energy agency KSENA
- 2024: mid-term conference in Trento and participation to study visit organized by AMETHyST and/or H2MA
- 2025: Participation to study visit and final event (FR)
- Financial dialogue network (complementary of EU funds): Participation to Macroregional Weeks 2023, 2024 and 2025
- Capitalization of cross border project on H2
- Connection with other EU H2 initiatives

He invited the members of the EUSALP AG9 as well as interested observers to join the project kick-off meeting that will take place on 8-9 March in Moûtiers, France.

3. Energy Efficiency in enterprises (CAESAR II)

Benjamin Auer informed about the activities in the field of energy efficiency in enterprises, realized in the framework of the project CAESAR II. In 2023, the project will work on:

- Mapping of relevant tools and projects which enable implementation of energy efficiency analysis and carbon footprinting;
- Method and checklists for energy and carbon footprint analysis for key economic sectors;
- Set of instructions for the utilisation of existing tools in selected economic sectors;
- Organisation of a final transnational workshop in autumn 2023, with the involvement of AGs 2 and 9 and the development of recommendations

By now, no other project development activities are foreseen in the field of energy efficiency in enterprises. However, the EnTrainer project (LIFE) “Energy Transition Audits towards Decarbonization” might be an opportunity for the EUSALP AG9 to remain active in this field. The project consists of the following activities:

- Creation of **holistic Energy Transition Audits (ETA)** methodology
- **training** for auditors, energy experts and company staff
- **web portal and training platform** for continuous interaction and knowledge sharing
- support to industrial sites for the effective implementation of proposed audit measures, bringing together top management and financing bodies and guiding them to exploit existing and future financing opportunities.
- energy audits in 80 energy-intensive industries

Interested AG members are asked to get in contact with Benjamin Auer.

4. Energy efficiency in buildings

A general discussion arose about future activities in the field of energy efficiency. **Silvio De Nigris** underlined the importance to foresee activities throughout the period 2023-2025 due to the energy efficiency potentials that still exist in the building sector. Ulrich Santa supported this viewpoint. Nevertheless, no clear ideas for activities were formulated during the meeting.

5. Energy communities

APE-FVG demonstrated the interest to lead future activities in the field of energy communities. Martina Arteni and Francesco Locatelli presented a list of possible activities to be carried out in the field of energy communities. Due to the lack of time, Martina Arteni proposed to follow up on the definition of activities with the help of an online survey to support the definition of activities in the field. The activities listed during the meeting:

- Capitalization and dissemination of Alpgrids and Smart village results
- Common and cross-border project to be developed in cross-border programs (France-Switzerland, France-Italy, Italy-Austria, Italy-Slovenia, etc.)
- Specific work on landscape integration of RES
- Energy communities as RES vectors for Alpine heritage urban centres
- Tools to evaluate economic sustainability of Energy Communities
- Working models/Best practices of Alpine Energy Communities (taking advantage of EUSALP Energy Awards to collect them)
- Capacity building for Public Administrators as promoters/supporters of Energy Communities (incl. study visits to existing energy communities)
- Annual conference on Alpine Energy Communities (Financing? Rotating location? Synergies?). Within existing conferences that are already taking place?
- Web platform on Alpine Energy Communities (best practices, templates, tools, providers of technology and services, etc.)
- Energy Storage solutions for Energy Communities

6. Smart Villages (SmartCommUnity)

Tino Blondiau signaled the interest of Lower Austria to remain a sub-group leader of activities connected to Smart Villages. He underlined the importance to strengthen the collaboration between EUSALP AG 5 “Connectivity” and EUSALP AG9 “Energy”. He presented the ASP project SmartCommUnity that seeks to promote activities towards smart transition in selected Test Areas (TAs) and inspiring new territories by creating regional links between more advanced (lighthouse) TAs and less advanced (follower) TAs.

The project will support the development of new innovative and interactive digital tools for matchmaking and networking to facilitate the access to smart transition actions for Alpine areas, with a strong focus on the community aspect of the smart transition, especially on the green and sustainable aspects of it.

Milestones that are more concrete will be reported by Tino Blondiau after the project kick-off meeting with the goal to insert them in the AG9 work plan.

7. Renewable energies and landscape protection

Maren Meyer informed AG9 members about the invitation of AG6 “resources” to develop a common activity “renewable energies and landscape protection”. This cross-sectoral activity could stretch over the three subtopics of (1) extension of renewable energies and land use/protection, (2) renewable energies and water use/scarcity/management in times of climate crisis as well as (3) renewable energies and biodiversity/agriculture. She underlined that the proposed activity is in line with the Swiss Presidency Program 2023 that stresses the water sector and also supports the 5 common EUSALP priorities set by the General Assembly in 2022 that stress the importance of water management issues at the Alpine level. She proposed to work towards common policy recommendations, which are a priority for the MRS.

The roadmap elaborated by Plattform Land (AG6 member) and CasaClima to reach this goal within 2025 was reported as follows:

- kick-off: EUSALP Presidency conference in Grison 15th-16th of June “Water 2022-2050”;
- for experts from the various AGs with the goal to create a cross-sectoral network of experts from the AGs, to develop a common vision of the activity for 2023-2025;
- 2-3 online meetings of AGs experts’ network in 2023-2024 to discuss challenges in the context of RES roll-out and sustainable land-use and natural resources with the goal to define common best practices in the EUSALP and develop first recommendations;
- online-event in 2024: targeting local and regional decision-makers as well as general public through experts and best practices to discuss the subtopics and spread good practices from different regions that were defined by the experts before
- 2025: final event: presentation of policy recommendations

TSS officer **Stefano Sala** confirmed to inquire the Swiss Presidency how AGs could contribute to the water conference in June 2023 in Grison and get back to the AG.

8. CO2 compensation mechanism to support sustainable, local development in the Alps

Maren Meyer presented the intention of CasaClima to further the discussions on CO2 compensation in the Alps due to the fact that several regional programs have started over the last year and the necessity to support regions and states in becoming CO2-neutral as declared in several European, national and regional policy roadmaps.

Due to the complexity of CO2 compensation mechanisms in being set up and in delivering concrete results in the field of local sustainable development, these mechanisms need to be set-up in a cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach right away. In fact, the topic of CO2 compensation might touch the interest of AG2 – AG6 – AG7 – AG8 and AG9. In addition, the complexity makes this activity a medium-term activity that would exceed the 2023-2025 work plan framework with the potential of becoming a flagship project.

In a first step, in 2023-2025 a small-scale project could be realized to pilot the implementation of a regional CO2 compensation scheme to better understand the complexity and the obstacles of compensation mechanisms. In a second step after 2025, a cross-sectoral project could be developed to work towards the setting up of a compensation mechanism for CO2 emissions with the goal to support sustainable local projects in the field of climate change mitigation as well as adaptation.

9. AOB

The next EUSALP AG9 meeting will take place on 9 March in Moûtiers, France, organized by AGL co-lead AURA-EE. The meeting is organized as an in-person meeting.

80 million people, 7 countries,
48 regions, mountains and plains
addressing together common challenges and opportunities



Interreg
Alpine Space
AlpGov





18th Action Group 9 meeting

Môûtiers, 9th March 2023, 9:00-12:30

To join online: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86033241657>

Agenda

Moderation: Etienne Viénot, AURA-EE and Benjamin Auer, ACC

Welcome coffee at 8:30

Opening of the meeting at 9:00

1. News of interest to the Action Group (15')

- Swiss Presidency 2023 Programme
- Energy conference St Gallen 9th June (Only in German)

2. Feedback on AMETHyST kick off and next steps (15')

3. Status on the elaboration of work plan 2023-2025 (45')

- Update on the sub-groups (15')
 - Energy data collection (CERVINO), Valentina D'Alonzo, EURAC & Michela Fossa, IRE Liguria
 - Smart Villages, Tino Blondiau, eNU Lower Austria
 - Energy communities, APE FVG, Matteo Mazzolini, APE FVG
 - Energy Efficiency in enterprises (CAESAR II), Benjamin Auer, ACC

- Hydrogen (Amethyst), Etienne Vienot, AURA-EE
- CO2-compensation, Maren Meyer, ACC
- Renewable energies and landscape protection, Maren Meyer/Benjamin Auer, ACC
- Communication: Energy Conference 2023-2025, EUSALP Energy Award, Maren Meyer; ACC
- Discussion
- Decision on Strategic flagship initiative and cross cutting priority (15')
- Update on AG9 members and process for new members (15')

Coffee break

4. **Priorities of AG2 and potential common projects, Sylvain Guetaz, Région AURA (15')**
5. **Update on AG9 running projects: Amethyst, Cervino, CAESAR, Support Eusalp (15'), SmartCommunity**
6. **EU project proposal 2023: round table, new project ideas (15')**
7. **Next events: MRS week, EUSEW 2023, EUSALP Energy conference (15'), Annual forum**

12:30 End of the meeting and lunch pack.

EUSALP Action Group 9 -Meeting

Date and Time: 6 July 2023, 10:30 - 12:30

Location: online

Presence List

N.	Name	Institution-Function
1	Maren Meyer	KlimaHaus
2	Benjamin Auer	KlimaHaus
3	Etienne Vienot	AURA-EE
4	Noémie Bichon	AURA-EE
5	Aleš Kegl	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska
6	Raphaël Lelouvier	Alpine Convention
7	Matteo Mazzolini	Friuli Venezia Giulia Energy Agency
8	Bruno Oberhuber	Energie Tirol
9	Michela Fossa	IRE Liguria
10	Nuno Madeira	Alpine Space Joint Secretariat
11	Anna Boccardi	Infrastrutture Lombarde, Lombardy Region
12	Tino Blondiau	Energy and Environment Agency of Lower Austria
13	Giacomo Luciani	DG REGIO
14	Nora Leszczynski	CIPRA International
15	Dino De Simone	Infrastrutture Lombarde, Lombardy Region
16	Simon Soltner	TSS
17	Silvio Denigris	Piemonte Region

Agenda

1. Welcoming and adoption of the agenda
2. Presentation of the new AG9 members from Slovenia
3. Adoption process of the AG9 work plan 2023-2025
4. Implementation of AG9 activities 2023-2025
 - a. Cervino regional energy data collection: call for action
 - b. EUSALP Energy Award 2024: Energy Communities, all members



- c. EUSALP Energy Conference 2024
- d. Hydrogen cross-sectoral initiative in the EUSALP
- e. Common Political Declaration “Energy Transformation in the Alps” (2025)

5. Open Alpine Space call

6. AOB

- Council conclusions on the Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, *Giacomo Luciani, DG Regio*
- *Activities of interest – Alpine Convention, Raphaël Lelouvier, Alpine Convention*
- *ACB “cross-sectoral governance energy”: Invitation to signal good practices.*
- *Changes of AGL AURA-EE, Etienne Vienot*
- *Next EUSALP AG9 meeting and EUSALP events, Etienne Vienot and Maren Meyer*

Closure

Minutes

1. Presentation of the new AG9 members from Slovenia

- Ales Kegl, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Štajerska

ID:

- 41 municipalities
- Services: business support, business development...
- Since 2007, 450 members
- 10 employees
 - European projects > Nina Meglič
 - H2 Center OSS > Ales Kegl
 - Business support office
 - Specialist groups (energy, accounting...)

Projects of interest:

- SRIP - Circular economy project
- H2 GreenTECh Hydrogen Center (Interreg project): 2025 roadmap development strategies and policy recommendations; creation of a regional network of companies for H2
- TBMCE 2023 - International conference: circular economy: connect stakeholders from businesses and research
- Alps4GreenC (Interreg Alpine Space) - Implementation pathways for sustainable Green Carbon production in the Alpine Region

2. Adoption process of the AG9 work plan 2023-2025



At the EB-BABL meeting in Scuol (15.06.2023) the EB asked AG9 to provide more details on AG5-AG9 coordination concerning smart communities.

AG9 leaders made the requested changes to the work plan.

The work plan should now be approved by written procedure by 17.07.2023

Cross-sectoral initiatives (among which Hydrogen) will be approved at the EB-BAGL meeting in Lugano (31.08.2023).

Discussion:

AG6 & AG9 cooperation: not included in the workplan because no specific activity was foreseen. However, water will be an important topic for the coming years, led by AG6.

3. Adoption process of the AG9 work plan 2023-2025

a. CERVINO regional energy data collection: call for action!

Update on regional data availability:

- Switzerland: national data will be used bcs no data available at cantonal level
- Austria: only Niederösterreich and Tirol for the moment. Please, if you have any contact from other Austrian regions or national data, please get in touch with Etienne Viénot.
- Veneto region missing. Please get in touch if you have any contact.
- Liechtenstein: please get in touch if you have any contact / link.

Objectives:

- all regions answer the survey by end of summer.
- Autumn 2023: finalizing the visualization platform, analyzing results.
- Launch of Slovenian Presidency: official presentation of the visualization platform

Discussion:

- Maren Mayer has potential contacts for Austria
- Silvio de Nigris: for Italy national data can be useful if regional data missing
- Bruno Oberhuber: Austria has energy balance available from national statistical office. Bruno will send link.

b. EUSALP Energy Award 2024: Energy Communities, all members

1st edition took place in 2022 to collect best practices in energy transition. Because of the success, we decided to have a bi-annual EUSALP energy Award.

2024 edition:

- energy communities-focused
- organized under the umbrella of the Slovenian presidency

Timeline (give us feed-back):

- Late-summer 2023: group of experts prepares the criteria and defines selection process
- November 2023: confirm jury: EUSALP AG9 co-leader + 1 EUSALP AG9 rep/country + 1 rep from EUSALP youth council. The Slovenian member shall at the best be part of the AG9 in order to facilitate the coordination with the Slovenian Presidency 2024.
- If interested in joining the jury, please let AGL know, AGL will steer the process after the AG meeting to invite experts bilaterally
 - o Matteo Mazzolini confirms interest in joining the jury as energy communities expert as well as the steering committee
- Jan/Feb 2024: Slovenian presidency kick-off: launch of the energy award process
- June 2024: end of application phase
- September: Energy conference (TBMCE) and awarding ceremony in Slovenia

c. EUSALP Energy Conference 2024

Will be linked to TBMCE circular economy conference 2024 (for info: 2023 edition takes place on 6-8 September in Portorož, Slovenia <https://tbmce.um.si/>).

d. Hydrogen cross-sectoral initiative in the EUSALP

Official name: “Fast-tracking energy transition in the Alps”
AG2,4,5&9

Activities:

- H2 focus group: explore available funding opportunities, connect regional initiatives, draft an EUSALP H2 roadmap. Coordinated by AG2
- AMETHyST and H2MA: open all events to AGs. Coordinated by AG9
- Decarbonization of the transport sector: data collection & policy recommendations. Coordinated by AG4
- Investigate the relationship between decarbonization and digitalization. Coordinated by AG5.



Discussion:

- Giacomo Luciani: use of national/regional cohesion policy funds foreseen?
 - Regions are interested in “H2 valleys” concept + financing infrastructure.
- Ales Kegl: have also been working on H2 linked to circular economy. More details will be given bilaterally.

e. Common Political Declaration “Energy Transformation in the Alps” (2025)

EB would like AGs to be more involved in EUSALP political steering, to give expert advice to politicians. Therefore, a political declaration was inserted in the new workplan as an activity.

Timeline: 2025

H2 activities could be useful in drafting such a declaration (use policy recommendations from AMETHyST...).

Please give any feedback.

Declaration governance approval: still unclear (who drafts, approves, EB, AGs...) but will be discussed at the coming EB-BAGL meetings.

4. Open Alpine Space call

2 steps procedure: step 1: Oct 2023, step 2: Feb 2024

Particular attention will be given to biodiversity and innovation. But not exclusive.

Info-day webinar for applicants: presentation of the call and JEMS application procedure: 11 July 2023

Discussion:

Energy communities are of interest for the call under objective energy efficiency.

4. Any other issue

- Council conclusions on the Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, *Giacomo Luciani, DG Regio*

The Council conclusions on the 4th report on the implementation of the MRS approved on 27 June. It is the main guiding doc at EU level for the MRS for the next 2 years.

Key take-aways from the Council conclusions:

- MRS recognised important for green transition.
- Call for the establishment of new, and the reinforcement of existing, MA networks in all four MRS (EUSALP has established already financial dialogue networks between authorities in charge of EU Funds and MRS implementers)



- Council recognises the importance that MRS implementers (e.g. AGs) work is placed in the broader policy landscape at national, regional, and European level.
- Swiss presidency reviewing work-plans: the value of reviewing the MRS in general recognised by the Council.

Document available at:

https://danube-region.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Council-Conclusions-on-the-4th-Report-of-EC-on-EU-MRS-ST-11060-2023-INIT_en.pdf

- *Activities of interest - Alpine Convention, Raphaël Lelouvier, Alpine Convention*
 - Alpine Convention Alpine climate board x KlimaHaus: working group.
 - Alpine convention held an energy experts forum to gather energy related views
 - Next Alpine convention presidency will be held by Slovenia in 2025

- *ACB “cross-sectoral governance energy”: Invitation to signal good practices.*

Stronger cooperation between AG9 & Alpine convention requested -> Creation of a Joint input paper: collection of good practices from the Alps, approach & cooperation models for energy transition in the Alps. Common topics potentially discussed: energy communities, energy and landscape/spatial planning. Will result in a Fact sheet publication.

- Looking for good practices from across the alpine regions -> please provide your good practices case studies, projects. etc. reaching out to Benjamin Auer.

Discussion:

- Good idea could be to look at 2022 energy awards applicants
- KlimaHaus will send a written call for good practices

- *Changes of AGL AURA-EE, Etienne Vienot*

Patrick Biard is leaving AURA-EE by end of summer. Etienne Viénot will be officially appointed AG9 co-lead for AURA-EE.

- *Next EUSALP AG9 meeting and EUSALP events, Etienne Vienot and Maren Meyer*

- Pitch your project competition is open. Please communicate on your channels.

This edition, there will be an energy focus.

- <https://eusalp-youth.eu/help-us-to-spread-the-news-about-pitch-your-project-2023-around-the-alps/>



EUSALP EU STRATEGY FOR THE ALPINE REGION

- Save the Date: next EUSALP AG9 meeting: 3-4 October 2023 in Innsbruck. Proposed programme:
 - 3 October: welcome dinner
 - 4 October:
 - am: AMETHyST good practice visit MPREIS
 - pm: AG9 meeting

80 million people, 7 countries, 48 regions,
mountains and plains addressing together
common challenges and opportunities

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Alpine Space

Support EUSALP



EUSALP Action Group 9 Meeting

[Online via MS Teams](#), 26/03/2024, 10:00-12:30 o'clock

Agenda

10:00-11:15 o'clock: PART 1

Welcome and adoption of agenda, AG9 co-lead

Changes in EUSALP AG9 memberships, AG9 co-lead

Slovenian Presidency Calendar and Priorities AG9 2024, AG9 co-lead

Cross-cutting priority: Accelerating the Energy Transition in the Alps, AG9 co-lead

Joint output of AGs 2 "Economy" and 9 "Energy"

- Hydrogen roadmap

Joint output of AGs 4 "Mobility" and 9

- Political declaration / political paper
- High level event
- Publication of best practices

EUSALP Energy Award 2024, AG9 co-lead

11:15-11:30 o'clock: break

11:30-12:30 o'clock: PART 2

Active and planned projects of interest for EUSALP AG9 Work Plan, AG9 members roundtable

- CERVINO: outputs of the data collection, *Valentina D'Alonzo, EURAC Research*
- SmartCommUnity updates, *Tino Blondiau, enu*
- Upcoming calls: Alpine Space Programme and EU Life Call 2024

AOB

- Review of EUSALP Action Plan 2024-2025
- New EUSALP website
- Next meeting EUSALP AG9: EUSALP Energy Conference and EUSALP Energy Award 2024

12:30 o'clock: End of the meeting





AG9 MEETING
26/03/2024
ONLINE
10:00 – 12:30 H



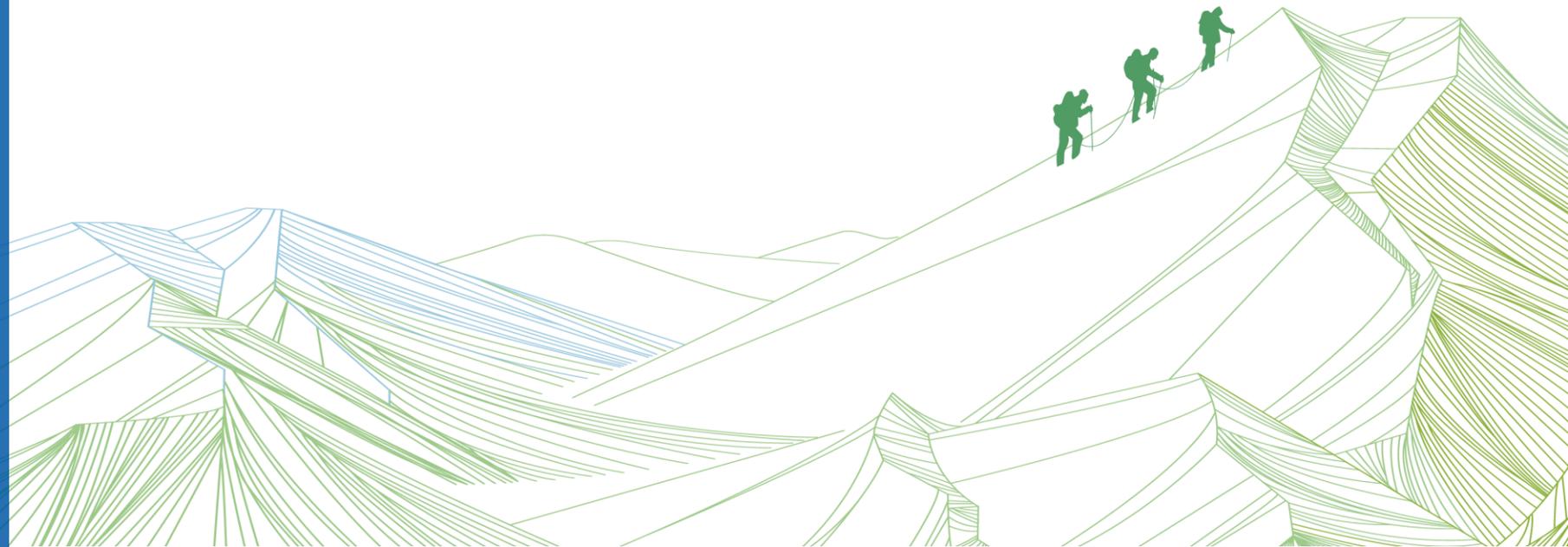
Interreg



Co-funded by
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Support EUSALP

Alpine Space



AGENDA part 1

10:00-11:15 o`clock: PART 1

Welcome and adoption of agenda, *AG9 co-lead*

Changes in EUSALP AG9 memberships, *AG9 co-lead*

Slovenian Presidency Calendar and Priorities AG9 2024, *AG9 co-lead*

Cross-cutting priority: Accelerating the Energy Transition in the Alps, *AG9 co-lead*
Joint output of AGs 2 “Economy” and 9 “Energy”

Joint output of AGs 4 “Mobility” and 9 “Energy”

EUSALP Energy Award 2024, *AG9 co-lead*

11:15-11:30 o`clock: *break*

AGENDA part 2

11:30-12:30 o`clock: PART 2

Active and planned projects of interest for EUSALP AG9 Work Plan, *AG9 members roundtable*

- CERVINO: outputs of the data collection, *Valentina D'Alonzo, EURAC Research*
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AOB

Review of EUSALP Action Plan 2024-2025

New EUSALP website

Next meeting EUSALP AG9: EUSALP Energy Conference and EUSALP Energy Award 2024

12:30 o`clock: End of the meeting

Changes in EUSALP AG9 memberships

Slovenian Presidency Calendar and Priorities



2024 SLOVENIA EUSALP PRESIDENCY

Slovenia holds the Presidency of the EUSALP from **January 2024** until **December 2024**.

During its term, the Slovenian Presidency will focus on **3 thematic priorities**



Circular Economy



Quality of Life for Young People
in the Alps



Water-smart society

Slovenian Presidency



In addition, the Presidency pursues **3 institutional priorities**

Revision Process of
the Action Plan

Active involvement of
youth

Visibility through
Success stories



Slovenian Presidency



Official inauguration: 1st February

**EUSALP Annual Forum: 14 – 15 November,
Brdo pri Kranju**

**Mediterranean Coast and Macro-Regional
Strategies Week: 16 – 20 September,
Slovenian Coast**

Further information:

<https://alpine-region.eu/about/presidency#:~:text=Slovenia%20holds%20the%20Presidency%20of,January%202024%20until%20December%202024.>



Cross-cutting priority: Accelerating the Energy Transition in the Alps

EUSALP Energy Award 2024

Active and planned projects of interest for EUSALP AG9 Work Plan

AOB

**Next meeting EUSALP AG9:
EUSALP Energy Conference and EUSALP Energy Award 2024**

**14 and 15 November 2024
Brdo pri Kranju, Slovenia**

Danke für Ihre
Aufmerksamkeit

Merci pour votre
attention

Grazie per
l'attenzione

Hvala za vašo
pozornost

Thank you for your
attention



OUR WAY FORWARD RELIES ON OUR CAPACITY

TO BE DOWN-TO-EARTH AND PRACTICAL



EUSALP Action Group 9 meeting

Date and time: Friday, November 15, 2024. 09:30 – 11:30 h. Brdo Pri Kranju, Slovenia

Agenda

1.	Report on the EUSALP Action Plan revision process	AG 9 Lead
2.	EUSALP Energy Award 2024: results and lessons	AG 9 Lead
3.	Energy data collection in the Alpine Region – how to move forward?	AG 9 Lead & Valentina D'Alonzo, EURAC
4.	Report from the AMETHyST project	AG 9 Lead
5.	Report from the <i>SmartCommUnity</i> project	Tino Blondiau, enu
6.	Outlook on the EUSALP Presidency 2025 priorities of Austria and Liechtenstein	Christian Wankmüller, EUSALP Presidency 2025
7.	Projects and activities of members and observers	all members & observers

Minutes

1. Action Plan revision process

Etienne Vienot presents the concept and timeline of the Action Plan revision process and the coordination of the BAGL with respect to the process.

2. EUSALP Energy Award 2024

Ulrich Santa presents the results of the Award and the challenges moving forward. The main challenge is the low participation, which stands against a notable effort to organise and implement the Award. All partners are invited to share their views and experiences.

Members confirm similar challenges in other (regional) awards and make the following suggestions:

- Make sure that there is good and useful follow-up for participants/winners
- Make the application process easier
- Increase promotion efforts at regional level, but also at EU level (e.g. EU Energy Week, Fedarene, Committee of regions). Strong promotion by all member regions is vital.
- Change to name to "Alpine Energy Award" to facilitate communication.

Ulrich Santa suggests covering more topics (broader) in the future. For the next edition in 2026, the focus could be MUNICIPALITIES.

3. Energy data collection in the Alpine Region

Etienne Vienot and Valentina D'Alonzo present the status after the end of the CERVINO project. The difficulty to obtain data from the regions is the biggest challenge.

Among the discussion points are:

- Suggestions to obtain regional data from the national statistics offices;
- Which data categories shall be collected first and foremost (e.g. amount of fossil fuels used; end users);
- Difficulty to retrieve certain data categories, such as solar thermal and biomass. There is a shared view that it is needed to find a methodology/common proxies to obtain energy and emission data;
- Proposal to develop a new project to define a common methodology for data collection and estimation.

Silvia Buzzetti invites to reach out to the DG Regio for support with the regions during data collection.

4. Report from AMETHyST

Etienne Vienot gives an update on the project activities. Matteo Mazzolini briefly explains the Financial Assessment Tool developed in the project. Matching the cost of production with end users is a big challenge: in future activities, this issue needs to be addressed.

5. Report from SmartCommUnity

Tino Blondiau presents the progress of the SmartCommUnity project and the materials developed in the project.

6. Outlook on the EUSALP Presidency 2025

Christian Wankmüller presents the priorities of the coming Presidency.

The regions will have different focus areas:

- A. Tyrol: Mobility
- B. Salzburg: Circular economy
- C. Carinthia and Vorarlberg: Energy

Within C, the main focus areas will be Energy transformation + network expansion; energy mix; conflicts of interest. The official Presidency programme will be launched in the near future.

The Presidency is looking for cooperation with and inputs from the AG 9, I particular for the organisation of the Energy Expert Forum in Carinthia on 11.06.2024.



7. Projects and activities of members and observers

Uwe Roth updates the AG 9 about news and activities from CIPRA.

The Annual Forum of CIPRA will take place on 27 February 2025 in Salzburg. It will focus on:

- Conflicts of interest
- Renewable energy directive vs. Restoration law

A pre-information by the Compliance Committee of the Alpine Convention is given on an upcoming ruling addressing the compliance of the RED emergency regulation with the Protocols of the Alpine Convention. The ruling will establish whether the Protocols are above EU law.

Annex: Photos and signatures





Action Group 9 meeting

Congress Centre Brdo, Brdo Pri Kranju, Slovenia

15th November 2024, 09:30-11:30 hrs

Signature list

Name and surname	Organisation	Signature
BENJAMIN AUER	CASACUMA	<i>Benjamin Auer</i>
Raphael Lelouvier	Alpine Convention	<i>Raphael Lelouvier</i>
Uwe Roth	CIPRA International	<i>Uwe Roth</i>
VALENTINA N'ALONZO	EURAC RESEARCH	<i>N'Alonzo</i>
Blondiau Tino	ENU	<i>Tino Blondiau</i>
VLASTA KRITELJ	ENERGAP	<i>Vlasta Kritelj</i>
MATEJ URBAS	LOMBARDIA REGION	<i>Matej Urbas</i>
Veronica Capetti	TSS POLICY OFFICER (AURA REGION)	<i>Veronica Capetti</i>
PIETRO TRAZZOLINI	APE FUG	<i>Pietro Trazzolini</i>
Etienne VIGNOT	AURA-EE	<i>Etienne Vignot</i>
VERVICH STINTA	SOUTH TYROL ENERGY AGENT	<i>Vervich Stinta</i>
Maximo PENAZZO	AURA-EE	<i>Maximo Penazzo</i>
SILVIA BIZZETTI	DO REGIO-EUROPEAN COUNCILS	<i>Silvia Bizzetti</i>