



**PRESS RELEASE**

Chambéry and Gap, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016

## **“Youth at the Top” 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: A Civic and Symbolic Experience July 12<sup>th</sup> 2016 in the Alps**

**On July 12<sup>th</sup> 2016, groups of young people will meet in several protected areas and natural sites throughout the Alps in order to share a physical, human, cultural and artistic collective experience in the mountains.**

### **Out in the Mountains**

All over the Alps people are disturbed by young people's lack of interest in mountains. Is it a growing phenomenon?

Little by little people are beginning to realise that our children and young people are missing something ... nature. Has contact with nature become a waste of time?

Omnipresent screens, hectic lifestyles, no more room to simply... go out. Yes, out, in the fresh air, into the woods or to the river. Sit in a meadow, listen, smell, observe. And then walk, climb, up the slope and maybe even reach the summit?

From France to Slovenia, the Alpine protected areas and mountain education actors are very keen to recreate or strengthen the link between mountain nature and young people from there and elsewhere

Because living in the Alps does not necessarily mean knowing the region and roaming about in it. Because “mountain experience is an educational experience”. Because the young people of our areas are also our discussion partners and tomorrow's key players, and also because it is quite simply vital for every human being to have regular contact with nature.

### **A Unique Moment in Symbolic Places**

So, amongst many other activities and projects, we have created **an original way to take young people of the Alps to experience the mountains**, spend a night up there, to rediscover the power of being a group and the values of citizenship and solidarity. A collective activity rich in symbolism: Youth at the Top!

### **What is Youth at the Top?**

It is a project led by ALPARC\*, in partnership with Educ'alpes, which mobilizes groups of young people from 6 countries at a common annual date, in an active, civic process, with a symbolic and imaginative approach.

The project has a collective setting but at the same time leaves plenty of room for local initiatives.

*\*with in particular the financial support of the German Ministry for the Environment.*





**For the first test edition in 2015**, around thirty events were organised simultaneously, near a summit or a refuge, including various activities: rock painting, land art, writing, wood carving, light painting, tales, treasure hunting, stargazing, climbing peaks, solidarity actions, meetings with mountain players, etc.

*"I really liked being with mates, sleeping outside and also moving around in the mountains during the holidays! We saw an 8,000-year-old rock shelter and I really liked the history"*

*"I didn't think I'd be able to do that... it's a long time since I went mountaineering!"*

### For the 2016 edition

**More than 50 simultaneous events have already been planned!** They will be run by the Alpine protected areas, youth workers, associations, refuges, communities, etc., with the participation of local professionals. The evening of 12th July will be a highlight of the operation, bringing the young people together around a collective artistic action on the theme of light.

### In 8 countries

This international collective action will be organised at the same time in six countries of the **Alpine arc** (France, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Slovenia), which will make it possible to connect the different countries and symbolically overcome administrative and language barriers by taking the Alps as one sole great mountain region. This year for the first time, the **Carpathians** will also participate with 4 events (Romania and Slovakia).

So this will be a day that will mobilise several Alpine actors around a unifying, original action. Above all it will be a collective project **to allow young people to "share an experience"**, with the aim of making them aware of the value and importance of these mountain territories and developing (or rediscovering) a feeling of belonging there.

**Homepage:** [www.youth-at-the-top.org](http://www.youth-at-the-top.org) • **Facebook page:** <https://www.facebook.com/YATevent>

See the 2015 video [on line](#)

**2016 : Find out what events are already scheduled on the [online map](#)**

You can still join the initiative by contacting the organisers!

#### International Event Coordination:



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#### Coordination in France:

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Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit

#### 2016 Edition Organising Partners



## “Youth at the Top” in a Nutshell

**Across borders:** *an international event concerning the Alps as a whole*

**Symbol:** “Youth at the Top” *mobilises* groups of young people for mountains around one **single date**. For one summer night it lights up the fires of the highest and simplest **solidarity** throughout the Alps

**Celebration:** *Offering a festive occasion based on the **happiness of being in** the mountains, the **pleasure** of roaming around there and at the same time doing something useful for the mountains and **showing respect**.*

**Together:** *Preparing an outing **in the mountains together**, directed to a summit, a pass, a mountain meadow, a historic site, a shelter, a refuge, a pastoral hut, a bivouac etc.*

**Mountain:** *Rediscovering a bond with mountains through feelings, **observation**, play, encounter, **imagination**, dreams and self-expression.*

**Experience:** *Going off in search of **adventure**, taking **time** to live and discover the mountains, **savoring** the little paths and the wide-open landscapes, the sky and the stars...*

**Sharing:** *Living as a group in the mountains and making new **friends***

**Citizenship:** *Taking part in a **solidarity** action with mountain professionals: shepherds, refuge keepers, mountain leaders, players in nature and heritage...*

**Inter-cultural:** ***Sharing** thoughts with **other mountain generations** and other young people from the Alps*

**Self-expression:** *Creating small works of **art** and other forms of **self-expression** by photo documentaries or videos and publishing them, using the **image** as the universal language of the Alps.*

**Night:** *For a real **personal** night experience in the mountains and creating beautiful **personal memories**.*