

**Speech by Cyril Gomez, Director General of the Ministry of Public Works,  
the Environment and Urban Development**

**68<sup>th</sup> Session of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention  
Monaco, 14 November**

Madam Secretary General,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Ms Marie-Pierre Gramaglia, Minister of Public Works, the Environment and Urban Development, and the Prince's Government, I am pleased to welcome you to the Principality for this 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention.

First of all, I would like to congratulate Ms Alenka Smerkolj on her appointment as Secretary General last July, for whom this session is a first in her new role.

As you know, my country became a contracting party to the Convention on the Protection of the Alps in 1999. For 20 years, Monaco has been participating alongside the Member Parties of the Alpine Convention in efforts to reconcile, in a sustainable manner, economic development and the preservation of the natural assets of this vast and sensitive area, the Alps.

Through the Alpine Convention, Monaco gives particular support to ALPARC's "Alpine Network of Protected Areas," notably by contributing to the "Youth at the Top" programme.

This commitment by the Principality also involves the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation in the actions it implements, in particular through the Partnership with the Prince's Government, the Mercantour National Park and the *Parco Naturale Alpi Marittime*.

Finally, I would like to remind you that, on this side of the Alps, the Via Alpina begins on the Palace Square, ending in Trieste via five hiking routes through eight countries, a distance of more than 5,000 km (approximately 3,107 miles).

This is an exciting challenge for those who love long walks and, above all, a wonderful opportunity to see some unique sites.

But before we embark on these hiking trails, this 68<sup>th</sup> Permanent Committee will have the task of reviewing the progress made by the various working groups on issues as diverse as transport, natural risks, the alpine climate, soil protection, biodiversity, agriculture and forestry, among others.

In particular, I would like to recall the importance that the French Presidency of the Conference places on the preparation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Report on the State of the Alps (RSA8), which will focus on air quality and will be the subject of discussions in your future work.

Monaco also welcomes the objective of updating the Action Plan on Climate Change and facilitating the implementation of the Alpine Climate Target System 2050, taking into account the Innsbruck Declaration, which was adopted at the last Alpine Conference.

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As you are aware, knowledge of and certainty about climate trends are becoming clearer. In late October, at a Summit meeting on the subject of high mountain areas, the World Meteorological Organization recalled the extent to which these areas are undergoing major transformation, due to climate change.

In this regard, the agenda for our work includes a speech by a scientist from Monaco, Ms Nathalie Hilmi, who helped to prepare the IPCC's report for decision-makers on the Oceans and the Cryosphere in a Changing Climate. I would remind you that this report was presented in Monaco last September. Ms Hilmi will, of course, highlight the elements of this report that relate to the mountain regions.

As we know, the fragility of the Alpine regions is an additional risk factor in natural disasters, with a direct impact on local populations and economies.

As the Secretary-General of the WMO, Petteri Taalas pointed out in the preamble to the High Mountain Summit, "Accelerating glacier retreat and receding ice and snow cover is perhaps the most visible sign of climate change."

Madam Secretary General, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are approaching the heart of a reality with which we are all confronted. Are we able to deal with it, for ourselves and for future generations? Part of the answer lies with us.

I wish you every success in the work of this 68<sup>th</sup> session of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Conference.

In conclusion, I am delighted that this 68<sup>th</sup> Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention has adopted an eco-responsible approach by adhering to the Monaco Charter of Eco-Responsible Events, which enables organisers and participants to incorporate eco-responsibility in their activities and take specific eco-friendly action for the exemplary organisation of events.

In this spirit, this 68<sup>th</sup> Committee will offset the carbon footprint of its travel.

I congratulate you for that, and thank you for your attention.

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