

Press Release March 2022

Paularo - the new Mountaineering Village in the Carnic Alps

- Paularo becomes a Mountaineering Village in 2022
- Joining ceremony on April 3rd, 2022

Paularo in the Val d'Incarojo in the Italian region of Friuli will join the Mountaineering Villages initiative in 2022. Like an amphitheatre, the mountain ranges of Zermula, Cuestalta, Serenat and Tersadia enclose the head of the valley, and the village of Paularo lies at its centre as if on a stage. Coming from the main valley, the valley floor rises slightly towards the main village of Paularo, vast forests and wide alpine pastures are the transition to gentle mountain ridges and rugged limestone walls that face each other in a very narrow space. In the Val d'Incarojo there are numerous possibilities of all levels of difficulty for hiking, climbing, mountain biking, as well as winter hiking, snowshoeing and ski touring.

Paularo is the first village on the Italian side of the Carnic Alps - and the fourth in this mountain range - to be designated a Mountaineering Village, which speaks for its alpine charm and unspoilt areas. Nature conservation also plays an important role in the new Mountaineering Village. About half of the municipality's territory is protected and offers habitats and retreats for the diverse local fauna and flora, e.g. in the Natura 2000 protected area Monti Dimon e Paularo.

Forest and wood have shaped the life and work in this side valley over the centuries. Paularo was able to impress the international committee with its living tradition and the preservation of old craft techniques. A separate museum dedicates its exhibitions to woodworking, sculpture, textile and food processing. Ecclesiastical festivities influence local customs strongly; for the Epiphany on 5 January, rhombus-shaped frames, the so-called Femenate, are erected and set on fire in Paularo. This tradition goes back to a Celtic origin.

At the joining ceremony on April 3rd, the village will be officially be accepted into the circle of Mountaineering Villages.

The Mountaineering Villages Initiative

The Alpine associations from Austria, Germany, Slovenia, South Tyrol, Italy and Switzerland are participating in the initiative. Different focal points of the associations are united in the initiative:

- to steer mountain tourism in a nature-friendly direction and to promote nature-oriented mountain sports
- support remote and structurally weak areas
- to sensitise the members of the Alpine Club to the beauty of the simple, to the special features of the landscape and the natural environment and to environmentally compatible behaviour (e.g. environmentally friendly travel).

For the villages, the added value is not only the increased awareness as a mountain destination in Alpine Club circles with over 2.5 million Alpine Club members. They are also encouraged in their orientation towards sustainable tourism, which should have positive effects on agriculture, local supply, transport, and population development. In the international network of Mountaineering

Villages, there is a constant exchange on how the villages and regions implement their strategies for a desirable future.

So far, these 36 villages and regions are part of the Mountaineering Villages initiative:

- *Austria*: Ginzling, Göriach, Großes Walsertal, Grünau im Almtal, Gschnitztal, Hüttschlag im Großarlal, Johnsbach im Gesäuse, Lesachtal, Lunz am See, Mallnitz, Malta, Mauthen, Sellraintal region, Steinbach am Attersee, Steinberg am Rofan, Steirische Krakau, St. Jodok, Schmirn- und Valsertal, Tiroler Gailtal, Vent im Ötztal, Villgratental, Weißbach bei Lofer, Zell-Sele.
- *Germany*: Ramsau b. Berchtesgaden, Sachrang & Schleching, Kreuth
- *Italy/South Tyrol*: Balme, Lungiarü, Matsch, Paularo, Triora, Val di Zoldo
- *Slovenia*: Jezersko, Luče
- *Switzerland*: St. Antönien, Lavin, Guarda & Ardez

Further information

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