

Plenary Session 5:

The Alps and surrounding Metropolises: A competitive European macroregion

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Moderator Podium: NN

Concept:

Macroregions play an increasing role in economic and spatial development within Europe. It is necessary to take into account the territorial diversity and functional economic areas, to better coordinate EU policies, to improve understanding of territorial processes and to develop strategic and flexible territorial cooperation.

The Alps are without doubt a model region for international co-operation structures. The Treaty of the Alpine Convention serves as an important political frame for the sustainable development of the mountain territory. The European Territorial co-operation programme Alpine Space – already going beyond the mountainous area and covering also the surroundings of the Alps – supports territorial cohesion through funding transnational projects with European relevance. However, there is still a lack of involvement of the integration of metropolises and of an understanding of their functional role.

The ForumAlpinum 2010 and especially Plenary Session 5 will change the sometimes traditional attitude of the alpine networks and start a dialogue between the Alps and partners from outside, especially from the large metropolises in the Alpine surroundings, which do not only belong to the most powerful regions in Europe but also have strong functional relations to the mountain territory (e.g. regarding traffic, tourism, energy production). This dialogue should tackle the opportunities for an “alpine macroregion”: What are mutual benefits between the Alps and surrounding metropolises? What would the Alps be without large metropolises like Munich, Vienna, Milano, Torino, Marseille, Lyon and national centres like Monaco, Geneva, Zürich or Ljubljana? And what would the metropolises be without the Alps? How can the Alpine Space programme contribute to an “alpine macroregion”? What will be the future role of the Alpine Convention? In order to improve the functional co-operation the discussions should result in launching a common project with the co-operation of metropolises, alpine regions and scientific networks.