



Milan, 20 March 2025

Press release

The day before International Glacier Day

Today CAI, CGI, CIPRA ITALIA, EUMA and Legambiente, together with a network of 60 signatories between NGOs, research institutions and other Organisations, present the European Manifesto for Glaciers at the University of Milan

"Key points at the heart of the document are reducing greenhouse gas emissions, more adaptation actions together with a European governance of glaciers and high-altitude resources, greater international cooperation between researchers, civil society and institutions, and information and awareness-raising campaigns"

[Link to the digital press kit](#)

From the highest peaks of the world to those of Europe, an SOS for glaciers is sent out. Due to the climate crisis and high temperatures, the great white giants are receding year by year, and with them we risk losing the planet's largest reserve of water. In the last 23 years, from 2000 to 2023, according to the latest scientific studies, global glaciers, excluding the continental ice caps of Antarctica and Greenland, have lost 5.4 per cent of their mass, a reduction of about 6.558 billion tons. **Central Europe, with the Alps and Pyrenees, is the most affected mountainous area: here, mountains are warming at about twice the rate of the rest of the world, and phenomena such as landslides and debris flows are increasing.** This is a worrying global picture, with major repercussions downstream, on local communities and ecosystems, on which immediate action is needed.

Pointing out the **direction to follow**, on the day before International Glaciers Day, are **CAI** (Italian Alpine Club), **CGI** (Italian Glaciological Committee), **CIPRA ITALIA** (International Commission for the Protection of the Alps), **EUMA** (European Union Mountaineering Association) and **Legambiente**, **who Today present the European Manifesto for Glacier Governance and Related Resources** at the Università Statale di Milano, a document that they have promoted together with a network of 60 signatories including NGOs, research bodies, protected areas and other Organizations from different countries. The goal is to implement common actions to ensure a sustainable future for glaciers and the communities that depend on them, a goal to be achieved through participatory and shared action among cross-border areas that share the same geomorphological conditions and functional ecological units.

There are two pillars at the heart of the European Manifesto for Glacier Governance - i.e. reducing greenhouse gas emissions by limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels and more actions to adapt to the impacts of climate change on glaciers - both **based on eight common actions, four at European level and four at a general level, for which the promoting associations and signatories are the spokespeople.** They all unite in reaffirming the importance of initiating European governance to protect and defend the cryosphere, which includes glaciers, ice caps, snow, sea ice and permafrost, which, together with periglacial and proglacial areas, represent one of the most sensitive components of the Earth's environment.

It is estimated, for example, that reducing emissions could save glaciers in 2/3 of the world's heritage sites. For example, with very low emissions and the achievement of carbon neutrality by 2050, in some areas, such as the Himalayas, up to 40% of the regional ice could be preserved, and some glacial areas could even begin slow regrowth between 2100 and 2300. Even in Central Asia and the Southern Andes, rapid emission reductions in line with the 1.5°C limit would preserve twice as much ice as in the most critical scenarios.

"Worldwide," **say the promoters** "more than two billion people depend on snow and ice in the mountains that feed rivers, lakes and aquifers, essential resources for ecosystems, agriculture, energy, industry and



households. The International Year for the Conservation of Glaciers represents a unique opportunity to unite global efforts in the fight against the climate crisis. Only through effective collaboration and shared commitment will it be possible to ensure a sustainable future for glaciers and the communities that depend on them. To foster climate resilience and sustainable development, it is essential to pursue urgent and ambitious emission reduction targets, together with coordinated, sustained and increasingly ambitious adaptation actions. The challenge is enormous, but the time to act is now”.

At a European level, the promoters and signatories of the Manifesto advocate four actions: 1) to create a European system for monitoring cryospheric risk, favouring the sharing of experiences gained at local and regional level and developing a common set of rules for monitoring; 2) to set up a multidisciplinary network of competences to be shared, with the aim of establishing a **European Glacier Governance (EGG)**; 3) to valorize **international tools and policies for mitigation and adaptation to the climate crisis in European glacial areas**; 4) Sustain **Europe's leadership and guiding role at a global level** by orienting EU choices towards the protection of glacial environments, from polar ice caps to glaciers, and promoting the reduction of impacts on the cryosphere, land use and water resources.

At a general level, the promoters and signatories of the Manifesto indicate 4 actions to focus on: 1) supporting the value and protection of glaciers, 2) collaborating with universities, research centres and schools to raise awareness and increase the awareness of citizens and institutions, developing training courses aimed at creating new professionalism in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation, 3) establishing spaces for discussion, 4) promoting and networking experiences from different geographical, political and climatic realities, in order to strengthen cooperation.

Sos glaciers data: from Everest, the roof of the world, to Mont Blanc, Europe's highest peak, the climate crisis is speeding through the glaciers of all the peaks. The data lined up by Legambiente, cross-referencing various international studies, summarized in the new dossier titled "*Sos glaciers: a past and a future to protect*" that the environmental association is releasing today - in support of the European Manifesto and ahead of World Water Day dedicated to glaciers - speak clearly: from **2000 to 2023 the greatest relative loss of ice occurred in regions with a small glacier area (i.e. less than 15.000 km²): Central Europe (-39%), Caucasus (-35%), New Zealand (-29%), North Asia (-23%), Western Canada and the United States (-23%) and low latitude glaciers (-20%).** (Source The GlaMBIE Team)

Moving on to Alpine glaciers, at least one third of their mass is being lost to date, and with the increase in temperatures expected by 2050 all glacier bodies below 3,500 metres will have disappeared. **Among those that are already extinct there is the Flua glacier in Piedmont, in Valsesia, while those of Canin (in Friuli-Venezia Giulia) and Triglav (in Slovenia) in the Eastern Alps have been reduced to scattered remnants of snow and ice. The next ones destined to disappear are those of Marmolada and Adamello.**

In the rest of the world, the situation is not the best: in Pakistan, the 13,032 glaciers in the Karakorum, Hindukush and Himalaya Mountain ranges have undergone rapid transformations, such that the Palas basin (in the Pakistani Himalayas) has seen a retreat of 16% in the last 20 years alone. Mountain glaciers along the west coast of Greenland show a reduction of almost 15% in total area and about 19% in ice volume, from 1985 to 2020. The mountains of the Andes have lost 25% of their ice cover since the Little Ice Age. Finally, it should not be forgotten that **glacier melting is responsible for 25-30% of the currently observed increase in sea level.** In the world, almost two billion people live near the coast, and about 800 million live less than 10 m above sea level. Today, said level is about 20 cm higher than in 1900, its rate of rise has increased more than three times and currently stands at 4.5 mm/year.

Press office: Luisa Calderaro 3496546593



They adhered to the Manifesto

MANIFESTO PER UNA GOVERNANCE DEI GHIACCIAI E DELLE RISORSE CONNESSE

PROMOTORI

- CAI (Club Alpino Italiano)
- CGI (Comitato Glaciologico Italiano)
- CIPRA Italia (Commissione Internazionale per la Protezione delle Alpi – Italia)
- EUMA (European Mountaineering Association)
- Legambiente

ADESIONI

- AGRAP (Associazione Gestori Rifugi del Piemonte)
- AIGAE (Associazione Italiana Guide Ambientali Escursionistiche)
- AIOL (Associazione Italiana di Oceanologia e Limnologia)
- Anton Melik Geographical Institute
- Bayrische Botanische Gesellschaft
- CAA Club Arc Alpin
- CIPRA Deutschland
- CIPRA France
- CIPRA International
- CIPRA Liechtenstein
- CIPRA Slovenia
- CIPRA Svizzera
- CIPRA Südtirol
- CIRF (Centro Italiano per la Riqualificazione Fluviale)
- Città Alpina dell'Anno/Alpine Town of the Year
- Dachverband für Natur- und Umweltschutz in Südtirol
- Department of Geography, at Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana
- Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile e Ambientale Politecnico di Milano
- Dipartimento di Scienze e Politiche Ambientali Università di Milano
- Dislivelli
- Ente di Gestione delle Aree Protette della Valle Sesia
- ERSAF Lombardia
- EVK2CNR
- Federazione Italiana Pro Natura
- Federparchi
- Fondazione Lombardia per l'Ambiente



- Friends of the Earth Bavaria
- Geoparco UNESCO Sesia Val Grande
- Gran Sasso Science Institute
- ISCAR (International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps)
- L'Altra Montagna
- Landesbund für Vogel- und Naturschutz in Bayern
- LGU (Liechtensteinische Gesellschaft für Umweltschutz)
- Lipu
- Mountain Partnership Secretariat FAO
- Mountain Wilderness International
- Mountain Wilderness Italia
- MUSE Museo delle Scienze Trento
- Museo Geografia Università di Padova
- Museo Nazionale della Montagna "Duca degli Abruzzi"
- Natural History Society of Slovenia
- Paeco Naturale Prealpi Giulie
- Parco Nazionale Gran Paradiso
- Parco Nazionale dello Stelvio - Lombardia
- Parco Nazionale Val Grande
- Progetto Rock-me (GECT Euregio Tirolo-Alto Adige-Trentino, IPN159)
- Progetto WATERWISE (Interreg Alpine Space, ASP0500341)
- Protect Our Winters Italy
- SGL (Servizio Glaciologico Lombardo)
- Slovenian Association for Water Protection (SDZV)
- Slovenian Association of Geodesy and Geophysics
- Slovenian Meteorological Society
- Società Meteorologica Italiana
- Triglav National Park
- Umweltdachverband (UWD)
- Université Savoie Mont Blanc
- Università di Brescia
- Università di Torino
- Verein zum Schutz der Bergwelt
- WWF Italia

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