

1.5 tonnes of artificial fertilizer for skiing competitions?

The impact of climate change on skiing areas is the subject of the OECD study published on 13 December 2006. It concludes that if a region's average annual temperature increases by one degree, only around 500 of the 666 skiing areas in the Alps could be assured of snow..... [more on page 1](#)

Olympic infrastructures – A bottomless pit?

The infrastructure facilities built for the Olympic Winter Games in Turin in February 2006 have proved an expensive legacy..... [more on page 2](#)

New brochure on International Mountain Partnerships

The Alpine Convention as such is not transferable to other regions. However many of its principles and the experience gained with the Alpine process in particular have proved of value to the sustainable development of non-alpine mountain regions. A new brochure has now been published on the subject of international mountain partnerships, as part of a keynote event held during Austria's Chair of the Alpine Convention..... [more on page 3](#)

1.5 tonnes of artificial fertilizer for skiing competitions?

(19.1.2007) The impact of climate change on skiing areas is the subject of the OECD study published on 13 December 2006. It concludes that if a region's average annual temperature increases by one degree, only around 500 of the 666 skiing areas in the Alps could be assured of snow. Were the temperature to increase by four degrees, only 200 or so would be left, and the German and Austrian skiing areas would be hardest hit. The Swiss Alps would still be regarded as assured of snow thanks to the skiing areas situated above 4000 m.

The current weather conditions are increasingly bizarre. Last weekend the international Lauberhorn races were held on the Lauberhorn in the Bernese Oberland. The small matter of the snow conditions was raised as it has been for organisers of other skiing competitions. In the past if it had not snowed, artificial snow was always an alternative. This year, however, the temperatures are so high that even this method is no guarantee of snow. That's why the organisers have been very grateful for the artificial fertiliser ammonium nitrate, which draws moisture from the snow, raising the freezing point. According to reports in Switzerland's Sonntagszeitung the organisers at the Lauberhorn are said to have used 1.5 tonnes of ammonium nitrate to prepare their ski run. This would be the equivalent of the entire approved annual quantity for an agricultural area of 14 hectares. The organisers deny these claims, and although precise figures are not available, they estimate that they used some 800 to 900 kg for the slalom run.

For the Swiss Agency for the Environment, this use of artificial fertiliser goes too far. What's more, the Canton omitted to monitor the use of artificial fertilisers. However, there is a loophole in the legislation here as there are no statutory provisions in Switzerland regarding the use of fertilisers on ski slopes. The current debate has also angered farmers. After all, they are subject to clear-cut regulations, and they are wondering why such regulations do not also apply to the organisers of skiing competitions.

Source and information: www.drs.ch/news.html (de),
www.taz.de/pt/2006/12/14/a0166.1/text (de)

Contents

1.5 tonnes of artificial fertilizer for skiing competitions?	1
Olympic infrastructures – A bottomless pit?	2
Exchange of know-how on regional management	2
Davos on the road to Kyoto	2
Climate change impacts biodiversity	2
New brochure on International Mountain Partnerships	3
Alpine Convention: concrete measures on behalf of the climate	3
Environmental associations obtain greater rights of action	3
Boosting cross-alpine rail freight traffic	3
Miscellaneous.....	4
Agenda	4
Oh!.....	4

Olympic infrastructures – A bottomless pit?

(14.12.2006) The infrastructure facilities built for the Olympic Winter Games in Turin in February 2006 have proved an expensive legacy. An article in La Stampa has underlined this fact with figures calculated as part of a study by the state agency Sviluppo Italia. The bob run, which cost around €70 m to build, is costing a further €2.2 m a year to service and operate. If yearly revenue is assumed to be €0.5 m, this leaves an annual loss of €1.7 m. The ski jump, for its part, cost approx. €35 m to build and is expected to run up an annual deficit of one million Euros. The operation and maintenance of the ice rinks will also entail losses in the millions.

Indeed, it has been calculated that the administration and operation of the Olympic infrastructure over the next five years will require financing worth €63.6 m. Almost half that sum is expected to be needed to cover the operating losses alone. Given this backdrop it is not surprising that a partial dismantling of the infrastructure is currently under consideration. Running costs such as these hardly come as a surprise, given the similar experience made with events of this kind in the past. Some lessons have been learnt in Turin with regard to environmental matters, an in which according to a current study by the UN Environmental Program (UNEP) the 2006 Winter Games have done relatively well.

Source: La Stampa 29.11.2006

Dry slope anyone?



© CIPRA Italia

Exchange of know-how on regional management

(14.12.2006) Two events focusing on regional development and management are scheduled for the beginning of 2007 as part of the workshop series entitled “Future in the Alps: Getting Knowledge Across – Networking People” organised by CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps. The first event, on January 22 and 23, will look at processes aimed at joint decision-making and conflict management in the areas of public planning and the environment. This workshop is to be held in Budapest/Hungary, in English.

The second workshop will take place in Admont in Salzburg/A on January 25 and 26, in German and English. The topic here is “planning, leading and networks in the region”, and one of its key issues will be ways of improving co-operation between regional players in their networks to ensure that rivalry and “friction losses” are reduced and that synergies are used more effectively. The registration deadlines are 10 and 15 January respectively.

For information on the entire series of workshops: <http://www.cipra.org/zukunft> (de/fr/it/sl/en)

Davos on the road to Kyoto

(14.12.2006) Davos, Switzerland's highest town, is working towards a more climate-friendly local policy. Together with the Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research (SLF) and the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), it has drawn up a study highlighting measures for reducing CO₂ emissions by 15%, thereby achieving the objective of the Kyoto Protocol.

In 2005 the Davos community released more than 100,000 tonnes of climate-damaging CO₂. Heat generation is the biggest source of CO₂ in Davos and accounts for 75% of emissions. The highest savings potential can therefore be achieved through building insulation. The study also revealed that 70% of the total final energy consumption in Davos was covered by fossil fuels. The researchers recommended to the community that it focus on promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy and the regional timber cycle, and to keep local inhabitants informed of the personal contributions they can make individually to climate protection.

Source: http://www.wsl.ch/news/pm_061205_DE (de)

Climate change impacts biodiversity

(19.1.2007) For a number of years now, biodiversity in Alpine ecosystems has been declining under the effect of climate change. That is the conclusion reached by the mountain research network GLORIA by a current study. It shows that a decline in biodiversity and shifts in species can be observed near the vegetation's nival boundary. Over the period 1994 to 2004 scientists at the University of Vienna/A studied observation areas situated at altitudes ranging between 2,900 and 3,450 m above sea level in the Stubai Alps/A; they noted that more and more alpine pioneer species were spreading from lower to higher altitudes as a result of species migration. By contrast specialist high-alpine plants adapted to the cold are increasingly being displaced. Overall the number of species in high alpine regions is rapidly declining. These results are worrying not least in view of the fact that around one fifth of all European plant species occur only above the tree line in high mountain regions.

In other words climate change is not a future scenario; it is already a reality. That is why environmental associations are critical of the recently announced action plan by the EU which provides for a lower reduction in CO₂ emissions than previously planned.

Sources: <http://www.juraforum.de/jura/news/news/p/1/id/124405/f/196/> (de),

<http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wissen/artikel/855/94761/> (de)

New brochure on International Mountain Partnerships

(16.11.2006) The Alpine Convention as such is not transferable to other regions. However many of its principles and the experience gained with the Alpine process in particular have proved of value to the sustainable development of non-alpine mountain regions. A new brochure has now been published on the subject of international mountain partnerships, as part of a keynote event held during Austria's Chair of the Alpine Convention (de/fr/en).

The brochure provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the contracting parties to the Alpine Convention with other mountain regions: In Central Asia and the Caucasus for instance the sustainable development of mountain regions is being promoted at the local level in particular. It is an area in which the Alliance in the Alps community network and CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, are able to contribute their expertise. The alliances of central Asian and Caucasian mountain communities benefit from that know-how. Experience at government level has also been exchanged as part of the Alps-Carpathian partnership. The Chair of the Alpine Convention supported the negotiation process between the Carpathian countries over the Carpathian Convention.

Bibliography: Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (publisher): International Mountain Partnerships, Vienna. 45 pages.

The 2005 Bishkek Conference:
Participants from Central Asia, the
Alps and the Caucasus



© CIPRA International

Alpine Convention: concrete measures on behalf of the climate

(16.11.2006) On November 9 the environment ministers of the alpine states convened for the Alpine Conference, which is held every two years. CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, welcomes the decision of the alpine states to adopt a joint action plan on climate protection. Italy's Marco Onida was elected as the new Secretary General. The ministers adopted a declaration on climate protection comprised on the one hand of measures aimed at combating climate change and, on the other, of adaptation strategies for the Alps. CIPRA indicated that there were enough declarations and recommendations for action and that it was now time for the alpine states to act. At CIPRA's suggestion the environment ministers agreed to draw up a concrete action plan for climate protection including a timetable for implementing the measures and initiatives.

Source: CIPRA International

German environmental associations obtain greater rights of action

(19.1.2007) With the coming into force on 15 December 2006 of Germany's environmental legal remedy legislation environmental associations have been given greater rights of action in the area of environmental protection. Germany has thus implemented EU legislation in place since 2003. It means that all associations whose aim is to protect the environment can ask the courts to verify resolutions adopted by the authorities even if they themselves are not directly affected by a particular measure. In the past only nature conservation associations were entitled to do so in the event of specific infringements of the nature preservation legislation. As a requirement the associations must be recognised by Germany's Federal Environment Agency (UBA). For this reason the UBA recommends that even those associations that are already recognised under nature preservation legislation apply to the UBA for recognition under environmental legal remedy legislation too. The new legislation has come under criticism from, among others, the Independent Institute for Environmental Concerns (UfU), which does not believe that the legislation's objectives has in any way strengthened the representative function of the environmental associations on behalf of the general public.

Source and information: http://www.ngo-online.de/ganze_nachricht.php?Nr=14950, <http://www.ufu.de/neues-aus-u---b/umwelt-rechtsbehelfgesetz-ist-eu-rechtswidrig.html> (de)

Boosting cross-alpine rail freight traffic

(30.11.2006) The Adriazug pilot project has been launched in a bid to reduce the burden of HGV traffic on transit routes through the Alps. A genuine alternative to road traffic is to be created by improving the rail link between economic areas in southern Germany and Austria and the Mediterranean ports of Trieste/I and Koper/SL. Adriazug is part of the Alpine Freight Railway (AlpFRail) EU project, the technical management of which has been handed over by the EU to the Logistik-Kompetenz-Zentrum (LKZ) in Prien/D. As a block train for container traffic the Adriazug could well be up and running from early 2007 onwards, operating every working day between Munich – Salzburg – Villach – Trieste and Koper. As market analyses have shown, 845 HGVs could be taken off the roads and onto the rails along this route every month. Besides the benefits to the environment, data from the LKZ shows that from a purely economical viewpoint the train would also be an interesting proposition. At present some 45,000 HGVs are currently transported by rail every year as part of the first AlpFRail module, the Tauerbahn Action Plan.

Information: <http://www.adriazug.com> (de)

Miscellaneous

Tests underway on the world's highest solar power station

(14.12.2006) The Swiss utility BKW FMB Energie AG is currently conducting trials scheduled to last until this summer on a high-alpine solar power station. In a joint venture with Jungfrau AG and Swisscom Broadcast AG it is testing the feasibility of continuous operation on suitable building façades. It is using solar panels at altitudes of 3,500 m and 3,700 m. Calculations show that due to the more intensive solar radiation and the lower temperatures the panels are expected to yield outputs that are 50% to 70% higher than comparable installations currently operating in Berne. Besides measurement results the tests are also designed to give an indication of the acceptance for a façade-integrated high-alpine solar power station.

Source: <http://www.bkw-fmb.ch/de/unternehmen/medien/2006/november/jungfrauoch.html> (de)

Database on experts in mountain area research

(14.12.2006) The Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) has gone online with an expert database comprising almost 5,000 entries on people in governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as private groups who are involved in research into mountain regions in general and the impact of climate change in particular. The database allows targeted searches for individuals and organisations based on personal information, their field of work or a full-text search. The MRI database is part of the ProClim information system, a database that also focuses on climate change and comprises not only individuals and institutions but also publications, projects and events.

Databases: <http://mri.scnatweb.ch/index.php/content/view/40/44> (en), <http://www.proclim.ch/about/AboutInfoSystem.html> (en)

Werfenweng: „Sanft Mobil auf neuen Wegen“

(19.1.2007) "The idea to create a special book of photographs about Werfenweng and our passion for gentle mobility came about in summer 2005," says Peter Brandauer, Mayor of Werfenweng. Werfenweng hopes to use the book to motivate other alpine communities to embrace the idea of gentle mobility. The book has been published in German, with summaries in Italian, French and English. The book was funded thanks to the prize money won as part of CIPRA's Future in the Alps competition.

For more information and to order the book: www.werfenweng.org (de), tourismusverband@werfenweng.org

Agenda

Glacier sound concert "Where all the frozen things went..." with Franziska Baumann, singer and tonal artist. 24.1.2007, 19.00, Swiss Alpine Museum, Berne/CH, entertainment programme accompanying the exhibition entitled "**Greenhouse Glaciers. Serious Signals from Alpine Ice World**" at the Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne/CH. Until 25.3.2007

Symposium and discussion forum: **The Alps Without Ice? Climate Change and the Melting of the Eternal Ice.** 23.2.2007, Swiss Alpine Museum, Berne/CH (de/fr)

European Conference "**European Regions As Champions For Biodiversity 2010**". This conference will take place on the **15th and 16th of February 2007** at Conference Centre 'De Rosep' in Oisterwijk in the Netherlands.
Infos: www.biodiversitybrabant.nl (en)

Workshop "**Applied Remote Sensing in Mountain Regions**": Identifying the status quo and future potential of remote sensing applications in mountain regions. **1st – 2nd February 2007** in Bolzano, Italy. Organizer: EURAC, CIPRA. Registration and Information: remote.sensing@eurac.edu, <http://www.eurac.edu/Org/AlpineEnvironment/RemoteSensing/workshop0107.htm> (en)

Oh!...

... at one time or another we have all felt like getting away from it all, getting to know new cultures, and making new friends. Well, a chamois either from the French Massif Central or the Pyrenees has done just that. Indeed last autumn the mountain-dwelling animal teamed up with a herd of cows in the Lot département of western France. The chamois lived and grazed on lush green pastures with its mooing family of choice for several weeks. The local authorities finally put an end to these multicultural goings-on and caught the chamois, which is now living happily ever after in a zoo.

Source: <http://www.ladepeche.com> (fr) 08.11.2006