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The autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano now pass the baton to Switzerland

EUSALP, the Annual Forum takes stock of a year of presidency

Responding to the energy crisis, mitigating the effects of climate change, and involving young people: these are the cornerstones of the Italian presidency of EUSALP for 2022, led by the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, which in Trento is currently witnessing the final event of the Annual Forum, an opportunity to share and deepen the results achieved by EUSALP in response to the common challenges for the territories of the Alpine region.

On the morning of Thursday 24 November, the General Assembly was held, opened by the President of the Autonomous Province of Trento Maurizio Fugatti and the President of the Autonomous Province of Bolzano Arno Kompatscher.

President Fugatti welcomed the representatives of the countries, regions and the European Commission present at the meeting. "In this presidency year, important topics have been developed and deepened. We are going through a difficult historical moment, but our objectives remain the fight against climate change and the energy crisis, as well as the relationship between centres and peripheries in the Alpine territories. I am pleased about the presence of the Youth Council members at this assembly, because they represent the vehicle of EUSALP's principles, ideals and projects," said Fugatti.

Chairing the working session was the Councillor for Education, University and Culture of the Autonomous Province of Trento, Mirko Bisesti, who recalled how 'strengthening the macro-regional strategy means strengthening the Alps. I thank you for your presence and wish Switzerland, which takes over the presidency for 2023, continued success in achieving the goals we have set ourselves'.

In his speech, President Kompatscher pointed out that "The Eusalp macro-area is the economically strongest and most attractive living space in the heart of Europe. We, the representatives of the territories, must become even more aware that we have the opportunity to take more direct responsibility within the framework of this macro-strategy. In this way, we can shape our living space sustainably in cross-border cooperation and overcome major challenges together".

Numerous delegates from other Italian Alpine regions (Valle d'Aosta, Lombardy, Piedmont, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Veneto), and from different countries (France, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Liechtenstein, Switzerland) attended, as well as institutional representatives: Marco Doglia, EUSALP national coordinator of the Department for Cohesion Policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and, via video link, Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms and Edmondo Cirielli, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. The presence of the young people from the EUSALP Youth Council, who presented the results of their activities, was significant.

As Bisesti recalled during the assembly, "in the European Year of Youth, a series of initiatives were organised with the Youth Council, which were also open to other youth organisations in the Alpine area. The prevailing themes were sustainable local development and reflection on how to strengthen relations

between the central and inland Alpine areas, in order to guarantee more opportunities - in terms of work, study, access to public services - for all Alpine citizens, also as a counter to depopulation. It was also important to draw attention to the role of women in the socio-economic development of the Alpine areas during the year of the Italian presidency,' said Bisesti. In addition to highly participatory initiatives, such as the 'Energy Dialogues' - one in each province - to gather the contributions of citizens, municipalities and businesses on the topics of the energy crisis and energy poverty, the Trentino and South Tyrol presidencies focused on the development of the Strategy through the establishment of the Technical Support Structure and worked to strengthen the financing and integration processes of EUSALP. In addition, the contributions of the EUSALP Action Groups, which concretely implement the Strategies in the Alpine territories and contribute to shaping the future of the Alpine macro-region, have been enhanced. These achievements belong not only to the Italian Presidency, but to all 7 countries and 48 regions of EUSALP.

Attached: Press release Conference of Swiss Cantonal Governments

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wjesp3TphCI>

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