



International Reciprocal Agreement on Mountain Huts

CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL RECIPROCITY

- Date: Friday, 19 September 2025
- Time: 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
- Venue: Swiss Alpine Club SAC, Berne
- Chairperson: Philippe Wäger, SAC
- Participants: Riccardo Giacomelli, CAI
Carolin Niggli, DAV
Joan Bernat Clarella Biarge, FEDME
Lukas Kremser, OeAV (online)
Ulrich Delang, SAC
Bruno Lüthi, SAC (Secretary)
- Miro Erzen, PZS
- Robin Baks, NKBV
- Guest: Berend Berlijn, editor NKBV magazine
- Excused: José Maria Nasarre, FEDME
Jean Miczka, FFCAM
Martin Niedrist, AVS
Matteo Giottonini, FAT
Giles Robertson, AC
Steve Schlitz, GAL
- Minutes: Bruno Lüthi, Ulrich Delang SAC

1. Opening address, approval of the meeting agenda

Philippe Wäger welcomes warmly all representatives present at the SAC's headquarters to this meeting, which is taking place in person again after three years.

As announced in the e-mail correspondence shortly before the meeting, the acting chairperson José Maria Nasarre (FEDME) resigned from his position at short notice and asked to be excused at the meeting. By mutual agreement, the SAC is chairing today's meeting on an interim basis, which those present approve without objection and express their gratitude for.

After a brief round of introductions, Philippe Wäger announces the apologies. On behalf of the assembly, he expresses his sincere thanks to José Maria Nasarre and Juan Jesus Ibanez (FEDME) for their work in favour of the Reciprocal Agreement on Mountain Huts.

Bernat Clarella explains that FEDME elected a new board of directors with him as chairperson last spring. At the same time the board has succeeded in re-admitting the regional asso-



ciations of Catalonia and Aragon into FEDME. This means that FEDME will offer a complete catalogue of huts again from 2026, all subject to the International Reciprocal Agreement.

Decision: the meeting agenda is approved unanimously.

Point 6.1 will be discussed specifically.

2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 13 September 2024

Decision: the minutes are approved unanimously, and thanks are extended to the minute-taker Bruno Lüthi.

3. Previous financial year

Bruno Lüthi says that there is no significant information to share about the past financial year, except that the Andorran mountaineering club FAM and its huts were added to the International Reciprocal Agreement at the beginning of 2025.

4. Approval of the 2024 annual accounts of the Reciprocal Agreement Hut Fund

4.1 2024 financial statements

Bruno Lüthi briefly explains the figures for the 2024 financial year. He apologises for an error in the calculation of the FEDME members, which was corrected in the e-mail of 13 August 2025.

He presents the growth in membership of the participating clubs over the last 10 years. Each club recorded an increase in membership numbers, amounting to over 30% in total and attributable to the years after the COVID pandemic in particular.

In the same period, decreases were recorded in the number of sleeping places (-9%) and the number of affiliated huts (-5%). This is due to the fact that when huts are rebuilt / renovated, this usually results fewer sleeping places due to smaller dormitories or wider mattresses. At the same time, several huts had to be closed due to damage from avalanches and other natural hazards.

The number of individual stamps sold to UIAA member associations has also been declining for years. This raises the question of whether a digital solution instead of printed stamps would make sense and be financially viable.

This issue will be discussed at the 2026 meeting. The 2026 meeting will also address the evolution in the number of sleeping places and huts of the individual clubs in detail.

4.2 Controlling body's report 2024

The controlling report by Chloé Douzet and Jean Miczka (FFCAM) found no deficiencies or incorrect information from the clubs. However, the controlling body reminds the clubs that huts which are closed all year round due to construction work should not be included in the list of huts – a rule that not all clubs seem to follow consistently. This topic is discussed in depth under point 6.1.



4.3 Tariff regulation 2026

The tariffs for 2026 will remain unchanged, after they were increased in 2025.

Robin Baks asks whether the clubs are still finding it hard to raise funds for hut-building projects.

All those present confirm that financing is and continues to be an ever-greater challenge.

Despite relevant interventions, state funding cannot be expected or significantly be expanded.

Decision: the 2024 Hut Fund statement and the controlling body's report are approved unanimously. The tariff regulations for 2026 are approved unanimously.

5. Elections

5.1 Chairperson

The CAI has agreed to take over leadership from FEDME. The assembly elects Riccardo Giacomelli as the new chairperson (2026–2028) to applause. Riccardo expresses his thanks for being entrusted with the role and is excited to take up office. Addendum: His election still has to be confirmed by the CAI board.

5.2 Controlling body

The DAV has agreed to take over the controlling body from FFCAM for the next three years. The assembly elects Carolin Niggli to applause.

6 Any other business

6.1 Calculation of sleeping places due to renovation work (partially opened hut)

Bruno Lüthi explains that the question has been raised by the AVS as to how to count sleeping places in huts that are temporarily closed due to renovation work or have reduced capacity during the construction phase. In addition, also the controlling body's report 2024 (see Point 4.2) also mentions this aspect. This question is not specifically answered in the Agreement, so two proposals were put forward in consultation with the previous chairperson. However, these seem too complicated, and a pragmatic solution is called for. It is important to establish a consistent rule and practice which all clubs are committed to.

The discussion raises the point that while construction measures serve to maintain the infrastructure and benefit the guests, they are very expensive. If the sleeping places in these huts are not taken into account, this would mean that the clubs are punished twice: the clubs invest money in maintaining the infrastructure for the benefit of their guests, whether the sleeping places cannot be counted during the renovation period.

After profound discussion, the assembly agrees that sleeping places in huts that are under renovation or being converted can be counted for the purpose of Reciprocal Agreement accounting. Sleeping places in huts that are closed due to natural events for more than one year, on the other hand, are not allowed to be counted.



The chairperson and the secretary will prepare a proposal to amend the agreement accordingly (Art. 7, para. 1) and send it to the clubs for a circular resolution. This amendment should already come into effect for the 2025 accounts.

6.2 Deposits/cancellation fees for huts between members of the reciprocity (NKBV)

Robin Baks outlines a problem with the reservation system (hut-reservation.org) used in several countries / clubs (DAV, OeAV, SAC, AVS). The NKBV makes the reservations for the tours it offers – between 150 and 200 per year – on a central basis. The problem is that every Alpine club or many huts have different conditions relating to cancellations, advance payments, cancellation fees, etc. This makes it complicated and the NKBV assumes that this is also the case for other Alpine clubs (e.g. DAV Summit Club).

The NKBV employs one person almost exclusively to administer registrations and changes in reservations of participants and catering preferences. On the previous alpsonline.org, the reservation links could be passed on to the tour guides/mountain guides, and they then managed the reservations. With the new login system, this is no longer possible, and all the work falls to the NKBV.

The NKBV would like Alpine clubs and other professionals to be given a different login procedure and different conditions for reservations. NKBV can also guarantee that he will pay for all costs related to cancellations, but no longer under the different conditions (advance payments, cancellation fees, etc.). Professional accounts should have an option to share the reservation link with the responsible tour guides – with whom participants are in contact regarding register, de-register, catering preferences (vegetarian, intolerances, etc.) – so that the tour guides can manage the reservations.

The NKBV would even be willing to contribute to the development costs if it could subsequently reduce staffing resources for reservation administration.

Bruno Lüthi records this request for the annual meeting of the associations involved in the reservation system (hut-reservation.org) on 8 October 2025.

6.3 Information on the NKBV Sustainability Fund

The topic of sustainability in mountain sports has been firmly embedded in the NKBV since 2017. Robin Baks gives an impressive presentation of the challenges that climate change poses for mountain sports in general and for mountain huts in particular. The NKBV not only tries to be as sustainable as possible in its own work but also wants to encourage and support the Alpine clubs to do the same. In addition to its annual contribution of EUR 450,000 to the International Reciprocal Agreement, the NKBV funds sustainability measures of huts/sections to the amount of EUR 50,000 per year. Robin invites the attendees to submit projects for such tasks. Instructions on how to do this will be enclosed with these minutes.

Together with the OeAV, the NKBV also supports volunteering work that helps to maintain and restore Alpine infrastructure. The NKBV takes care of the recruitment of the volunteers and pays their travel expenses. As part of this scheme, enthusiastic and motivated members of the NKBV have already been deployed at various huts in Austria. Robin calls on the attendees to submit projects for such deployments.

Robin's presentation will be enclosed with these minutes.

6.4 Date and venue of the 2026 meeting (online)

Decision: the 2026 meeting will take place on **Friday, 18 September 2026** (online).



Philippe Wäger closes the meeting shortly before 5 p.m., thanks all those present for their superb commitment to mountain sports and the huts and invites them to the dinner afterwards.

Berne, 15 October 2025

Chairperson ad interim:

Philippe Wäger
SAC

Minutes:

Bruno Lüthi
Reciprocal Agreement Secretariat