

YOUTH PARLIAMENT TO THE ALPINE CONVENTION Handbook

1. YPAC at a glance (general information)

1.1. What is YPAC?

YPAC brings together young people from seven Alpine countries to discuss current topics regarding the Alpine region in a parliamentary simulation. It aims at giving insights into parliamentary structures as well as current topics which are of concern to the Alpine region. Moreover, it is a platform for cultural exchange and networking among young people.

The work is documented in two ways:

- The General Assembly votes on a resolution with recommendations for action, which is handed on to the committees of the Alpine Convention and to politicians in the respective regions. They serve as a valuable orientation and guidance for all decisions.
- The media group produces newspaper and web articles, which reach a wider public than the resolution.

The simulated parliament meetings...

- are the basis for an active participation of young people in the development of their Alpine surroundings and environment;
- are a well-organized process for young people to develop and discuss their own opinions about issues of the Alpine Convention;
- and are therefore the basis for young people to take on responsibility in the regional and European process of collaboration. Furthermore, young people are given the opportunity to be heard by politicians and opinion leaders.

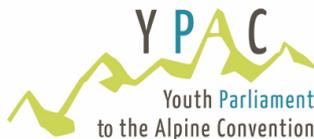
1.2. Organizational matters and partners

Each of the following participating schools sends a delegation of students to the YPAC:

- Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck (Austria)
- Gymnasium Sonthofen (Germany)
- Karolinen-Gymnasium Rosenheim (Germany)
- Lycée Frison Roche de Chamonix (France)
- Fachoberschule für Tourismus und Biotechnologie »Marie Curie« Meran (Italy)
- Liceo Scientifico Leonardo da Vinci Trento (Italy)
- Gimnazija in srednja šola Rudolfa Maistra Kamnik (Slovenia)
- II. gimnazija Maribor (Slovenia)
- Liechtensteinisches Gymnasium Vaduz (Liechtenstein)
- Kantonsschule Trogen (Switzerland)

YPAC takes place once a year. Every year, it is hosted by a different school¹.

¹ See appendix (List of participating schools) for the order in which the schools hosted YPAC.



The topics² closely follow the principles of the Alpine Convention. Students are hosted by families in the region. Accompanying teachers and experts are usually accommodated in guesthouses.

The official language of communication at YPAC is English. All final documents are, however, translated into the official languages of the Alpine Convention (French, Italian, Slovenian and German).

2. Structure and elements

2.1. Schedule

Since every YPAC is organized by a different school, the exact schedule varies each year³. The main elements of the week are the opening and the closing ceremony, at least four committee meetings (at least 8 hours) and the General Assembly. There may also be press conferences. The evening program depends largely on the organizing school. There is usually an informal social event on the evening of the fourth day.

2.2. Elements: Who is who?

2.2.1. Delegates

Students who participate in YPAC are delegates of their school (and representatives of their country).

2.2.2. Public Relations (PR)

Public Relations is dedicated to crafting and disseminating messages that align with the objectives of committees and the general assembly, distinguishing itself from the role of the press group. PR has one main goal: to spread the ideas of YPAC and the postulations of one session during the year on a local, regional or even international level.

Unlike Public Relations, the press operates as an impartial body, selecting content based not on the interests of specific groups, but on its relevance and significance to the broader public.

PR consists of 10 people; each school assigns one delegate for this function. This can be an additional delegate. All members of the PR group are members of the committees.

Members of PR need to have a strong dedication and the willingness to present the ideas and results of YPAC to politicians and the public.

During the YPAC session, members of PR should meet at least once. One of the presidents and a member of the press group should also join these meetings. Two teachers are responsible for this group.

² See appendix for information about previous years' topics and resolutions.

³ See YPAC homepage for the schedule of the previous years.

List of all tasks and rights of the PR members in detail:

during sessions:

- attend one meeting for coordination and exchange of information
- participate in committee meetings and the General Assembly (same as other delegates)

between sessions:

- spread the ideas and results of YPAC (to politics and the public)
- initiate meetings with politicians and interest groups
- assist the press group in producing content

2.2.3. Committees

Much of the parliament's work is done in committees. A committee consists of one delegate from each school, a committee president and a committee vice-president. There are four committees, which are assigned specific issues related to the topic of the current year's YPAC. Under the guidance of the committee presidents, the delegates have at least four committee meetings in two days to write three postulations.

The committee presidents lead the meetings. The delegates are expected to prepare for the discussions in advance by doing research on the relevant issues, including the position of their respective regional governments. During their research, they should also develop opinions of their own and stand up for them during the discussions. At the end of the committee meetings, the committee has to decide on and write three postulations and a strategy on how to defend these in the General Assembly.

2.2.4. Committee Presidents

The committee presidents are the link between the YPAC presidency and the delegates. They lead the debates in the committee meetings and make sure that formal and procedural standards are met. They moderate the meetings if necessary, but they are not allowed to influence the delegates in their opinions. They provide the delegates with information and they help with the preparation (e.g. they distribute preparation sheets, further information on background reading in books, online and newspaper articles). Furthermore, it is their task to make sure that all delegates fulfil their duties.

Those wishing to participate in YPAC as committee presidents must have been delegates in at least one previous session. A committee president should have good leadership skills and speaking abilities. A committee president should also be an impartial politician.

2.2.5. Presidency

Each YPAC is chaired by four presidents, who are responsible for the whole session. They help with the organization, keep in contact with the committee presidents and monitor and control all the participants' work. At the General Assembly, they welcome all the delegates, give the opening speeches and, most importantly, they lead the General Assembly.

Aspiring presidents must have taken part in at least two former YPAC sessions. A president should have good leadership and organizational skills, excellent speaking abilities and must be an impartial politician.

2.2.6. Press Group

The press group has 10-15 participants whose job it is to document the YPAC session. In general, the working language is English.

The work of the press group members includes identifying target media and contacts (before the YPAC week!), inviting them to the official press conference, writing press releases, suggesting articles, organizing interviews, giving additional information and material to the public media if asked for it, and sharing their information and knowledge at the official press conference. The press group members are not active committee members and do not actively participate in the general assembly. After the YPAC session they act as active members of their delegation.

Members of the press group should be interested in journalistic writing and photography. To be efficient and produce good team work, preparation of the press group members prior to YPAC is absolutely necessary. They should be willing and able to interact with professional editors and people in charge at the media. They are responsible for establishing media contacts in their home countries where they can publish texts during and after the YPAC session. The press group is also responsible for internal communication amongst all YPAC participants (black board / flying facts / information screens). These formats are to be defined together with the participants before the YPAC session.

The press group is also responsible for social media.

2.3 Elements: Structure

2.3.1. Committee meetings

After some coaching on how to approach the upcoming task in order to reach useful results, the delegates work in their committees during the first two days of the YPAC session. The committee presidents lead the committee meetings. The delegates are expected to present their opinions in addition to their respective region's political and economic position regarding the topic. The different positions are discussed. At the end of the committee meetings, each committee should have three postulations to present at the General Assembly.

2.3.2. Internal communication

There is usually a meeting for internal communication on the evening of the second day. Committee presidents and the Presidency meet in order to prepare for the General Assembly. Delegations also meet and catch up on the work that has been done in the committees.

2.3.3. Input from politicians

The delegates get the opportunity to discuss their postulations with experts and/or politicians. They present their ideas to the politicians and receive feedback. The politicians point out problems in the students' line of argument and help them to improve their postulations. The discussion should focus on feasibility and help students realize which of their postulations need to be revised.

2.3.4. The General Assembly

Presidents are in charge of leading the GA.

1. The presidents open the General Assembly: They welcome the delegates and explain the exact schedule of the General Assembly.
2. The committees read out their postulations (in random order).
3. All participants can ask questions to clarify misunderstandings or comment on the postulations.

4. Each committee delivers a speech in favour of their postulations. Additionally, the other committees can make a speech against or in favour of one or more postulations.
5. Amendments of postulations:
 - Raising of the red flag: Each committee has the possibility to raise the flag once per postulation.
 - Presidency decides if they want to recognize the flag depending on the situation.
 - The proposal for an amendment must be given as a specific adaptation (deleting, adding or changing).
 - One-minute time to discuss the proposal in the committee.
 - Answer by the committee up on the floor.
 - Vote on the proposed change directly afterwards by all delegates.
6. Each committee makes a closing speech.
7. Resolution
Each delegate receives a ballot paper and ticks 8 out of 12 postulations. If they tick more than 8 postulations, the vote is invalid. If they tick less than 8 postulations, the vote is still valid. The presidents collect the ballot papers in a voting box. The results are displayed and announced later in the day.

Duration: 1 hour for each committee => not more than 5 hours

2.3.5. Public press conference

Before the official press conference, students will present the resolution to politicians from their respective hometowns or countries. Thus, they are given the opportunity to talk to politicians about their ideas concerning the topic in their mother tongue.

Afterwards the resolution will be presented at a public press conference, to which politicians and the media will be invited as well as other students from the organizing school and the YPAC host families.

The presidents, committee presidents and the press group are responsible for the organization, and they lead the public press conference.

Following the press conference, there will be a public market where the committees have the opportunity to present the work they have done in order to come to the final resolution in the form of a work exhibition. The press group will be responsible for its layout.

2.3.6. Opening and closing ceremony

At the opening ceremony, the presidents, politicians and other invited guests welcome all the participants and there may be a presentation by each of the participating schools. The last official part of the YPAC session is the closing ceremony. Diplomas are handed out to the delegates and closing speeches are made.

2.4. Elements: Documents

2.4.1. Postulations

Each committee writes three postulations on the topic they have been assigned. The postulations explain why the issue in general and the particular problem they focus on needs to be addressed and recommend measures that should be taken to solve the problem.

It is important to note that a postulation should be short, realistic and clear and, if possible, propose one or more measures in order to put it into effect.

How to write a good postulation?

The topic and the target audience should be named at the beginning. It is always important to have a well-written text with a good title and a short introduction. The text should be neither too long nor too complicated or technical. Use good examples. Investing time into wording and form of a text is well worth it.

A postulation should take a firm stand, make clear demands and be dedicated to a clearly defined topic; detailed suggestions as a basis for action should be included. It is also important to focus on one topic and not include too many different topics in one postulation. Postulations should have a direct relation to the aims and goals of the Alpine Convention.

Elements of a postulation:

1. Name the topic and choose a good title:

What is it about?

2. Introduction and justification of the topic:

Why does something need to be done?

3. Measures:

How can the situation be improved?

4. Responsibility:

Who is in charge of implementing the measures?

2.4.2. Resolution

The resolution is a formal expression of the postulations after voting. The resolution is the most important document of YPAC, because it summarizes all the work that has been done during the week. The resolution explains why the issues need to be addressed and recommends measures that should be taken to resolve the issues.

3. Preparation

Preparation is an important part of YPAC. Without a thorough knowledge of their topic, delegates will not be able to follow the discussions, let alone contribute effectively. Delegates should also be familiar with the important terms in English related to the topic. Delegates are expected to know the Alpine Convention and CIPRA as well as their role in the different regions. They should also be aware of current events relating to the Alpine Convention and especially the current topic and political and regional positions related to the topic their committees are assigned. Press group members should have a clear overview of the conference's topics in order to ensure proper reporting.

CPs assign the task of writing an essay on the current topic before the YPAC session. Delegates might use the following outline for their essay:

Introduction of the topic

A short paragraph about the topic in general, the reason why it is on the political agenda and why it is important for the Alpine Convention. Mention the most important issues and why they are more significant than others.

Position of the region you come from

Mention the most important issues and why they are more significant than others. It is also a good idea to give examples of how the region is trying to deal with the issue in question.

Personal opinion

Apart from the positions of your country, your personal ideas and ideals play an important role during the discussions. Please point out why you agree or disagree with the official positions. Clearly state your own opinion.

Aims

Your task during YPAC will be to come up with solutions to problems linked to your topic. You need to be prepared to think about your own position before the conference starts.

Sources

For the YPAC staff as well as for future delegates it is interesting to know where you have taken your information. Please list your reference sources: literature and websites.

4. Code of behaviour

YPAC is a forum for young people from all Alpine regions who are interested in politics. All participants are required to show tolerance and behave respectfully towards one another. Attendance during all meetings is mandatory, and absences without valid excuses may lead to the exclusion from the conference. Participants are asked to behave and dress formally (no drugs, alcohol and leisure wear). Leisure wear is suitable for spare time activities, group-finding activities and the party.

5. Application and contact

Students wishing to participate should contact their teachers. Application details should be announced in the fall of the current school year. Each school decides how to select participants – minimum 5 (4 committee delegates and 1 press member); max 8 (4 delegates, 1 PR delegate, 1 press member, 1 CP, 1 Presidency).

Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the YPAC Association or the host school of the current YPAC.

6. Appendix

6.1 List of participating schools in the order in which the schools hosted YPAC

Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck

Angerzellgasse 14
A-6020 Innsbruck
www.agi.tsn.at

II. gimnazija Maribor

Trg Miloša Zidanška 1
SI-2000 Maribor
www.druga.si

Fachoberschule für Tourismus und Biotechnologie „Marie Curie“

Mazziniplatz 1
I-39012 Meran
<https://fos-meran.it/>

Karolinen-Gymnasium Rosenheim

Ebersberger Str. 3
D-83022 Rosenheim
<http://www.karolinen-gymnasium-rosenheim.de/>

Kantonsschule Trogen

Kantonschulstrasse
CH-9043 Trogen
www.kst.ch

Liechtensteinisches Gymnasium

FL-9490 Vaduz
www.lg-vaduz.li

Gymnasium Sonthofen

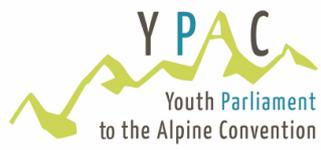
Albert-Schweizer-Strasse 21
D-87527 Sonthofen
www.Gymnasium-sonthofen.de

Lycée Frison Roche de Chamonix

Promenade du Fori BP 9
F-74400 Chamonix-Mont-Blanc Cedex
Mél: Ce.0741116L@ac-grenoble.fr
www.ac-grenoble.fr/citescolaire/frison-roche.chamonix/

Gimnazija in srednja šola Rudolfa Maistra Kamnik

Novi trg 41 a
SI-1241 Kamnik
<http://www.gssrm.si>



Liceo Scientifico Leonardo da Vinci

Via Cristoforo Madruzzo 24

IT - 38122 Trento

<https://liceodavincitn.it/>

6.2 Umbrella topics and subtopics from previous years

2006 Innsbruck: The Importance of Water as an Alpine resource / How much Tourism is bearable for the Alpine Region? / How can we improve the attractiveness of the Alpine region for young people? / What impact do modern and traditional culture have on the life of youths in the Alpine Region?

2007 Innsbruck: Tourism and climate changes / How do climate changes affect tourism? / How can rural and urban areas in the Alps complement each other?

2008 Maribor: Economy versus Ecology / Transportation / Environment / Tourism / Government

2009 Meran: My Future in the Alps / Active involvement of youth / Networking and participating / Crossing borders / Alpine identity

2010 Rosenheim: Water / Demography / How can a social balance be found for the Alpine society of the future? / How can the decrease of the young population be prevented in the rural Alpine society of the future? / How should water be used as a natural resource? / How can people in alpine regions make use of rivers and lakes?

2011 Trogen (Schweiz): Transportation: Freight and industrial traffic: Imagine the Alps without traffic / Let's unify railways! / Public transport / Individual transport / Health, environment and traffic

2012 Vaduz: Reduction of energy consumption / Saving energy in private households / Saving energy in public households (municipalities, regions, countries)

2013 Sonthofen: My Alpine town of the future: Youths demand sustainable development of towns in keeping with the Alpine Convention / Consumer behaviour / Living and working / Tourism and leisure / Mobility

2014 Chamonix: My Alps beyond boundaries – My Alps of the future / Education – training – working / Everyday life / Economy & energy / Active citizenship

2015 Kamnik: What are the main changes in the Ecosystem Services and how can we deal with them in the Alps in times of climate changes? / Soil / Food production and waste assimilation / Forests as source of renewable energy / Recreation and the cultural aspects of Ecosystems

2016 Bassano del Grappa: Green Economy in the Alps / Living (demographic change, spatial planning, quality of life) / Local Business (start-ups, social innovation, new forms of sustainable tourism) / Consumption (circular economy, waste, CO₂, energy management) / Leisure & Culture (culture as a resource for regional development, terracing, culture of cooperation).

2017 Innsbruck: Demographic Changes in the Alps / Attractiveness of Alpine regions (pull-push factors, migration patterns, family friendly conditions, youth-specific offers) / Employment trends (jobs for young people in rural areas, infrastructural improvements, chances for start-ups, suggesting nature-specific education programmes) / Refugees and integration (application process for refugees, housing possibilities, education offers, young people's contribution to a successful integration of refugees) / Nature protection, Natura 2000 projects in the Alps (economy versus ecology, areas worth protecting, overusing space through building projects, suggesting concrete Alpine regions to be included in the Natura 2000 concept).

2018 Maribor: Preservation of soil /Agriculture (livestock, methane production, biodiversity, farming on slopes, deforestation, water consumption, artificial fertilizers) / Spatial planning in rural areas (spatial planning, second homes, seasonal overpopulation, national parks, soft tourism, snowmaking) / Spatial planning in urban areas (sealing soil, green surfaces, infrastructure, urbanization) / Living and coping with natural hazards (global warming, thunderstorms, precipitations , denudation, steepness, landslides).

2019 Meran: How to cope with climate change? / Ecology (new plants and animals, new environmental conditions, change of cityscape, impact on agriculture, natural hazards) / Health (heatwaves, tropical nights, problems with storing banked blood, influx of tropical diseases, virus carrying insects, pollution) / Human rights to life (change of living conditions due to climate change, migration as a consequence of climate change, sustainability over generations, right to live in healthy conditions, laws and binding fines for protection programs, Alps as a border) / Youth participation (dealing with common goods endangered by climate change, codetermination bodies, participatory models, political education, sociodemographic change, cooperation between various stakeholders).

In 2020 YPAC was not held because of the pandemic.

2021 Trogen: Children's Rights in the Alpine Region / Personal development and education (access to information, inclusion, flexibility, relevance of the subjects taught) / Health and well-being (equality, healthcare system, rights of children, autonomy, opinion) / Freedom of expression (participation in politics, opinions of minors, parent/child relations) / Equality, integration, migration (freedom of religion, education, integration, gender and homosexuality, equality)

2022 Vaduz: Do the Major Crises of the 21st Century Require a Change of System? / Government 2.0 (pandemic, rights, climate crisis, responsibility, decision-makers) / Economy 2.0 (property, circular economy, waste management, sustainability, new economic system) / Society 2.0 (demographic, ageing, loneliness, poverty) / Mobility 2.0 (motorization, travelling, commute, emissions, transport)

2023 Sonthofen: Quality of Life in the Alps / Tourism (mass tourism, social crises, climate change, sustainability, accessibility, impact) / Social co-existence (minorities, social awareness, sustainability, transport, social services, community projects) / Environmental challenges (deforestations, renewable energy, winter sports, preservation of biodiversity, wildlife, ecosystem, protection) / Cultural life (platforms for culture, purpose, message, education, interest, participation, funding)

6.3 The language of presentations and meetings

The Language of Presentations & Meetings - 1

Beginning

I would like to begin/start by ...

I would like to make a few remarks concerning ...

I would like to comment on the problem of ...

Let me begin by ...

To start with, I'd like to...

At the beginning let me give you ...

Ordering

First (of all), we must bear in mind ...

At the outset ...

First(ly) ... Second(ly) ... Third(ly) ... Finally

Introducing a new point

I would now like to turn (briefly) to ...

The next issue I want to discuss ...

Let's now turn to ...

Turning to ...

Adding

In addition, ...

I might add that ...

As well as ..., there is also ...

Furthermore, ...

Moreover, ...

Apart from that, ...

Giving an example

Let me give you an example ...

To illustrate this point, let us ...

A case in point is ...

As an example I'd like to ...

Balancing

On the one hand ..., but on the other hand ...

Despite the fact that ..., I still think ...

Although ..., we mustn't forget ...

Generalising

On the whole ...

In general, ...

Generally speaking, ...

By and large, ...

All in all, ...

All things considered, ...

Coming back to a point

As I was saying ...

As mentioned before, ...

To return to ...

As I have already indicated, ...

The Language of Presentations & Meetings - 2

Stating preferences

I'd rather ... than ...

I prefer ... to ...

I tend to favour ...

The main advantage of ... is that ...

Giving strong opinions

I firmly believe that ...

I am absolutely convinced that ...

It's my belief that ...

There is no doubt in my mind that ...

Summarising

To summarise, ...

To sum up, ...

In short, ...

Let me go over the main points again. ...

Concluding

Let me conclude by ...

I'd like to conclude/finish/end my presentation by ...

Allow me to conclude by ...

In conclusion, ...

Asking for opinion

What's your opinion of ... ?

What's your position on ... ?

What do you think of ... ?

I'd like to hear your views on ...

Asking for a reaction

Could I ask for your reaction to ... ?

I was wondering about your position on this issue.

Where exactly do you stand on this question?

Interrupting

May I interrupt you for a moment?

Sorry to interrupt, but ...

If I may come in here ...

I don't want to interrupt, but ...

Taking the floor

Could I come in at this point?

If I could say a word about ...

I have a point to make here.

Comment

I wonder if I could comment on the last point.

Excuse me, but I'd like to point out ...

I'd like to add something here.

The Language of Presentations & Meetings - 3

Preventing an interruption

If I might just finish ...

With respect, I would like to finish the point I was making.

If you would allow me to continue.

If you'd please let me finish ...

Correcting a misunderstanding

I am afraid there seems to be a misunderstanding.

We seem to be talking at cross purposes.

That is not quite what I meant.

Rephrasing

Let me put it in another way.

Allow me to rephrase that.

To be more specific, ...

Put simply ...

Asking for further information

Could you be a little bit more precise?

Could you give us some details about ... ?

Could you expand on that?

Withholding comment

I'd rather not comment right now.

I am afraid I don't have enough information.

Well, it's rather difficult to say.

I am not at liberty to say.

Expressing support

I am in favour of ...

I would certainly give my backing to ...

I see no objection to that.

Expressing opposition

I am opposed to that.

I am afraid I can't support the proposal.

I am sorry, but I cannot support that.

Making a proposal

I propose/suggest that ...

My proposal is ...

What I suggest is ...

I strongly recommend that ...

Reassuring

Let me assure you on that point.

We need not be afraid of ...

There's no cause for concern