

Call for applications

Youth exchanges :
**ALPINE YOUTH AS
AMBASSADORS FOR
WATER**

March 2026

This initiative is organized by project WATERWISE in collaboration with the OFAJ

Presentation of the exchanges

As part of intercultural and cooperation exchanges, we are looking for **15 young people** (5 French, 5 Slovenian, and 5 German) to take part in a three-week exchange on the theme of **resilient water management in Alpine regions in the context of the climate crisis**.

Three exchanges will therefore be held at three different sites: the first in **Les Contamines Montjoie**¹ (France), the second at **Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark**² (Slovenia), and the third in the **Zugspitze massif**³ (Germany). These three sites are all pilot sites inherent to Waterwise project.⁴ They all present key challenges related to water and climate change.



1. <https://reserves-naturelles.org/reserves/contamines-montjoie/>

2. <https://www.geopark-karawanken.at/en/>

3. <https://zugspitze.de/de/Unsere-Bergwelten/Die-Gebiete/Garmisch-Classic>

4. <https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/waterwise/>

Above all, this is a real opportunity for young participants to fully grasp the **systemic nature of water-related issues** in the context of the environmental crisis, specifically in alpine environments. The aim is to enhance their knowledge and experience by complementing it with that of local stakeholders through meetings, workshops and conferences. The various activities will be led in collaboration with a variety of local partners and, on occasion, directly by the young people themselves. The exchange is based on a **popular education approach**, in which participants are fully invited to get involved in co-constructing the program and content, for example to lead language discovery workshops. The SUERA Youth Council⁵ could also be mobilized, for example to lead a workshop and debate to present the role of the Alpine Convention in water management, public policies and discussions, and the place and positioning of the Youth Council in water governance.

Each week of exchange will allow for the gradual accumulation of knowledge through a **cross-disciplinary approach** to sub-themes such as glacier melt and changes in hydrological regimes, impacts on human activities, natural hazards, impacts on biodiversity, etc. The knowledge thus produced will be valorised and disseminated through **various media** (sensitive mapping, artistic productions, etc.), combining a **sensitive approach** and **design fiction**, in order to anticipate and strengthen the resilience of mountain areas in the face of the environmental crisis.

This capitalization will also serve to **highlight young people's perspectives on these issues**, so that they can be incorporated into local water management policies. It will take the form of **advocacy for resource conservation**, facilitating the consideration and **integration of young people's voices into local and European governance policies**.



5. <https://alpine-region.eu/alpine-youth/youth-council>

The origins of these youth exchanges

On the front line of climate change, Alpine regions are already facing increasing vulnerabilities in their watersheds, particularly regarding water resources, with periods of scarcity alternating with periods of abundance. This instability in the availability and quality of water resources has inevitable repercussions, destabilizing Alpine ecosystems and biodiversity, but also forcing us to rethink our anthropogenic activities. This pressing issue for Alpine regions to anticipate and adapt to the transition in water resource management has given rise to the co-funded by the European Union project "Waterwise", which is echoed in this exchange between young Europeans.

What is the Waterwise project ?

Through the Interreg Alpine Space programme, the overall objective of the "Waterwise" (WW)⁶ project is to strengthen the resilience of water management in Alpine headwaters by equipping these areas to better anticipate the vulnerability of their water resources and initiate the development of adaptation strategies. The consortium is developing experimental tools to better understand the future of water in these areas: hydrological modeling, local consultation, and scientific mediation. The approach is being tested at 16 pilot sites across six Alpine countries, including Slovenia, Germany, and France. In this context, it seemed necessary to give young people a chance to express their views on issues surrounding the vulnerability of water resources in the Alpine region. It is thanks to the OFAJ and through the Waterwise project that these exchanges are made possible.

What is the OFAJ ?

The OFAJ⁷ (Franco-German Youth Office) is an international organization created by the Élysée Treaty in 1963, with the aim of encouraging relations between young French and German people, strengthening Franco-German cooperation, and promoting mutual understanding with other partner countries by fostering intercultural learning, particularly through the implementation of exchange programs. By promoting interculturalism and cooperation among young people, as well as environmental protection and the fight against global warming, this exchange is fully in line with the main principles of the OFAJ.

6. <https://www.alpine-space.eu/project/waterwise/>

7. <https://www.ofaj.org>

Presentation of the organisers



Tétraktys

Tétraktys (lead organisation)⁸ is an NGO based in Grenoble that aims to share the territorial experience of the Alps internationally. Its work involves supporting rural mountain communities, focusing on promoting and preserving their heritage. Tétraktys also implements ECSI actions between the Alps and the territories of intervention, and recently actions dedicated to mediation and storytelling on the challenges of transition in mountain areas.



Hochschule Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences⁹ is one of Europe's leading universities of applied sciences. It has a research team with interdisciplinary expertise in river hydroecology that develops low-tech solutions for studying watercourses. Working on the site of the Partnach River, which originates in the Zugspitze massif, this is where the third exchange will likely take place.



Passau University¹⁰ is The University of Passau is a leading university in the Alpine region in the fields of business, economics, political science, and cultural studies. The university has a team that includes the Bioeconomic Research Group and the Chair of Physical Geography, which focuses on research into the Human-Environment. With expertise in ecological economics and social studies, it addresses issues related to sustainable river management, in particular by identifying strategies for resilient local economies, biodiversity, and the green economy.



Geological Survey of Slovenia¹¹ is a Slovenian public multidisciplinary research organization specializing in geology and hydrogeology. Working in collaboration with the Karawanken-Karavanke UNESCO Global Geopark (EGTC), the site of the second exchange, it already carries out awareness-raising activities.



Réserve Naturelle de France¹² is the umbrella organization that provides technical, legal, and strategic support to France's 359 national networks with the aim of protecting habitats and species of particular importance.



Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels Haute Savoie (ASTERS)¹³ : Asters-CEN74 is an association that protects, promotes, and documents the natural areas of Haute-Savoie on a daily basis in collaboration with numerous public and private stakeholders.

8. <https://www.h-kahttps://tetraktys-association.org>

9. <https://www.h-ka.de/en/>

10. <https://www.uni-passau.de/en/>

11. <https://www.geo-zs.si/en/>

12. <https://reserves-naturelles.org>

13. <https://www.cen-haute-savoie.org>

First exchange

Contamines Montjoie, France



Lacs Jovet

©CEN de Haute Savoie

From June 1st to June 6th 2026

Provisional programme :

Day 1: Departure from home, settling in and visiting the accommodation, icebreaker activities, serious game session on water issues in the mountains.

Day 2: Day trip to Bon Nant (visit to the reserve's Nature Domes on two themes: "Glaciers, ecosystems and hydroelectricity" and "Exceptional natural heritage," activities on high-altitude lakes, meeting with the managers of the Balme refuge on issues related to tourism), intercultural evening on the French, German, and Slovenian languages.

Day 3: Workshop and debate led by representatives of the SUERA Youth Council on the role of the Alpine Convention in water management, meeting with various socio-economic stakeholders in Les Contamines Montjoie, screening of the film Downstream by Juliette Becquet.

Day 4: Day-long activity on the theme of glacier melt and changes in hydrological regimes led by the Nature Reserve, landscape reading and production of sensory maps, intercultural evening on the specialties of the young people's regions.

Day 5: Facilitation of a design fiction workshop: the mountains in 2050, writing of an initial plea for resilient water management in the Alps.

Day 6: Return journey from Les Contamines Montjoie.

Second exchange

Karawanken-Karavanke

UNESCO Global Geopark, Slovenia



From October 19th to October 24 2026

Planned activities:

- Exploration of the former mine and karst aquifer of Mount Peca by kayak
- Discussion on management of transboundary karstic aquifer among Slovenia and Austria
- Workshop on extreme hydrological events (floods, landslides)
- Visits to hydrological sites in the Geopark

The program is to be co-developed, particularly following the first exchange.

Third exchange

Zugspitze, Germany



Spring 2027

Activities are still to be suggested as part of the co-construction of the program with participants.

Costs

To date, only transportation and accommodation costs and part of the meals (breakfast and dinner) are covered by OFAJ funding. We will suggest a picnic solution that will be at the participant's expense. However, Tétraktys is exploring funding options with a view to covering all costs.

Application procedure

Who can apply ?

- Young people between 18 and 25 years old : university students, young workers, young people entering the job market and young people in vocational training.
- Young people from Slovenia, Germany and France. 5 candidates will be selected from each of the 3 participant countries.
- Showing an interest in environmental issues and more specifically in the preservation of water resources. You do not need to have a degree or work in a related field to participate; simply showing a keen interest in the topic is sufficient.
- A minimum intermediate level of English is required to communicate comfortably on the subject and ensure the smooth running of exchanges.

Please note that, as far as possible, all three exchanges should be carried out. Every effort will be made to ensure that the group remains the same during the three exchanges.

How to apply ?

1 - Please answer the following form to apply :

<https://framaforms.org/intercultural-youth-exchanges-alpine-youth-as-water-ambassadors-1771925812>

2 - Send us a 2-3 minute video (MP4 format, LAST_NAME_First_Name_Country), in English, presenting yourself and your motivations for participating in this exchange. The videos should be sent by Wetransfer to this e-mail address :

volontariat.montagne@tetraktys-ong.org

→ **Applications must be sent before May 3, 2026.**

→ **Responses to applications will be sent on May 8, 2026.**

For all inquiries

French contact : volontariat.montagne@tetraktys-ong.org

Slovenian contact : nina.rman@geo-zs.si

German contact : markus.noack@h-ka.de