

Tough negotiations took place before the rules and regulations could be compiled and put into practice, but the overriding thought in the mind of each race organiser was to make their race more international and to make their races famous outside the borders of their individual countries. The three 'founding' representatives were Roberto Moggio of Marcialonga, Robert Steiner of Dolomitenlauf and Fritz Lang of Koenig Ludwig Lauf.

The combined distance of the Alpentris races was 210 km: 50 km at Dolomitenlauf, 70 km at Marcialonga and 90 km at Koenig Ludwig Lauf. During the first year of the event in 1974 around 400 participants took part in all three races. The sense of friendly solidarity was evidenced through the 'Alpentrisiade' which was presented several times at Marcialonga. Another factor in the growth in the popularity of the Alpentris was the fact that many famous skiers, such as Pauli Siitonen and Alpo Virtanen from Finland took part. Between 1974 and 1980 other well-known Scandinavians participated in the Alpentris and took most of the podium places at the award ceremonies. For two years La Transjurassienne was also part of the series, but later withdrew.

The General Secretariat of Alpentris rotated amongst the races following a three-year cycle until 1989 when it found a permanent home in Oberammergau. The original concept of an overall Alpentris winner was abandoned after several races had been cancelled because of lack of snow and later in 2000 because of duplication with Euroloppet rankings.

Although Alpentris has been overtaken by other series, its name will not be forgotten, particularly at Marcialonga where an Alpentris flag is flown. The special song written for Marcialonga is also about Alpentris.

The success of the three races which had founded Alpentris in 1973 made other races, especially in Scandinavia, interested in establishing a Europe-wide cross-country skiing union. The first initiative in this direction came from Finland and in 1974 a meeting of interested races took place in Moena, Italy. The interests of the two great Scandinavian races, Vasaloppet and Finlandia-hiihto were represented by Risto Rytokoski, chairman of the Finnish race, and Raul Fuerstenborg, a Finnish ski fanatic and business man.

The first official meeting of Euroloppet took place on 10 August 1974 in the Hotel Sheraton in Munich. Representatives of the three Alpentris races were present together with Risto Rytokoski and Rune Andersson of Vasaloppet. The name of Euroloppet was decided upon, a common advertising strategy was defined and the need to develop by-laws was recognised.

Euroloppet was launched in 1975 with 358 ranked participants from 8 different countries. To be ranked in the overall series, each skier had to participate in one race in Scandinavia. At first rankings were only for men and women were not ranked until 1980.



1978. Three best of the first Euroloppet season: Heikki Ripatti, Pauli Siitonen, Inge Mörk