



## Full version of alpMedia now online

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## Alpine Experience – an Approach for other Mountain Regions

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In today's information society, professional standards are essential in coping with the sheer volume of data involved in collecting, editing and disseminating information. It is also important to be fast off the mark – without neglecting such fundamental principles as transparency, and the reliability and trustworthiness of the sources.

That is the thinking behind alpMedia.net, a website devoted to the field of sustainable development in the various fields of the Alpine Convention. Coverage relates primarily to the Alpine region, although the articles can also be relevant for other mountain regions of Europe and the whole world.

The target audience for alpMedia.net includes NGOs active in the various fields of the Alpine Convention in the Alps and other mountain regions of the world. Equally, alpMedia.net is a valuable source of useful data for anyone involved in research on any subject of relevance to the Alps, for students at schools and universities, and for various occupational groups including journalists.

The website is available in French, German, Italian and Slovene, with an additional English version offering a selection of articles.

All Newsletter items are archived at alpMedia. In addition to news items, AlpMedia also provides information in various other forms, such as portfolios, events, publications, documents and links.

The Portfolio section offers focussed information on selected topics of relevance to the Alps. Each portfolio includes a background, and articles and links on the subject. The Events column provides a calendar of forthcoming events with a focus on the Alpine region. The Publications page comprises reviews of the latest publications. In addition the site can be used to search for relevant literature in a very full Alpine database, which also includes unpublished sources such as dissertations, etc. The Documents section can be used to call up various key documents relating to the Alpine region, including international treaties, European Union documents, the Protocols to the Alpine Convention, etc. To round off the online information offering, there is also an extensive collection of useful links, and a detailed search routine is available for all sections.

alpMedia.net is the name of the new medium for targeted information on the Alps – fast and up to date.

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### News:

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### Portfolio:

<http://www.alpmedia.net/d/dossier.asp?Sprache=2>

### Events:

[www.alpmedia.net/d/veranstaltung.en.asp?Sprache=2](http://www.alpmedia.net/d/veranstaltung.en.asp?Sprache=2)

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### Archive search:

[www.alpmedia.net/d/suche.asp?Sprache=2](http://www.alpmedia.net/d/suche.asp?Sprache=2)

## 2002 Swiss Environment Report

(28.6.02) The Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) and the Federal Office of Statistics have now published the two-volume Swiss Environment Report for 2002. Among other things, the report states that the efforts made above all by Swiss industry in support of cleaner production have led to improvements in Switzerland since the 1990s in terms of reduced levels of air and water pollution. On the other hand, traffic volumes continue to rise, total built-up area continues to expand, and new environmental hazards have emerged including the rapid spread of electromagnetic fields.

For Peter Glauser as project manager for the Environment Report, these negative developments are the reason why the overall eco-balance must be considered negative: "We can see an increase in overall consumption in practically all fields. Above all the consumption of goods is outstripping improvements in eco-efficiency. That means the environmental impacts are still increasing, too." For Philippe Roche, Executive Director at SAEFL, the conclusion is clear: "We must take a critical look at our consumption habits and production methods and also at the principle of economic growth, and we must find our way back to the laws of Nature." To that extent the Environment Report is in direct contradiction to the Report on Growth published by the Swiss Ministry of the Economy a few weeks ago.

Sources: SAEFL 24.06.02, and Die Südostschweiz 25.06.02

## Preventing natural disasters

(21.6.02) In 1999 heavy snowfalls triggered thousands of avalanches in the Alps at a cost of over a hundred lives and damage totalling billions of euros. In the meantime a number of programmes have been established at the international level and also in Switzerland and France to address the problem of natural disasters.

The United Nations, for example, has launched an International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR). The programme goals include support for interdisciplinary working, network building, and promoting scientific research into the causes and effects of natural disasters. The instruments established for the programme include an Inter-Agency Task Force, a secretariat and a very full website (<http://www.unisdr.org/>, engl.).

In Switzerland a conference is being organised by stakeholders in the Swiss insurance industry and the National Platform for Natural Hazards on the subject of "The Challenge of Natural Hazards – are we equal to the threat?". The conference will be held in Neuchâtel/CH on 21 August 2002. Information: <http://www.irv.ch> (d) and <http://www.planat.ch> (d/f/it/en).

In collaboration with the Rhône-Alpes Region, the French authorities have developed a computer programme by the name of GASPARD. The software is designed for the management of data relating to natural disasters. The various features include maps and information on the subject of prevention plus a database for access via the Internet. Information: <http://www.environnement.gouv.fr/> (f), [charly.vignal@environnement.gouv.fr](mailto:charly.vignal@environnement.gouv.fr)

In addition, a flood prevention centre is being set up in Toulouse/F.

Train accident following storms in the Alps



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## Third European Mountain Convention

(28.6.02) The third European Mountain Convention was held in Inverness (Scotland) in May 2002. The conference, which was organised by Euromontana, focussed on the consequences of forthcoming reforms in the European Union, above all with regard to enlargement, which will involve a redistribution of funding in the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy. Michel Barnier, EU Commissioner with responsibility for regional policy, made a presentation on the future of regional policy in the EU and the consequences for the European mountain areas. Euromontana is a European association for co-operation between mountain regions. The main conference papers will shortly be available at <http://www.euromontana.org> (f/e).

## Fire in the Alps 2002

(5.7.02) As a bright signal for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps, the mountain fires will again be burning after nightfall on Saturday, 10 August in the whole of the Alpine region from Vienna to Nice. Fire in the Alps 2002 is one of the main Swiss and German contributions to the UN Year of Mountains 2002. The fires can take any form (from mountain-top bonfires to torch-lit human chains) and may be combined with various events (e.g. theatre and concerts, presentation of a "Manifesto of Fire" to politicians and the media, etc).

Mountain fires are an ancient tradition. Over the centuries they served as a warning system against impending danger. In 1986 the idea of a European Chain of Light was revived and since then has been the subject of an annual transalpine event.

Information on the planned mountain fires and registration at <http://www.feuerindenalpen.org> (d/f/i/e).

## Cleaning up the mountains

(21.6.02) In collaboration with Mercantour National Park, the environmental protection organisation Mountain Wilderness (MW) is organising a clean-up for a former army training area from 24 to 26 August. In addition to the immediate goal of rehabilitation of the countryside, the purpose of the campaign is also awareness-building for the general problem of abandoned man-made installations in the natural environment.

MW's Mountain Clean-up Campaign was launched in France in 2001 with the aim of identifying disused installations in the countryside and removing them. The organisation appeals to walkers to notify any problem sites they come across, and a form is available via the Internet for that purpose.

With the help of public funding, the campaign is being continued in 2002 in collaboration with various protected landscape areas. Activities will include the creation and analysis of an inventory of rehabilitation sites, the publication of demolition guidelines, and also a long-term proposal for avoiding concentrations of obsolete installations in the mountain environment.

The problem of disused installations is one that confronts many Alpine areas. It is addressed in the Tourism Protocol to the Alpine Convention, where the states signatory are called upon to ensure that approvals and operating licences for lifts and cableways also include provisions for the disassembly and removal of installations that are no longer in use. Source: <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/mountain.wilderness/>

## Mountains at the World Food Summit in Rome on 10 - 13 June 2002

(14.6.02) Following the 1996 World Food Summit in Rome, the sustainable development of mountain regions is the subject of a supporting event at this year's summit of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, which is being held under the motto "Five Years Later".

Activities will include the reading of a note on the subject of hunger in mountain areas, submission of a major document on the uncertain and vulnerable nutrition situation of people in mountain areas, and provision of an update on the growing global partnership between mountain regions. Then the results of the last few days' work in the Mountain Workshop at the NGO Forum will be presented, regional and national presentations made by members of the International Year of Mountains Focus Group, and a general discussion held with all attendees. Source: <http://www.mountains2002.org/news.html> (en/fr/sp)

## Alpine Experience – an Approach for other Mountain Regions

(5.7.02) Last week over 400 people from a total of 31 countries attended the CIPRA jubilee celebrations at the invitation of the Bavarian State Government. The reception was held in Berchtesgaden/D in the framework of a conference on the subject of international co-operation between the mountain regions of the world under the heading "The Alpine Experience – an Approach for other Mountain Regions?". The discussions centred on experience to date with the Alpine Convention. The conference was attended by various ministers and undersecretaries of state, and representatives of leading NGOs including UNEP Secretary General, Klaus Töpfer.

The final declaration of the event will be read out by various ministers in September of this year at the Global Mountain Summit being held in Bishkek/Kyrgyzstan. The goal is to make a contribution to international collaboration between the mountain regions of the world. <http://www.cipra.de/berchtesgaden/> (d/e)

German Undersecretary of State Gila Altmann with UNEP Secretary General Klaus Töpfer



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## Burying the power lines

(21.6.02) In Ecrins National Park in France, a total of seventy pylons have been dismantled in the Haut-Vénéon Valley and the overhead power line replaced with underground cables over a distance of 7 km. Among other things, that will make the power supply more reliable for the communities involved, above all because of the various avalanche paths on the slopes flanking that section of the valley. At the aesthetic level, what is basically a safety measure also means that the wild mountain scenery of the region can now be enjoyed without the power lines that have crossed it for the last fifty years.

In the course of 2001, the French utility EDF replaced some 9100 km of transmission lines. Of a total of 5280 km of new medium-voltage power lines, 4130 km are underground lines. The main argument for the decision was supply security, after the 1999 storms deprived more than a million households of electricity when many of the pylons failed to stand up to the powerful gusts of wind. Since then EDF has placed the emphasis on underground lines. Their goal is to replace 50% of their overhead transmission lines by 2015 and to remove the pylons from the countryside.

Sources: EDF 2001 annual report <http://www.edf.fr>, (f/en) and Dauphiné libéré, 13.6.2002

## Miscellaneous

### TV programmes for minority languages now region-wide in Friuli-Venezia Giulia

(14.6.02) The regional authority of Friuli-Venezia Giulia/I and Italy's national communications authority have agreed that TV and radio programmes in Slovene, Croatian, Friuli and German should in future be broadcast throughout the region. In South Tyrol and, to a lesser extent, in the Trentino it is also normal practice to provide TV programmes in various languages. Source: Friuli-Venezia Giulia Press Office

### "World of Mountains" – films from the higher regions

(21.6.02) In the framework of the UN Year of Mountains, trigon-film is presenting a special cycle of films. Between June 2002 and February 2003, a total of 25 films are being shown in various locations in Switzerland and Liechtenstein. The films, which are all in the original version with German and French subtitles, have been produced in various mountain regions of the world, such as Kurdistan, Armenia and Japan, as well as in the Tyrol und in Switzerland. The project was commissioned by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC).

A programme can be ordered from <http://www.trigon-film.org/> (d/f/en) or +41 56 430 12 30.

### Germany: Small combined heat and power plants eligible for the Blue Angel eco-award

(21.6.02) At a meeting held on 13-14 June, Germany's Environmental Label Jury approved new eligibility rules for the Blue Angel award for energy-efficient small-scale combined heat and power plants. Gas-fired and solid-fuel combined heat and power plants can now be labelled "eco-friendly because energy-efficient". Combined heat and power plants generate electricity and utilise the process heat at the same time. To that extent they make a meaningful contribution to the goals of reduced carbon dioxide emissions and reduced primary energy consumption. The Blue Angel award is limited to plants with a rated output of less than 30 kilowatts.

Small-scale combined heat and power plants constitute an efficient source of decentral power generation. That makes them attractive for the Alpine region, with its dispersed settlement patterns.

The Blue Angel eco-label is the oldest environment and consumer protection label for products and services. It was introduced in Germany in 1977 at the initiative of the Federal Minister of Home Affairs and the Ministers of the Environment of the German *länder*. About half of all German consumers say that the eco-label influences their shopping decisions.

Source: <http://www.blauer-engel.de/> (d/en)

### New Panos report as a mouthpiece for mountain people worldwide

(28.6.02) The Panos Institute recently published a report entitled "High Stakes - the Future for Mountain Societies". The report reflects the opinions of people living in mountain regions worldwide, who were polled on such subjects as migration, climate change, water and tourism. The aim of the project is to ensure that their voices are heard so that resident populations can have a greater influence in the development of their regions. The Panos Institute is an international non-profit organisation that provides information on matters of global concern with a main focus on developing countries. The 57-page Panos report can be ordered or downloaded from the Panos website at [http://www.panos.org.uk/environment/high\\_stakes\\_mountain\\_societies.htm](http://www.panos.org.uk/environment/high_stakes_mountain_societies.htm) (e).

### Interreg IIIB CADSES – closing the gap between the EU and Eastern Europe

(21.6.02) The European Union has allocated 233 million euros to its Interreg IIIB CADSES programme for balanced development within the EU and cross-border co-operation. For the Alpine region CADSES, which is short for Central Adriatic Danubian South-Eastern European Space, is targeted at collaboration between the EU members Italy, Austria and Germany on the one hand and Slovenia as a candidate country on the other. Public authorities and private organisations in those countries can submit projects between 15 June and 31 July 2002. The CADSES programme has the following main focus:

- Promotion of a spatial development approach and targeted actions in the field of social and economic cohesion
- Development of efficient and environmentally friendly transport systems and improved access to digital information
- Promotion and sustainable management of the landscape, and the natural and cultural heritage
- Co-operation in the fields of environmental protection, resource management and risk management

Source: South Tyrol Press Office; information: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/interreg3/abc/voletb\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/abc/voletb_de.htm)

## Agenda

Exhibition entitled "Là-haut sur la montagne" / "Schöne Neue Alpen"; 27 June to 3 August 2002, Municipal Library of Grenoble/F; organisation: CIPRA France, Grenoble municipal authority, Conseil Général de l'Isère

Exhibition entitled "Jungfrau, Mönch & Eiger – Geschichten zur Faszination des Berges"

open until 1 December 2002, Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne, information: <http://www.alpinesmuseum.ch> (d)