

Declaration of the XVI Alpine Conference on the Protection of Mountain Biodiversity and its Promotion at International Level

- (1) Underlining the importance of mountain ecosystems in global biodiversity conservation;
- (2) Emphasizing the specificity of mountain biodiversity, in particular its high species richness, but also the vulnerability of mountain ecosystems and the threats they are facing, including climate change, pollution, land use change and natural hazards, leading inter alia to the melting of glaciers, more extreme events, including severe droughts and floods, significant changes in the hydrogeomorphological cycle of rivers, the degradation of habitats, and the losses in the diversity and distribution of species;
- (3) Underlining the importance of the Alpine Convention and of its Protocols, as key instruments for the protection of mountain biodiversity and ecological connectivity, in particular its Protocols on nature protection and landscape conservation, tourism, spatial planning and soil conservation;
- (4) Referring to the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, which institutionalizes cooperation efforts in mountain regions;
- (5) Underlining the need to reinforce these considerations at the Mountain Biodiversity Day and to strengthen global political awareness on the importance and vulnerability of mountain biodiversity during the next IUCN World Conservation Congress and the 15th Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- (6) Considering the target 15.4 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, namely “by 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, to enhance their capacity to provide benefits which are essential for sustainable development”;
- (7) Considering the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the Aichi Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity as well as the ongoing negotiations under the same Convention to set up a post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- (8) Considering the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services of May 2019;
- (9) Underlining the need, in this context, to strengthen resilience of mountain ecosystems and take into account the role of mountain biodiversity in mitigating climate change and adapting to it, inter alia by protecting ecosystems and inhabitants from natural hazards;
- (10) Considering the work of the Alpine Biodiversity Board;
- (11) Considering the new Climate Action Plan 2.0 of the Alpine Convention, especially the implementation pathways on ecosystems and biodiversity;
- (12) Recalling the EUSALP Joint declaration “Alpine Green Infrastructure – Joining forces for nature, people and the economy”;

- (13) Referring to the importance of protected areas, ecological connectivity, nature-based solutions and retreat areas as a backbone for habitat protection and ecological processes;
- (14) Considering existing ecosystem resilience practices developed by local communities and the need to formulate strategies of adaptation to climate change in consultation with local communities;
- (15) Considering the necessity of site-specific agricultural cultivation to preserve mountain pastures and push back scrub encroachment of high-biodiversity pastures, as well as the need to protect rare and sensitive habitats;
- (16) Considering the findings of the Green Economy Progress Report regarding the preservation and use of ecosystem services and natural capital and considering the goals of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 with its focus on ecosystem restoration and the objectives of the UN Decade 2021-2030 that aim to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems globally;

The Alpine Conference requests the Contracting Parties to the Alpine Convention to:

1. Support the integration of mountains as vulnerable ecosystems in their National Biodiversity Strategies and Actions Plans (NBSAPs);
2. Support the integration of mountains as vulnerable ecosystems in the ongoing negotiations related to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and take anticipatory adaptation measures such as encouraging extensive mountain pastures and hay meadows conservation and their long-term monitoring, as well as the conservation of rare and sensitive habitats;
3. Reinforce the implementation of the Protocols of the Alpine Convention, especially its Protocols on nature protection and landscape conservation, tourism, spatial planning and soil protection;
4. Support implementation mechanisms at regional and local levels to strengthen actions towards the protection and restoration of biodiversity, cultural landscape and the livelihoods of local communities in mountains; these mechanisms should promote the integration of biodiversity into sectors such as agriculture, forestry, tourism and spatial planning, as well as support the development of livelihoods through sustainable use of mountain biodiversity and a green economy in the Alps;
5. Consider, with the support of the Alpine Biodiversity Board, the development of an action plan for mountain biodiversity protection identifying priorities, good practices and a monitoring system as a model for other mountain regions globally, and in light of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
6. Emphasize the importance and protection of Alpine soils in their diversity, especially with regard to their contribution to biodiversity;
7. Support the existing Alpine protected areas and, where relevant and possible, establish new protected areas that are well connected and effectively managed, and therefore contribute to the target of protecting 30% of land globally as suggested in the context of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

8. Further improve coordination and cooperation – both regional and transboundary – when implementing actions to increase the resilience of mountain ecosystems and the protection of mountain biodiversity.