

Julian Prealps

The Voice **of the Park**



**PARCO
NATURALE
PREALPI
GIULIE**

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A Biosphere Reserve beyond borders

Tit Potočnik / Director of Triglav National Park and president of the Coordinating Committee of the Julian Alps Transboundary MaB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Anna Micelli / President of the Park Authority of the Julian Prealps Nature Park and spokesperson of the Italian Julian Alps MaB UNESCO Biosphere Reserve



The establishment by UNESCO of the transboundary Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve marks a highly significant moment for our common territory.

Its importance is bound to various aspects, from the dimension of the area to the number of communities involved, from the rich nature and landscape heritage to the various cultural one, from the engagement of the different interested partners to the powerful message of cooperation and peace that serves as a central theme in this process of recognition.

For us, leading this experience, it sometimes seems almost impossible to coordinate such a vast sharing experience in an area that was the scene of conflicts, fights and divisions less than a century ago.

Especially in this historical moment, we are proud to carry this powerful message of cooperation that travels beyond borders.

By establishing the reserve and activating its governance, we have taken an essential step to protect and enhance the value of this area, which, as one of the most extraordinary and precious places of our continent, is also a strategic reserve for future generations.

The Julian Alps, with their unique biodiversity, breathtaking landscapes and richness in cultural traditions, symbolize how transboundary cooperation can lead

to positive, concrete results. The Biosphere Reserve we are building together is proof of the joint commitment all of us are showing in order to protect and enhance this extraordinary territory, also promoting a sustainable development that can involve and give a central role to local communities.

Therefore, we consider the presence and work of young people a central point. They are and will be a central element of the governance.

We are aware that our task is ambitious, but we are convinced that we will be able to make the difference, thanks to our experience, our passion and our spirit of collaboration. By working together, we will be able to ensure that our common Biosphere Reserve will not remain just a well-made project for environmental protection. Instead, we will be able to ensure that it becomes an excellent model for the management of protected areas in a cross-border context.

We are thrilled and curious to see what we will be able to build in the next months and years, together with our communities, young people and all other interested partners. Also, we are already aware that this Reserve will become a source of inspiration for other nature areas and for all those who believe in the possibility of a more sustainable future.

We thank all the people who have collaborated and made this result possible, but also those who will face with us such an important challenge.

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UNESCO Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve

A model for the future of conservation and sustainability

António Abreu | Director of the UNESCO Division of Ecological and Earth Sciences



The Julian Alps, straddling the border of Italy and Slovenia, are more than just a stunning landscape of rugged peaks, pristine forests, and glacial lakes. Now designated as a Transboundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, this region is emerging as a global model for sustainable development, biodiversity conservation, and human-nature coexistence. By integrating scientific research, environmental stewardship, and local livelihoods, the Julian Alps showcase the potential of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme in action.

A Living Laboratory of Biodiversity and Conservation

The Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve

is a haven for wildlife with diverse ecosystems ranging from ancient beech forests to alpine meadows, the region provides an unparalleled setting for conservation science.

One of the Biosphere Reserve's key strengths is its role as a "living laboratory." Scientists and conservationists use cutting-edge monitoring techniques to track climate change effects, study ecosystem resilience, and develop adaptive management strategies. By blending traditional ecological knowledge with modern conservation science, the reserve is pioneering innovative approaches to biodiversity protection.

Additionally, the reserve plays a crucial role in habitat restoration efforts, ensuring that previously degraded areas can recover and once again support a wide array of species. Ongoing scientific studies also focus on the intricate relationships between flora and fauna, providing key insights into ecological networks and their resilience to environmental pressures.

Sustainability at the Core: Balancing Nature and Local Economies

A central goal of the UNESCO

MAB Programme is to harmonise environmental conservation with economic and social well-being. In the Julian Alps, sustainability isn't just an abstract concept—it's a way of life.

The region is fostering eco-tourism, sustainable agriculture, and green entrepreneurship. Local communities are actively involved in initiatives such as organic farming, responsible forestry, and artisanal crafts, ensuring that economic benefits go hand in hand with environmental protection. Carefully designed tourism models are being implemented to minimise ecological impact while offering visitors a genuine experience of the Alps' natural and cultural heritage.

Moreover, efforts are being made to promote sustainable infrastructure, including renewable energy projects and environmentally friendly transportation options. Integrating green technology into daily life, the Biosphere Reserve sets an example of how communities can thrive without compromising their natural surroundings.

Advancing Science, Education, and Global Cooperation

Biosphere reserves are hubs for scientific research and education,

and the Julian Alps are no exception. Collaboration between universities, research institutions, and local stakeholders generates valuable insights into climate adaptation, ecosystem services, and sustainable land use.

Educational programs within the reserve are inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards. Schools, community groups, and visitors can engage in hands-on learning experiences, reinforcing the understanding that human well-being is deeply interconnected with the health of natural ecosystems.

On a global scale, the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve contributes to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, joining over 700 sites worldwide. As a leader in transboundary conservation and sustainable mountain development,

the reserve provides a model for international cooperation in tackling environmental challenges.

Furthermore, initiatives to strengthen community participation in decision-making ensure conservation efforts align with local needs and aspirations. By fostering inclusive governance, the reserve helps build resilience and adaptability among its stakeholders, paving the way for long-term sustainability.

The Julian Alps: A Beacon for the Future

The Julian Alps' designation as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve recognises its natural and cultural wealth and commitment to a sustainable future. The Biosphere Reserve exemplifies how human societies can thrive while protecting the planet by bridging the

gap between conservation and development.

With ongoing collaboration between scientists, policymakers, and local communities, the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve stands as a beacon of hope, proving that we can create a world where nature and people flourish together. As the global community seeks solutions to climate change and biodiversity loss, this alpine territory is an inspiring blueprint for sustainable living in harmony with nature.

By fostering scientific research, sustainable economies, and global cooperation, the Julian Alps demonstrate that protecting the environment does not mean halting progress—it means redefining progress to be more inclusive, resilient, and harmonious with nature.

What is a Biosphere Reserve?


Where nature and communities grow together: model territories for a sustainable future.

A Biosphere Reserve is a territory recognized by UNESCO as an example of balance between nature conservation and human activities. In these places a sustainable development model is being tested, capable of protecting biodiversity while simultaneously improving the quality of life of local communities. The concept was born in 1971 with the “Man and Biosphere” (MAB) Programme, an initiative that combines natural and social sciences, economics, and education to promote a more harmonious relationship between humanity and the environment.

Biosphere Reserves encompass terrestrial, coastal, and marine ecosystems that represent the biological and cultural diversity of an area. They are not simply protected areas: they are dynamic places where concrete solutions are studied and implemented in order to face global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and the degradation of natural resources.

They are open-air laboratories where scientific knowledge and traditional wisdom meet to generate new forms of land management. In a Biosphere Reserve, the present is protected, the past is valorized, and a more sustainable future is built for everyone.

Biosphere Reserves in the world...

759 

Biosphere Reserves



Present in  136 countries

25 

Transboundary Biosphere Reserves

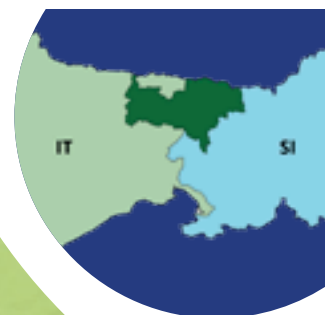
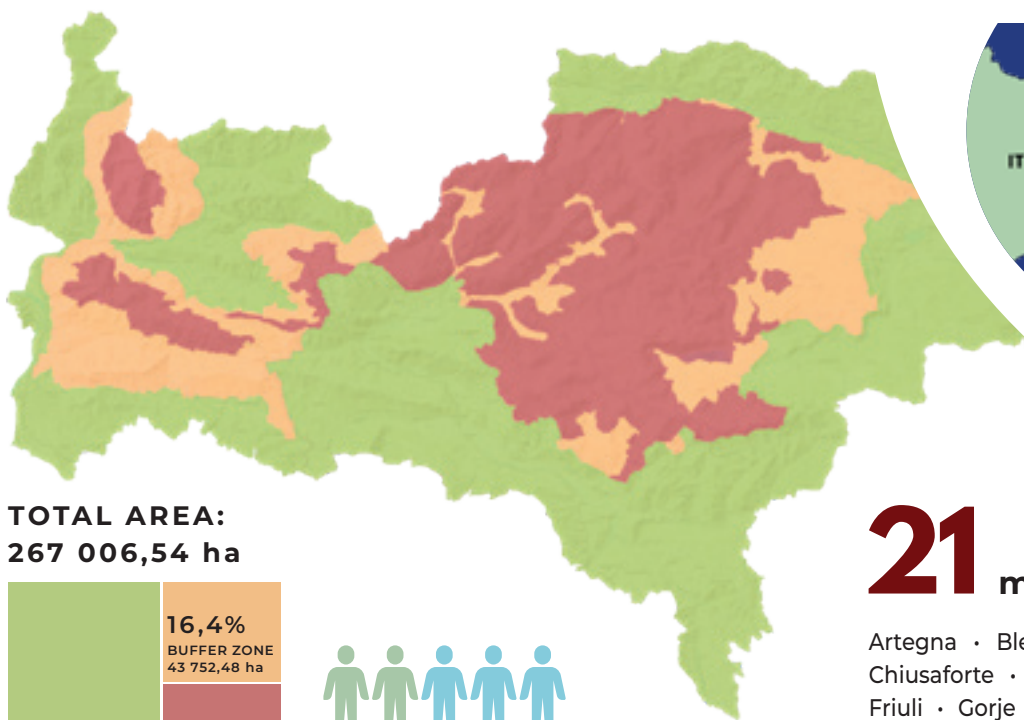


Home to more than **300 million people**

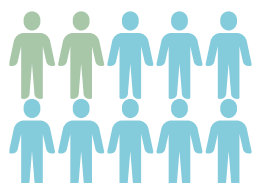
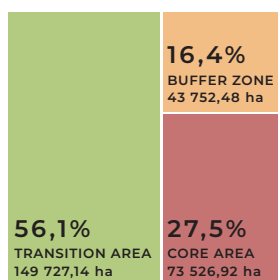
 **5%**
of the Earth's surface
7 667 281 km²
Almost as large as Australia 



...and in the Julian Alps



TOTAL AREA:
267 006,54 ha



103 856 inhabitants

21 municipalities

- Artegna · Bled · Bohinj · Bovec · Chiusaforte · Dogna · Gemona del Friuli · Gorje · Jesenice · Kobarid · Kranjska Gora · Lusevera · Moggio Udinese · Montenars · Resia · Resiutta · Radovljica · Taipana · Tolmin · Venzone · Žirovnica

Next steps: organization and management of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve

With the Coordinating Committee a new program of cooperation between the two sides has started. Thematic Roundtables on cooperation are also planned and aim to involve local communities.

Following the creation of the Julian Alps transboundary Biosphere Reserve (which was recognized last July), the time has come to take the first steps.

The document Piano delle Azioni (“Actions Plan”), approved as part of the application dossier, outlines the shared actions (ongoing, planned, or proposed activities) that local stakeholders intend to carry out in the near future (10 years).

The first step has been the establishment of the Biosphere Reserve’s “Governance”, which is responsible for stimulating, supporting, and implementing cooperation projects between the two sides of the Julian Alps, as well as interacting with the International Network of MAB Biosphere Reserves. In this context, it represents the Julian Alps as a unique region in ecological, social, and economic terms.

It consists of a single body, named Coordinating Committee, composed of 12 members: 1 representative from the Triglav National Park (Slovenia); 1 representative from the Julian Prealps Nature Park (Italy); 6 representatives chosen from regional/local authorities and/or members of the boards of directors of the

Julian Alps Biosphere Reserves (3 from Slovenia and 3 from Italy); 2 youth representatives (1 from Slovenia and 1 from the Youth Council of the Italian Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve); 1 representative from a Professional institute for nature conservation (Slovenia); and 1 representative from the Scientific Council of the Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve (Italy).

With the establishment of the Committee, held in Trenta on the 14th of February 2025, the following members were identified: Tit Potočnik (Director of the Triglav National Park), who shall hold the presidency for the two-year term 2025/2026, Francesco Boscutti, Chiara Deganutti, Aljaž Lavtižar, Alberto Madrassi, Marko Matajurc, Anna Micelli (Spokesperson for the UNESCO MaB Biosphere Reserve “Italian Julian Alps”), Fabio Orlando, Metod Rogelj, Simon Škvor, Peter Torkar, and Cecilia Venturini.

The Committee is supported by a permanent secretariat. This consists of three people from each national biosphere Reserve and representing the focal point of the Transboundary Reserve for local communities (the Park Director and two selected collab-

orators), a Youth Advisory Committee, the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism (ECST) Forum, and five Cooperation Roundtables.

The next step will be to establish, during the year, the “Cross-border Cooperation Roundtables”, i.e. a series of discussion tables (in person or online in order to facilitate participation) to promote the dialogue between Italian and Slovenian stakeholders of a specific sector. This is aimed at identifying synergies, promoting collaboration and sharing of best practices, and intensifying cross-border cooperation.

The roundtables will be: Agriculture and Forestry, Universities and Research Groups, Cultural and Traditional Associations, School and Education, and the Youth Roundtable.

The organizations that promoted the nomination, in

collaboration with the municipalities of the Reserve, are responsible for making the recognition effective through actions that engage local communities and give them a central role.



A new challenge for young people

A joint initiative has been launched to strengthen the presence of young people in the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, with the aim of creating a stable group on the Slovenian side as well.

Alberto Madrassi | Youth Council of the Italian Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve

Following the establishment of the Julian Alps Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, the Youth Council of the Italian Julian Alps Biosphere Reserve has also begun to take the first steps toward a greater cross-border dimension. Over the past few years, some attempts had already been made, but they encountered several obstacles, including the pandemic and the lack of a stable group of Slovenian peers. The important recognition from Agadir, Morocco, has now instilled a good dose of new energy in the youth of the Council, aiming to achieve this thrilling goal.

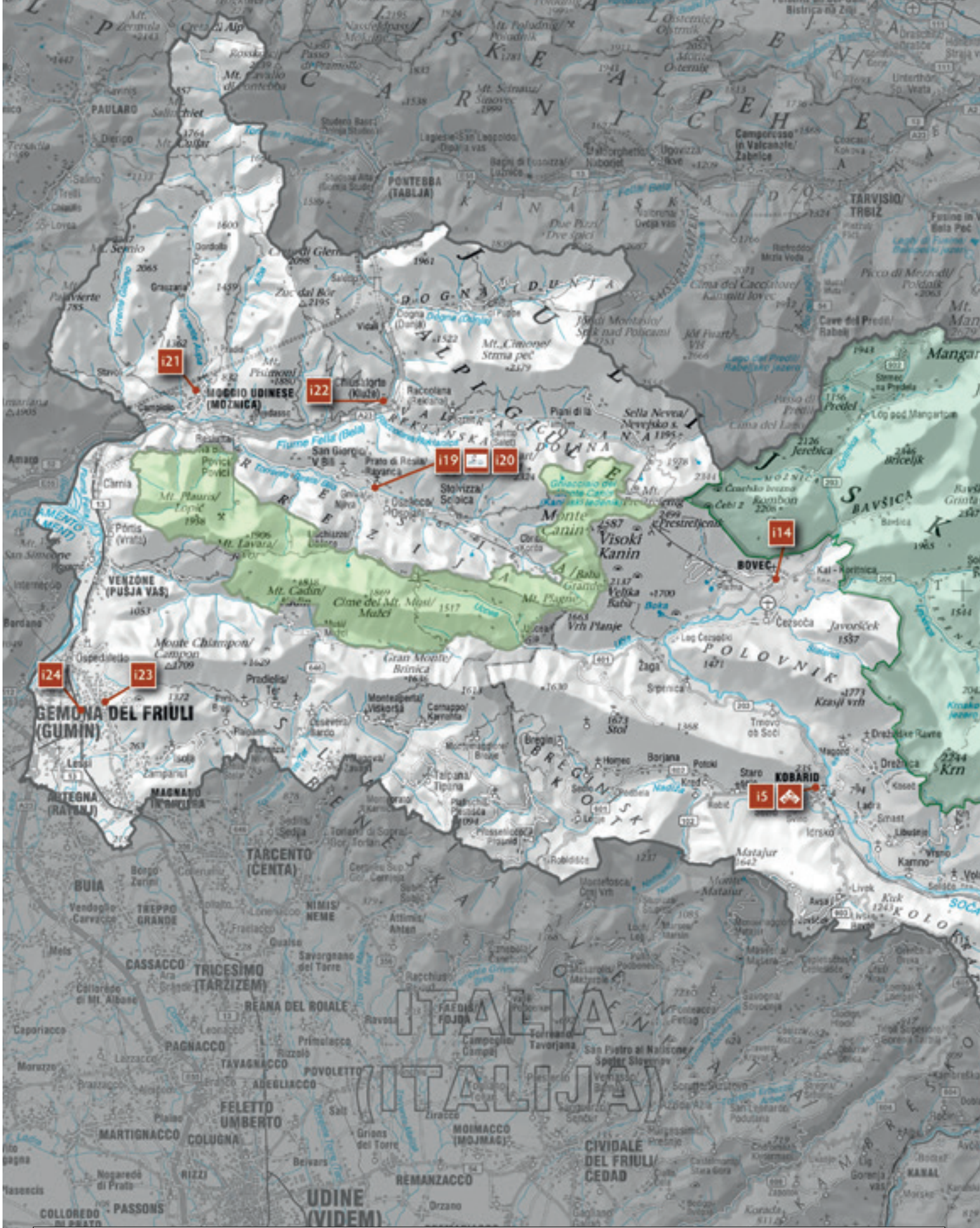
At the first meeting of the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve’s Coordinating Committee, the two youth representatives – Alberto






























Madrassi and Aljaž Lavtižar – began laying the foundations for this joint effort to engage young people in the Reserve’s various activities and to promote sustainable development of the Julian Alps. Initially, the focus will be on helping Slovenian peers build their own group by recruiting young

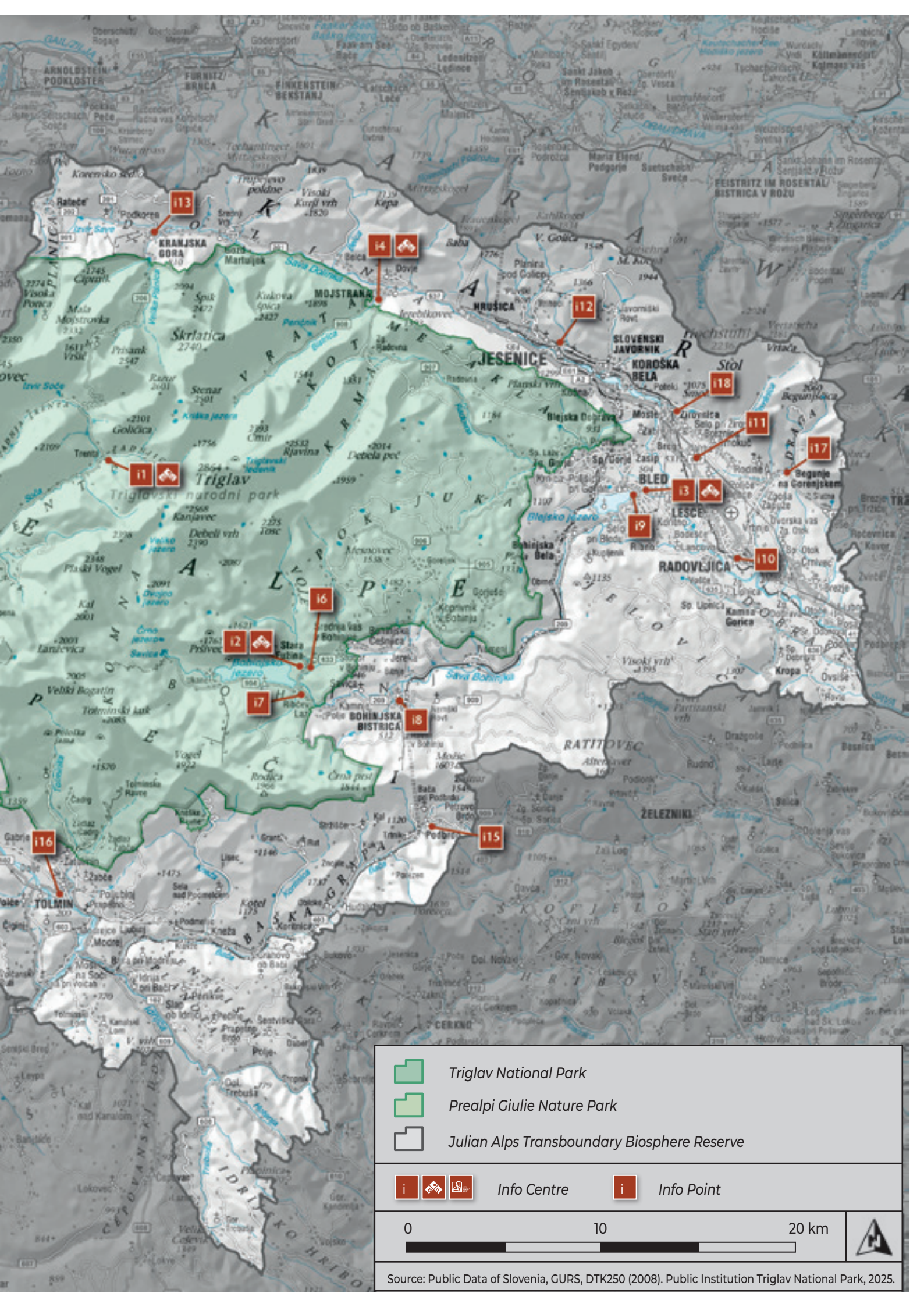







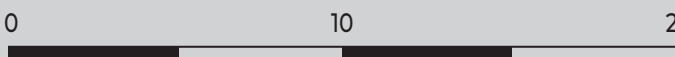

people from the eleven Slovenian municipalities in the Reserve. Only then will it be possible to organize joint activities to build lasting relationships of collaboration and friendship. A clear and achievable goal is to organize the first official meeting of a cross-border cooperation table during the next ECST Forum, to be held in Slovenia in October.

The youth members of the Coordinating Committee also include Cecilia Venturini and Chiara Degantutti, representatives of the municipalities of Arterga and Moggio Udinese, respectively, who will undoubtedly make a significant contribution to youth engagement in the Julian Alps area.



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|--|--|--|---|
| <p>ITALIAN JULIAN ALPS BIOSPHERE RESERVE</p>    |       |       |   |
| <p>SLOVENIAN JULIAN ALPS BIOSPHERE RESERVE</p>    |       |       |   |



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|---|---|---|------------|
|  | Triglav National Park | | |
|  | Prealpi Giulie Nature Park | | |
|  | Julian Alps Transboundary Biosphere Reserve | | |
|  | Info Centre |  | Info Point |
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| Source: Public Data of Slovenia, GURS, DTK250 (2008). Public Institution Triglav National Park, 2025. | | | |