Press pack

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ALPARC
The Alpine Network of Protected Areas
Le Réseau Alpin des Espaces Protégés
La Rete delle Aree Protette Alpine
Das Netzwerk Alpiner Schutzgebiete
Mreža zavarovanih območij v Alpah
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ALPARC: THE ALPINE NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS

The Alpine Network of Protected Areas – ALPARC – represents all types of large protected areas (over 100 ha) that fall under the scope of the Alpine Convention. Since 1995, ALPARC has facilitated close contacts between the regional and national parks, nature reserves, biosphere reserves, quiet zones and many other types of protected area, not to mention cooperation with nature conservation agencies and institutions, local stakeholders, local residents and scientific experts.

Some key dates:

1994 France instigates the notion of creating an international network of Alpine protected areas.

1995 The Ecrins National Park organises the First International Conference of Alpine Protected Areas; creation of ALPARC. The Network is managed by a team that reports to the Ecrins National Park.

2000 The Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) is formally recognised by the environment ministers of the Alpine countries as contributing to the implementation of the Alpine Convention.

2000 ALPARC rules of procedures are established.

2002 ALPARC organises the Conference of protected areas in European mountain areas (representatives from 20 countries).

2004 The Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention commissions ALPARC to carry out a study on ecological corridors and cross-border areas.

2005 ALPARC celebrates its 10th anniversary.

2006 The Protected Areas Task Force is created as part of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. It takes on the task of coordinating ALPARC.
2008 In conjunction with other partners, ALPARC launches a large-scale project to establish ecological corridors with the long-term aim of creating a genuine ecological network.

January 2013

ALPARC, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, becomes an organisation legally based on the decisions of the General Constituent Assembly of 18th January 2013, governed by the law of 1st July 1901 concerning the contract of association and its implementing decree of 16th August 1901 (French law on associations).

February 2013

The Permanent Secretariat and ALPARC sign a Memorandum of Cooperation with a view to facilitate the cooperation between the two organisations and benefit from potential synergies.

2014 The ALPARC association takes charge of all functions of the Task Force Protected Areas, which is discontinued at the end of 2013.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE ALPS

- The Alps extend across 8 countries: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Principality of Monaco*, Slovenia and Switzerland.

- They are home to over 14 million inhabitants (from 3 million in 1938)

- Surface area: 190,000 km²
• 500 million overnight stays in 2000, making the Alps the world's top tourist region.

• A unique network of mountainous protected areas:
  - 14 national parks
  - 74 natural and regional parks
  - 299 nature reserves (over 100 ha)
  - 11 biosphere reserves
  - 4 UNESCO world heritage sites
  - 2 geological reserves

That adds up to roughly 400 protected areas in the main categories alone.

In addition, there are a further 600 special protected areas (quiet zones, protected landscapes, classified sites, etc.), which often overlap with the existing protected areas.

All in all, that makes more than 1000 large Alpine protected areas (over 100 ha) registered in 2010, which cover almost 25% of the Alps (as defined in the scope of the Alpine Convention).

>> Link: www.alparc.org/the-alps

* The Principalities of Monaco and Liechtenstein do not have (large) protected mountain areas to manage, but are nevertheless very committed to conservation and addressing the issues that affect the Alps, and actively contribute to the work done under the Alpine Convention.

THE ALPINE PROTECTED AREAS

ALPARC brings together a whole range of different yet complementary protected areas and has defined the values that they share:
1. **The land.** We are all ALPINE protected areas. We are united by the ALPS. We protect and defend our common Alpine natural, historical and cultural heritage.

2. **Our concerns.** We want to tackle issues and challenges that are common to all protected areas: sustainable development, nature conservation, research, leisure and discovery, awareness-raising and education, culture. All of these are also of interest to the wider public.

3. **Our network.** We, the Alpine protected areas, are stronger when we combine forces: through cooperation and working within a network, our combined voice and actions are powerful (more clout with decision-makers). The network stands for: learning from one another, sharing expertise, joint projects.

4. **Our skills.** We are more effective if we pool our skills and expertise.

5. **Biodiversity.** We protect biodiversity on our lands and are seeking to create a physical network with tangible links between our protected areas in order to preserve that biodiversity.

6. **Our social role.** In addition to providing conservation and protection, we also have an important contribution to make within and on behalf of society: culturally (preserving heritage), through social interaction and especially in terms of urban-rural relations.

7. **The Alpine Convention.** We have a common legal instrument – the Alpine Convention – in order to implement joint policies and measures.

>> Link:  [www.alparc.org/the-protected-areas](http://www.alparc.org/the-protected-areas)
ALPARC AND THE ALPINE CONVENTION

The Alpine Convention is an international treaty intended to ensure the long-term preservation of the natural ecosystem in the Alps and to promote sustainable development in the Alps by safeguarding the financial and cultural interests of the residents and the member countries. The Alpine Convention has been ratified by the eight Alpine countries: Austria, France, Germany, Italy, the Principalities of Liechtenstein and Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland.

ALPARC's activities are defined by the General Assembly, which is made up of the members of the ALPARC association. In conjunction with the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, ALPARC works on all issues relating to the protected areas based on the Memorandum of Cooperation signed on 28th of February 2013. ALPARC's primary objective is based on Article 12 of the Protocol on nature conservation and the countryside of the Alpine Convention:

**Article 12:**

The contracting parties shall take appropriate measures to establish a national and cross-border network of existing protected areas, biotopes and other sites which are protected or require protection. They undertake to harmonise the objectives and measures that apply to the protected cross-border areas.

The aim of the protocol is to increase the environmental protection afforded to species, biotopes, habitats and landscapes. In order to achieve this, conservation measures throughout the Alps need to be harmonised.

>> Useful addresses: www.alpconv.org  
www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/alparc-and-the-alpine-convention
ALPARC'S OBJECTIVES

The aim of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) is to facilitate the sharing of expertise, lessons learned, techniques and methods between the managers of Alpine protected areas. The network also seeks to realise cooperation projects involving managers who want to provide consistent levels of conservation and sustainable development in the Alps in accordance with the Alpine Convention.

ALPARC provides support for cooperation under three broad headings: the thematic network, the physical network and the communication network.

- THEMATIC NETWORK:

The thematic network has been ALPARC's main focus since its inception in 1995. The network allows staff from protected areas across the Alps to discuss practical methods, to share expertise and lessons learned in relation to common themes, and to rise above linguistic and administrative divisions.

The network therefore seeks to promote regular technical discussions between the managers of protected areas and other associated organisations, through conferences, seminars, thematic training, workshops and field trips, but also through its publications, by compiling information on good practices and through other communication resources (Internet, Extranet).

- ECOLOGICAL NETWORK:

One of the main aims of both ALPARC and the Alpine Convention is the creation of an ecological network. This network could be created by establishing ecological corridors between protected areas, through nature conservation agreements and sustainable land management.

In 2004, the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention commissioned ALPARC to carry out a study of the existing...
national and cross-border links between protected areas, which would then form the basis for the planned network. The findings of this study have confirmed the real potential in the Alps for creating a genuine ecological continuum, which will help to conserve the outstanding biodiversity in the Alps in the long term and will facilitate species migrations within the Alps and to/from neighbouring mountain ranges.

In 2006, the Alpine Convention set up a specific working group to examine this issue: the Ecological Network Platform. ALPARC, together with other international partners (CIPRA, the International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps (ISCAR, WWF), is actively contributing to this process. ALPARC is also working on the ground with the protected areas to make the project a reality.

In 2008, the Protected Areas Task Force launched a large-scale European project to give a further boost to the creation of the ecological continuum (ECONNECT). The project has been undertaken together with CIPRA, ISCAR, the WWF and a number of protected areas.

- COMMUNICATION NETWORK:

ALPARC also works to raise awareness among and inform the general public and local residents about the importance of the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps and the need to preserve that heritage.

To this end, ALPARC defined a common communication strategy for the Alpine protected areas together with style guidelines for the shared communication resources. Thus ALPARC is involved in developing a range of shared resources and communication campaigns for all protected areas in the network: the online portal (www.alparc.org), documentation, travelling exhibitions (Mythical Mountains, Return of the wildlife, information displays), standard communication resources for the general public (postcards, flyers, etc.), and most recently, a spectacular tool, ViViAlp – the Alps seen from the air. From 2008, this virtual tour of the protected areas in the Alps has
been available in many visitor centres in the Alps and online via Google Earth (access via the [www.alparc.org](http://www.alparc.org) website).

>> Links:  [www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network](http://www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network)

**ALPARC'S PRIORITIES**

The main subjects for cooperation and discussion within the network are:

- **Ecological network in the Alps**
  Contributing to the creation of an ecological continuum by establishing ecological corridors, nature conservation agreements and sustainable land management.

- **Climate change and protected areas**
  How climate change affects biodiversity, how we manage supplies of drinking water and business activities in the protected areas.

- **Managing the protected areas effectively**
  Establishing methods and indicators for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of nature conservation and sustainable development measures in the Alpine protected areas.

- **Mobility and the protected areas**
  Input and recommendations on soft mobility and access to the protected areas, including for visitors with reduced mobility.
Mountain partnership between the ALPS and CARPATHIANS

Cooperation between protected area managers in the Alps and Carpathian Mountains on subjects of mutual interest: management plans, predators, habitats, NATURA 2000, developing tourism, etc.

ALPARC'S ACTIVITIES

ALPARC organises a whole range of conferences, seminars, workshops, public exhibitions, various publications, databases, maps, field trips, training and staff exchanges:

- Organising regular conferences, meetings and thematic workshops for managers and technical experts from the Alpine protected areas; also field trips and staff exchanges

- Supervising thematic working groups and involvement in establishing harmonised observation and species monitoring protocols

- Promoting and supporting joint projects; assisting with the creation of European projects and raising awareness among local inhabitants about their natural and cultural heritage

- Linguistic coordination via the multilingual coordination unit and a team of translators and interpreters

- Providing communication and information-sharing tools for managers and partners (bulletins, thematic and scientific reports, website, Extranet, etc.)

- Developing communication tools aimed at the general public: website, travelling exhibitions, flyers, educational material, book of tales and legends, library, virtual tour of the Alpine protected areas (ViViAlp), etc.

- Creating international coordination tools: databases, geographic information system (GIS) for the protected areas, glossary of environmental terms
- Providing training for a range of management personnel from the Alpine protected areas on issues relating to the protected areas and the Alps

- Coordinating and contributing to major Alpine projects (European territorial cooperation, Alpine Convention, research programmes)

>> Link:  [www.alparc.org//our-actions](http://www.alparc.org//our-actions)

### ALPARC'S RESOURCES

**Funding**

ALPARC, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas receives funding from:

- the French Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy;
- DATAR (Inter-ministerial Delegation for Regional Planning and Attractiveness – France); and
- the two French Alpine regions: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and Rhône-Alpes

The Alpine countries and states that are signatories to the Alpine Convention and the Alpine protected areas actively support and participate in joint activities. In some cases, they also contribute financially. Germany, Monaco and Liechtenstein provide practical and financial support for activities relating to the ecological network and cooperation between protected areas in the Alps and Carpathian Mountains.

Some protected areas apply the principle of shared responsibility, which in practice means heading up an activity, a programme or some other ALPARC project. This means they take on responsibility for the coordination, communication or financing elements of a particular activity or ALPARC working group.
Team

The ALPARC team is responsible for implementing the work programme, for coordinating and carrying out joint projects on behalf of the protected areas, and for organising events and meetings. The team also works with the partners to produce and manage publications, exhibitions and other resources.

It also arranges the meetings of the Council, the Board and the Annual General Assembly. In order to do all of this, there is a permanent team of five multilingual staff plus short-term staff who oversee specific projects.

ALPARC's office is in the Maison des parcs et de la montagne in Chambéry, Savoy, France.

>> Links:  [www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/how-alparc-works](www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/how-alparc-works)  
[www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/funding](www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/funding)

HOW THE ALPARC NETWORK WORKS

ALPARC is the network of all protected areas that fall within the scope of the Alpine Convention.

Its members participate in activities according to their own needs and fields of interest. The network currently comprises nearly 1,000 protected areas (covering around one quarter of the Alps) including about 100 with an own management structure. About half of these organisations are already members of the ALPARC association.

The network was created so as to be able to carry out joint projects, discuss technical issues, assess the effectiveness of management methods and organise professional meetings and events on a range of subjects, from wildlife management to climate change issues.

>> Link:  [www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/how-alparc-works](www.alparc.org/the-alparc-network/how-alparc-works)
THE CARPATHIAN NETWORK OF PROTECTED AREAS

In recent years, the Carpathian countries have produced an international agreement similar to the Alpine Convention that is designed to ensure the conservation of the Carpathian Mountains. The countries in question are: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic and Ukraine.

One core feature of the convention is the creation of a Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA) modelled on the Alpine network.

ALPARC has contributed significantly to the creation of the Carpathian Network of Protected Areas (CNPA). A whole range of activities were organised jointly by the two networks (seminars, workshops, staff exchanges, creation of communication tools, strategic work programmes).

The Carpathian Network was officially established in December 2006 in an agreement between the governments of all the Carpathian countries. An International Steering Committee has also drawn up a work programme and is working in conjunction with other international institutions (including ALPARC) to organise the General Assembly.

Many issues affect both the Carpathians and the Alps, particularly in the fields of managing the natural environment and sustainable development. The similarities have become more pronounced since four of the countries joined the European Union in 2004 (e.g. NATURA 2000 network). Both mountain ranges (Alps and Carpathians) are part of the same European biogeographic region and have a common border.

>> Useful addresses:  [www.carpathianparks.org](http://www.carpathianparks.org)
[www.carpathianconvention.org](http://www.carpathianconvention.org)