

PROTOCOL
on the implementation of the Alpine Convention of 1991 in the field of tourism
Tourism Protocol

Preamble

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY,

THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA,

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC,

THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC,

THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN,

THE PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO,

THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA,

THE SWISS CONFEDERATION,

and

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY,

IN ACCORDANCE with their task, arising from the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention) of 7 November 1991, of pursuing a comprehensive policy for the protection and the sustainable development of the Alpine region;

IN COMPLIANCE with their obligations under Article 2(2) and (3) of the Alpine Convention;

DESIRING to harmonise economic interests and ecological requirements, and establish sustainable development;

AWARE that the Alps are the living and economic environment for the local population;

CONVINCED that the local population must be able to develop their own social, cultural and economic development plan, and take part in its implementation in the existing institutional framework;

CONSIDERING that in our urban civilisation, there is an ever-growing need for varied tourism and leisure activities that are appropriate to today's way of life;

CONSIDERING that the Alps remain one of the most important areas for tourism and leisure in Europe due to the extensive range of leisure activities on offer, the rich variety of landscapes and the diversity of its ecosystems, and that protection of the Alpine region should go beyond national frameworks;

CONSIDERING that for certain Contracting Parties, a significant proportion of their population live in the Alps, and that tourism in the Alpine region is of public interest given that it helps to maintain a permanent population;

CONSIDERING that mountain tourism is facing competition in an increasingly globalised context and contributes significantly to the economic performance of the Alpine region;

CONSIDERING that recent trends seem to be moving towards greater harmony between tourism and the environment; for customers, an increasing interest in attractive natural surroundings that are protected summer and winter alike, and for local decision makers, concern for making tourist destinations more environmentally-friendly;

CONSIDERING that in the Alpine region, individual attention must be given to limitations to the ability of each location's ecosystem to adapt, and each ecosystem must be appreciated for its specific features;

CONSIDERING that natural and cultural heritage as well as the countryside constitute an essential part of tourism in the Alps;

AWARE that the Alpine States are characterised by natural, cultural, economic and institutional differences which have caused them to develop independently, giving rise to very varied tourist facilities which, far from becoming more standardised at international level should be a source of diverse but complementary tourist activities;

AWARE of the need for sustainable development in the tourist industry to be based on developing natural heritage and providing high-quality services, given that the majority of Alpine regions are dependent on tourism which also provides a livelihood for the local population;

AWARE that it is appropriate to encourage holidaymakers to respect nature, to give them a greater understanding of the people living and working in tourist destinations and to create the best conditions possible for them to truly discover the diversity of nature in the Alpine region;

AWARE that it is the responsibility of professional tourist organisations and regional and local authorities to put into place, within a defined framework for the Alpine region, means of improving production structures and their efficiency;

DESIRING to contribute to sustainable development in the Alps by encouraging environmentally-friendly tourism, which is also an essential basis for the standard of living and economy of the local people;

CONVINCED that certain problems can only be resolved in a cross-border framework and require joint measures on the part of the Alpine States,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

Objective

The objective of this Protocol is to contribute to sustainable development in the Alpine region within the existing institutional framework, by encouraging environmentally-friendly tourism through specific measures and recommendations which take the interests of both the local population and tourists into account.

Article 2

International cooperation

1. The Contracting Parties undertake to eliminate barriers to international cooperation between regional and local authorities

in the Alpine region, and to promote collaboration at the appropriate territorial level in order to solve common problems.

2. The Contracting Parties shall encourage stronger international cooperation between the relevant competent bodies. They shall ensure, in particular, the development of cross-border areas by coordinating environmentally-friendly tourist and leisure activities.

3. When local and regional authorities are unable to implement measures because they are a matter of national or international competence, they must be given the opportunity to effectively represent the interests of the population.

*Article 3***Taking account of the objectives in other policies**

The Contracting Parties undertake to take account of the objectives of this Protocol in their other policies as well, in particular in the fields of regional planning, transport, agriculture, forestry, protection of the environment and nature, and water and energy supplies, with a view to reducing any negative or contradictory effects.

*Article 4***Participation of regional and local authorities**

1. Each Contracting Party shall define, within its institutional framework, the best level of coordination and cooperation between the institutions and regional authorities directly concerned so as to encourage solidarity of responsibility, in particular to exploit and develop synergies when applying tourism policies and implementing measures under them.

2. The regional and local authorities directly concerned shall be parties to the various stages of preparing and implementing these policies and measures, within the framework of their competence, within the existing institutional framework.

CHAPTER II

SPECIFIC MEASURES

*Article 5***Managing tourism**

1. The Contracting Parties undertake to combine sustainable development with environmentally-friendly tourism. To this end, they shall support the preparation and implementation of guidelines, development programmes and sectoral plans which take the objectives of this Protocol into account and which are initiated by the competent bodies at the most appropriate level.

2. These measures will allow the advantages and disadvantages of planned developments to be evaluated and compared, in particular in terms of:

(a) the socioeconomic consequences for the local population;

(b) the consequences for soil, water, the air, natural balances and the countryside, taking into account specific ecological data, natural resources and limitations to the ability of ecosystems to adapt;

(c) the consequences for public finances.

*Article 6***Guidelines for developing tourism**

1. The Contracting Parties shall, when developing tourism, take account of issues such as the conservation of nature and the countryside. They undertake to promote, as far as possible, projects which enhance the countryside and are environmentally acceptable.

2. They shall adopt a sustainable policy to make environmentally-friendly tourism in the Alps more competitive, and by doing so shall make an important contribution to the socio-economic development of the Alpine region. Priority shall be given to measures promoting innovation and diversity in tourism.

3. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that in areas attracting high numbers of tourists, a balance is struck between intensive and extensive forms of tourism.

4. When incentives are established, the following requirements should be met:

(a) for intensive tourism, the adaptation of existing tourist facilities and equipment to meet ecological requirements, and the development of new facilities conforming to the objectives of this Protocol;

(b) for extensive tourism, the continuation or development of environmentally-friendly tourism, and the promotion of the natural and cultural heritage of tourist areas.

*Article 7***Research on quality**

1. The Contracting Parties shall adopt a policy of permanent and systematic research on the quality of tourism across the whole of the Alpine region, taking ecological requirements into account.

2. They shall encourage the exchange of experiences and the implementation of joint action plans, pursuing qualitative improvements particularly in:

- (a) the development of amenities in the countryside and natural areas;
- (b) urban development and architecture (new buildings and village restoration);
- (c) accommodation and range of tourist services;
- (d) diversity in tourism for the Alpine region, promoting cultural activities in the various areas concerned.

Article 8

Controlling tourists flows

The Contracting Parties shall encourage the control of tourist flows, particularly in protected areas, organising a way to evenly disperse and accommodate tourists in order to guarantee the sustainability of these areas.

Article 9

Natural limitations to development

The Contracting Parties shall ensure that tourism development is adapted to the specific environment and available resources of the area or region concerned. It is appropriate to establish prior assessment for projects likely to have a marked impact on the environment, within the existing institutional framework, which will be taken into account when decisions are made.

Article 10

Quiet areas

The Contracting Parties undertake, in accordance with their laws and ecological criteria, to establish designated quiet areas where no tourist facilities will be developed.

Article 11

Accommodation policy

The Contracting Parties shall develop accommodation policies, taking account of how little space is available and giving priority to commercial accommodation, restoring and using

existing buildings, and modernising and improving the quality of existing accommodation.

Article 12

Ski lifts

1. The Contracting Parties undertake, within the framework of national authorisation procedures for ski lifts, to implement a policy that goes beyond economic and safety needs, responding to ecological requirements and the countryside.

2. Both new authorisations to operate ski lifts and concessions will be subject to disused ski lifts being dismantled and removed, and areas no longer in use being returned to nature, giving priority to plant species native to the area.

Article 13

Tourist traffic and transport

1. The Contracting Parties shall encourage measures to reduce dependence on motorised vehicles in tourist resorts.

2. Furthermore, they shall promote both private and public initiatives to improve access by public transport to resorts and tourist areas, and shall encourage tourists to use these services.

Article 14

Specific development techniques

1. Ski slopes

1. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that the development, maintenance and use of ski slopes blend into the natural surroundings as much as possible, taking account of natural balances and biotope sensitivity.

2. Developments affecting the landscape shall be avoided as much as possible and, when natural conditions allow, developed areas should be replanted, giving priority to plant species native to the area.

2. Artificial snow machines

National legislation may authorise the use of artificial snow during cold seasons specific to each location, particularly to make exposed areas safer and if the location's hydrological, climatic and ecological conditions allow.

*Article 15***Sporting activities**

1. The Contracting Parties undertake to define a policy for controlling outdoor sporting activities, especially in protected areas, in order to avoid causing damage to the environment. This control may mean prohibiting a particular activity, if necessary.

2. The Contracting Parties undertake to limit as much as possible, and if necessary prohibit, sporting activities using motorised vehicles outside areas designated by competent bodies.

*Article 16***Landing by air**

The Contracting Parties undertake to limit as much as possible, and if necessary prohibit, landing by air outside of airfields for the purpose of sporting activities.

*Article 17***Developing economically weak regions and local and regional authorities**

It is recommended that the Contracting Parties examine solutions adapted to the appropriate territorial level to promote the balanced development of economically weak regions and local and regional authorities.

*Article 18***Staggering holidays**

1. The Contracting Parties shall endeavour to spread out the demand for tourist resorts more effectively, in terms of time and location.

2. To this end, it is appropriate to support cooperation between States on staggering holidays and experimenting with extending holiday seasons.

*Article 19***Encouraging innovation**

It is recommended that the Contracting Parties develop incentives to encourage the implementation of the objectives

of this Protocol. To this end they will examine, in particular, the implementation of an Alpine competition with a view to rewarding innovative tourist initiatives and products which respect the objectives of this Protocol.

*Article 20***Cooperation between tourism, agriculture, forestry and handicrafts**

The Contracting Parties shall support cooperation between tourism, agriculture, forestry and handicrafts. They shall particularly encourage combinations of activities which generate employment in the context of sustainable development.

*Article 21***Further measures**

The Contracting Parties may take further measures to promote sustainable tourism than the measures provided for in this Protocol.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH, TRAINING AND INFORMATION*Article 22***Research and observation**

1. The Contracting Parties shall encourage and harmonise, in close cooperation, research and systematic observation relevant to improving understanding of the relationship between tourism and the environment in the Alps, and analysing future developments.

2. The Contracting Parties shall ensure that the national results of the research and systematic observation are included in a common permanent observation and information system and that they are made accessible to the public under the existing institutional framework.

3. The Contracting Parties undertake to share information about their own experiences relevant to implementing the measures and recommendations in this Protocol and to gathering valuable information in terms of qualitative tourism development.

*Article 23***Training and information**

1. The Contracting Parties shall encourage basic and further training and the provision of information to the public about the objectives, measures and implementation of this Protocol.

2. It is recommended that the Contracting Parties include knowledge of nature and the environment in vocational training for jobs directly involving or linked to tourism. New types of training bringing tourism and the environment together could then be introduced. For example:

— 'nature activity leaders',

— 'resort quality assurance officers',

— 'tourism assistants for the disabled'.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION*Article 24***Implementation**

The Contracting Parties undertake to ensure the implementation of this Protocol by taking any appropriate measures within the existing institutional framework.

*Article 25***Monitoring compliance with obligations**

1. The Contracting Parties shall regularly report to the Standing Committee on measures taken under this Protocol. The reports shall also cover the effectiveness of the measures taken. The Alpine Conference shall determine the intervals at which the reports must be submitted.

2. The Standing Committee shall examine these reports in order to ensure that the Contracting Parties have fulfilled their obligations under this Protocol. It may also ask for additional

information from the Contracting Parties concerned or have recourse to other information sources.

3. The Standing Committee shall draw up a report on the compliance of the Contracting Parties with the obligations arising from the Protocol, for the attention of the Alpine Conference.

4. The Alpine Conference shall take note of this report. If it finds that obligations have not been met, it may adopt recommendations.

*Article 26***Evaluation of the effectiveness of the provisions**

1. The Contracting Parties shall regularly examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions of this Protocol. They shall consider the adoption of appropriate amendments to this Protocol where necessary in order to achieve objectives.

2. The regional and local authorities shall be associated with this evaluation within the existing institutional framework. Non-governmental organisations active in this field may be consulted.

CHAPTER V

FINAL PROVISIONS*Article 27***Links between the Alpine Convention and the Protocol**

1. This Protocol constitutes a Protocol to the Alpine Convention within the meaning of Article 2 thereof and any other relevant articles of the Convention.

2. Only Contracting Parties to the Alpine Convention may become a party to this Protocol. Any denunciation of the Alpine Convention also implies denunciation of this Protocol.

3. Where the Alpine Conference discusses matters relating to this Protocol, only the Contracting Parties to this Protocol may take part in the vote.

*Article 28***Signature and ratification**

1. This Protocol shall be open for signature by the signatory States of the Alpine Convention and the European Community on 16 October 1998 and in the Republic of Austria, as the depositary, from 16 November 1998.

2. This Protocol shall enter into force for the Contracting Parties which have expressed their agreement to be bound by the said Protocol three months after the date on which three States have deposited their instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval.

3. For Parties which express their agreement to be bound by the Protocol at a later date, the Protocol shall enter into force three months after the date of deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval. After the entry into force of an amendment to the Protocol, any new Contracting Party to the said Protocol shall become a Contracting Party to the Protocol, as amended.

*Article 29***Notification**

The depositary shall, in respect of this Protocol, notify each State referred to in the Preamble and the European Community of:

- (a) any signature;
- (b) the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval;
- (c) any date of entry into force;
- (d) any declaration made by a Contracting Party or signatory;
- (e) any denunciation notified by a Contracting Party, including the date on which it becomes effective.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, has signed this Protocol.

Done at Bled, on 16 October 1998 in German, French, Italian and Slovene, the four texts being equally authentic, the original text being deposited in the Austrian State archives. The depositary shall send a certified copy to each of the signatory States.
