

# alpMedia Newsletter

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[www.cipra.org/alpmedia](http://www.cipra.org/alpmedia)



## Negative CO<sub>2</sub> balance in the Alpine region

**(28.9.2007) The Alps have the potential to become a model region for climate protection. And yet today, on a global comparison, every inhabitant of the Alps is contributing disproportionately to the greenhouse gas emissions affecting the climate.**



There is huge potential for energy savings in the building sector.

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And despite a relatively low settlement density, the significant and largely CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral generation of electricity using hydraulic power, and the high proportion of forests, the Alpine region has a negative CO<sub>2</sub> balance, i.e. it emits more CO<sub>2</sub> than it absorbs.

It was against this backdrop that from 20 to 22 September some 140 experts attending the Yearly Symposium of the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) discussed the potential uses of renewable energies and the possibilities for

increasing energy efficiency in the Alpine region. The conference held in St Vincent in the Aosta Valley/It was entitled "The Alps beyond Kyoto".

There was agreement that Alpine countries could and should cover a large part of their energy requirements from renewable forms of energy and improve on the Kyoto targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In the first instance they should seek to conserve energy wherever possible and, secondly, make full use of the vast potential available from improved energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources such as wood, water, sun, wind and geothermal energy. For instance the Alps enjoy almost Mediterranean conditions for the use of solar energy thanks to the intensive solar radiation and the largely mist- and fog-free mountain locations.

Other than potential uses, CIPRA also addressed limitations in the use of renewable forms of energy from an ecological and economic point of view. While the expansion of hydropower is now often criticised for nature conservation reasons, it is important to take account of any negative impact on the natural landscape caused by new wind power installations or large-scale photovoltaic systems.

The Alpine region not only contributes to climate change, it is also disproportionately affected by it. This should provide additional motivation to undertake exemplary efforts aimed at climate protection.

Source: CIPRA International

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## Headlines:

### Page 2: New UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in mountain areas

A total of 23 selected regions and protected areas from 18 countries are to join the global network of biosphere reserves. The decision was taken in Paris at the conference of the International Co-ordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB).

### Page 3: European Commission adopts measures to promote freight traffic

On 18 October the European Commission adopted a series of measures aimed at boosting the efficiency, integration and sustainability of freight transport within the Union. The package of measures consists of proposals for improving logistics, for a rail network that gives priority to freight, and for a European ports policy.

## New UNESCO Biosphere Reserves in mountain areas

(11.10.2007) A total of 23 selected regions and protected areas from 18 countries are to join the global network of biosphere reserves. The decision was taken in Paris at the conference of the International Co-ordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB). Some of the new additions to UNESCO's World Network includes mountain regions such as the reserves of Western Nghe An in Vietnam, Sierra de Alamos – Río Cuchujaqui in Mexico and Apaneca-Llamatepec in El Salvador. The latter for instance promotes sustainable coffee plantations and cultivation, thereby strengthening an important regional economic sector.

This is in keeping with the definition of Biosphere Reserves, which see themselves as model regions which innovate and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development at the regional level. The network of UNESCO Biosphere Reserves now comprises 529 model regions in 105 countries, 41 of them in alpine countries.

Source and information: <http://www.unesco.de/1738.html> (de), <http://www.unesco.org/mab/> (en/fr)



West Nghe An in Vietnam was recently included on the list of biosphere reserves.

Source: Wikipedia

## Status report on the lynx in the Alps

(28.9.2007) The Alpine countries have updated their information on the status and distribution of lynx populations on their respective territories for the period 2000 to 2004. The findings are summarised in a new report as part of SCALP (Status and Conservation of the Alpine Lynx Population). It emerges that the largest lynx population is to be found in the north-western Alps, i.e. in western Switzerland. A second nucleus is located in the south-eastern Alps, i.e. in Italy and Slovenia. While Austria and Switzerland have reported new areas of occurrence, range expansions have been noted in France and Italy.

A census of lynx populations has been carried out using photo traps, and by recording and verifying reports of random sightings and the range of tracks. In total, around 120 to 150 individuals have been estimated across the Alps. Between 60 and 90 lynx are thought to be in Switzerland, and less than 20 in France and in Italy. There are also approximately 15 in the Slovenian Alps and at least four in Austria. Germany and Liechtenstein have yet to be colonised.

To download the report: <http://www.kora.ch/pdf/scalp/SCALP-News-4a.pdf> (en)



The lynx is always at risk from poaching.

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## Proceedings of the "Ecological Network" platform and ForumAlpinum 07

(28.9.2007) Germany's Federal Agency for Nature Conservation is presenting a brochure on the inaugural meeting of the Ecological Network Platform under the Alpine Convention. The meeting was held in Munich/D on 29 March 2007 under the heading "Establishing an Alpine Ecological Network". The proceedings, which have now been published, contain in particular reports from the individual Alpine states and presentations of selected project examples of ecological networking from Germany, France and Austria.

The 7<sup>th</sup> ForumAlpinum international conference was dedicated to the topic of mountain landscapes. The proceedings of the meetings are now available online. Some 230 scientists, stakeholders and politicians discussed the various aspect of landscape development in mountain regions in Engelberg/CH from 18 to 21 April 2007. Four plenary sessions addressed the topics of "Values and Valuation", "Transformation Processes", "Cooperation and Decision-making in Landscape Management" and the "Role of Landscape in a Changing Society".

To download the proceedings: <http://www.bfn.de/fileadmin/MDb/documents/service/skript210.pdf> (en), [http://epub.oew.ac.at/0xc1aa500d\\_0x0016f3a1](http://epub.oew.ac.at/0xc1aa500d_0x0016f3a1) (en)

## Luc Hoffmann honoured for his life's work as a conservationist

(28.9.2007) The 2007 Environmental Award of the European Nature Heritage Fund goes to Switzerland's Luc Hoffmann in recognition of his life's work as a prominent nature conservationist and nature heritage patron. Luc Hoffmann was a co-founder of the WWF in 1961, Vice President of the World Conservation Union IUCN, and active in many other nature conservation organisations. Today he heads his own Fund, the MAVA Foundation for Nature Conservation, and continues to travel the world on behalf of nature conservation. According to the award presentation Luc Hoffmann is to be honoured in particular for his efforts aimed at preserving biodiversity, an issue very close to his heart. The natural alpine environment has already benefited in many ways from Hoffmann's commitment.

Past recipients of the Euronatur Environmental Award include Klaus Töpfer, Mikhail Gorbachev and Nelson Mandela. The Euronatur Award for Environmental Excellence is a non-monetary prize; it pays tribute to outstanding achievements on behalf of nature conservation.

Source: <http://www.euronatur.org> (de) 20.09.2007

## European Commission adopts measures to promote freight traffic

(25.10.2007) On 18 October the European Commission adopted a series of measures aimed at boosting the efficiency, integration and sustainability of freight transport within the Union. The package of measures consists of proposals for improving logistics, for a rail network that gives priority to freight, and for a European ports policy. The Commission's objective is to promote the creation of a European freight network on which freight transport could be more competitive in terms of journey times, reliability and capacity than it is at present.

It is estimated that the volumes of goods transported in Europe will increase by 50% between 2000 and 2020. The problems of congestion, climate change, energy supply and security will become all the more acute. The EU is therefore advocating concentrating long-distance transport in "green corridors", i.e. freight transport corridors such as rail routes and inland waterways which are characterised by low impact on people and the environment.

Source and information: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/logistics/freight\\_logistics\\_action\\_plan/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/logistics/freight_logistics_action_plan/index_en.htm) (de/fr/en), <http://www.umweltruf.de/news/111/news0.php3?nummer=6333> (de)



Maritime shipping has the lowest impact on the environment.

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## Werfenweg has Austria's longest solar-powered street

(25.10.2007) The Municipality of Werfenweg in Salzburg is saving €38,000 by using solar lighting. 17 recently installed solar streetlights have proved to be the cheapest way of lighting a path some 700 m long on the town's outskirts. This makes it currently Austria's longest solar-powered street.

There are many advantages to the solar solution. There is no cabling work involved, the lamps do not require maintenance, they can be installed very quickly, and above all they are eco-friendly. A comparison of the costs involved in installing and operating the lamps (irrespective of future increases in electricity prices) highlighted the financial benefits. The bottom line is that, over an operating period of 30 years, the total costs of a mains-based lighting system would amount to around €100,000 Euro, compared with only €62,000 for solar lighting. What's more, generating the mains electricity needed to power the 17 street lamps would produce 1.7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> a year, which have now been saved.

Source: [http://www.oekonews.at/index.php?mdoc\\_id=1025077](http://www.oekonews.at/index.php?mdoc_id=1025077) (de)



Solar lighting cuts down on costs and CO<sub>2</sub>.

@ ecolights

## Eco-building zone promotes demographic growth

(13.9.2007) The tiny Grisons community of Flerden/CH has succeeded in attracting new residents to its mountain village – and done so ecologically. In 2003 the community created an 8,500 m<sup>2</sup> energy-saving housing area for new builds erected according to ecological principles. The concept was a success, and people began to settle in the area. Six of the thirteen plots were sold in the space of three years, and the number of inhabitants has risen from 170 to 204 – and the trend is up.

However prospective home builders must fulfil a number of commitments. The building must be certified with the *Minergie* label and make use of solar energy; other alternative energy sources are also desirable. In addition the property must be occupied all year round. In return the plots are generously proportioned; there are no stipulations with regard to the design of the building; and the community is selling the land at around 40 per cent below the usual prices. Flerden has achieved its objective of countering the exodus in its population and could well act as a role model for other Swiss mountain villages.

Source: <http://domizil.nzz.ch/2007/08/12/imn/articleFDSE6.print.html> (de)

## Call for a more strategic approach to mountain area development

(25.10.2007) At a meeting of the Adelboden Group held in Rome on 3 October over 60 representatives from governments, civil society and international organisations from mountain countries across the globe called for a more coherent approach to sustainable development in mountain areas.

An official statement issued at the close noted that a disproportionate number of world's 840 million chronically undernourished people live in highland areas. Governments were therefore urged to undertake systematic evaluations of their mountain-relevant policies and to integrate mountain areas more effectively into national economies. The Group also stressed the need to address new challenges such as climate change, growing levels of internal and regional migration, and issues of gender equity in these regions. The Adelboden Group, which was established in Switzerland in 2002, serves as a forum for discussion of policies, exchanges of experience, and co-ordinated planning. It also acts as an advisory board for the FAO's project on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in Mountain Regions (SARD-M), which works to improve the quality of life of people living in mountain areas. Source: <http://www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2007/1000670/index.html> (fr/it/en)

## Miscellaneous

### UN Conference on Tourism and Climate Change

(11.10.2007) A three-day United Nations conference was held in Davos/CH in early October on the subject of tourism and climate change. In a joint statement the participants urged action by the tourism sector to face climate change and reduce emissions. While no commitments were undertaken, tourists were encouraged to consider the environmental impacts of their travel options. Tourism contributes some 5% to climate-relevant emissions through air travel, and the trend is rising. The tourism industry does not just have a shared responsibility for climate change; it is also directly affected by it. Winter tourism in the Alps for instance is already suffering from a lack of snow in many places.

Source and information:

[http://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/startseite/detail/Tourismus\\_Appell\\_fuer\\_umweltbewusstes\\_Reisen.html?siteSect=105&sid=8279805&rss=true&ty=st](http://www.swissinfo.ch/ger/startseite/detail/Tourismus_Appell_fuer_umweltbewusstes_Reisen.html?siteSect=105&sid=8279805&rss=true&ty=st) (de) 3.10.07, <http://www.unwto.org/climate/index.php?op=0> (en)

### Europe's highest toilets

(13.9.2007) This summer two public toilets were installed at an altitude of 4 260 m on the French side of the Mont Blanc. Every year some 30,000 climbers head up the Alps's highest mountain. And every summer the snow and ice along the most frequented routes is tinged with a yellow-brown hue caused by urine, faeces and vomitus. A helicopter was used to fly the two dry toilets to the mountain top, bringing the total cost of the new sanitary installations to around €145,000. The toilets are to be emptied once a year and the unsavoury contents transported back down to the valley by helicopter. Waste has been a serious problem on the Mont Blanc for some time now.

Source: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/0,1518,496153,00.html> (en)

### Interreg III B projects MONITRAF and ALPNAP

(25.10.2007) Transport across the Alps is at the centre of the Final Conference of the Interreg III B projects MONITRAF and ALPNAP, which have been running since 2005. The Conference is entitled "Transport across the Alps. Approaches and common measures for sustainable transport development in the Alpine region". While the ALPNAP project consists of a network of experts investigating air quality, noise, climate and health, the MONITRAF project is dedicated to putting the results of the research into practice. Seven regional partners in the Alpine region have drawn up practical operative approaches aimed at improving the transport situation and living conditions along transit routes. The Conference is to discuss proposals for reducing the traffic-related impact and agree on a package of measures. It is being held in Innsbruck/A from 23 to 25 January 2008, and the conference languages are German, Italian, French (simultaneous interpreting) and English.

Information: <http://www.monitraf.org/24d1203.html> (de/fr/it/en)

## Agenda

Conference on remote sensing and forest management: **ForestSat'07**; 5-7.11.2007, Montpellier/F; language: en; organisers: Teledetection.

Information: <http://forestsat.teledetection.fr/> (en)

Conference: **Rural Development in Europe. Using funding and renewable energy to achieve sustainable growth in rural areas**; 13-14.11.2007, London/GB; language: en; organisers: Agra Informa Ltd.

Information: <http://www.agra-net.com/> (en)

Trade fair and conference on natural disasters, disaster management and climate change in alpine regions: **Aqua alta alpina**; 29-30.11.2007, Salzburg/A; languages: de, en; organisers: Messezentrum Salzburg.

Information: <http://www.acqua-alta-alpina.at> (de/en)

Conference: **Mountains of the World - Ecology, Conservation and Sustainable Development**, 10-14.02.2008, Muscat/Oman; language: en; organisers: Center for Environmental Studies and Research (CESAR), AEHMS – Ecovision, Sultanate of Oman.

Information: <http://www.aehms.org/pdf/OmanConferenceAnnouncement.pdf> (en)

Workshop: **Remote Sensing of Snow and Glaciers: Changing Climate - Changing Cryosphere**, 11-13.02.2008, Bern/ CH; language: en; organisers: GIUB, ENVEO, EARSeL.

Information: [http://www.geography.unibe.ch/lenya/giub/live/research/remotesensing/Forschung/earselworkshop\\_en.html](http://www.geography.unibe.ch/lenya/giub/live/research/remotesensing/Forschung/earselworkshop_en.html) (en)

### Strange but true!

If the party at the other end of the phone appears somewhat tongue-tied and, depending on the time of year, has a tendency either to gush and roar, trickle quietly or gurgle merrily, then it could well be that you're through to a glacier. Dial + 49 89 3791 4058 at the moment and you'll get through to the Vernagferner, a glacier in the Ötztal/A. A microphone has been set up to transmit in real time the sound made by the glacier's icy melt water as it gushes down the mountainside in a raging torrent.

The installation, designed to acoustically record climate change, is called *Mobile Elegy – Calling a Glacier*, and is by German sound artist Kalle Laar.

Information: <http://www.callingtheglacier.org> (en)