

alpMedia Newsletter

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NENA: A new network of innovative enterprises in the Alps

(14.02.2008) A network of innovative and sustainability-orientated enterprises and umbrella organisations in the Alps was officially established in Zurich in mid-January.



Project partners at the founding of the network in Zurich.

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The network was developed over the past two years as part of an Interreg III project co-financed by the EU.

NENA's objectives involve enabling the exchange of know-how and experience between enterprises engaged in sustainability and long-term co-operation on specific issues and projects in the Alpine region. Enterprises are to be assisted in expanding their innovation potential and improving their competitiveness.

In a first phase the network is to focus on the topic areas of renewable energies and energy efficiency in the building sector and on timber as a value-added chain. The network welcomes as members any innovation and sustainability-orientated enterprises and their umbrella organisations which deal with these issues. An agency is to be set up to bring together core competences such as an international and entrepreneurial work culture and solid know-how in the areas of renewable energies and energy efficiency. CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, is to be involved in this area, too.

A number of joint activities is already scheduled on NENA's programme for 2008. They include events, further training and publications as well as contacts with potential new members. Particular emphasis is to be placed on areas such as the assessment of public buildings, energy-saving construction and renovation projects at high altitude (mountain refuges in particular) and financing models for renewable energies. A concept for another joint Interreg project has already been drawn up by NENA members and submitted to the relevant body.

Source and information: <http://www.nena-network.net> (en)

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The EU is planning to begin work on drawing up a Green Paper on EU policy on mountain regions this September.

Page 3: EU funds for fifty harmful projects

At the end of February Friends of the Earth Europe and CEE Bankwatch published a list of 50 environmentally damaging and economically dubious infrastructure projects in Central and Eastern Europe, which are either financed or planned to be financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and EU regional development funds.

EU Green Paper on Mountain Regions

(14.02.2008) The EU is planning to begin work on drawing up a Green Paper on EU policy on mountain regions this September. In doing so it accedes to a demand expressed by mountain regions over many years and takes an important step towards acknowledging the special status of mountain regions. The Green Paper is to address issues of concern to all mountain regions: the strengthening of territorial cohesion, transport policies, cross-border and transnational co-operation and networks, farming and regional development. Such a Green Paper is an important step towards the implementation of Article 158 of the Lisbon Strategy, which calls for special consideration of mountain areas and regional cohesion.

Initial proposals from the AEM (European Association of Elected Public Authorities from Mountain Regions) for the Green Paper have been submitted to the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Danuta Hübner, as part of the official ceremony marking the founding of the Alps-Mediterranean Euroregion (F/I) in Brussels.

Source and information: <http://briancon-infos.fr/spip.php?article1025> (fr), aem@promonte-aem.net



The Green Paper is designed to contribute towards positive economic development in mountain regions.

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Alpine ski resorts melting away

(28.02.2008) A quick demise looks to be on the cards for two ski resorts in the Ticino/CH. Indeed the ski station at Abondance/F did not even go into operation this season. The fun of downhill skiing at the two Ticino ski resorts of Bosco Gurin and Carí is also set to be short-lived. In mid-February the cantonal government resolved to stop supporting the ski resorts financially. To date the federal government and the canton had kept both ski resorts alive to the tune of a total of CHF 30 million, i.e. around two thirds of overall investments. However a sound economic basis could not be established.

Abondance in the French *département* of Haute-Savoie is one of the first municipalities in the Alps to have completely closed down its ski resort already.

As with the Ticino resorts that are now at risk, here too the slopes were at critical altitudes, and with only one gondola and six tow-lifts the resort was too small to be economically profitable. Although the municipality took over the ski-lift installations to preserve them from bankruptcy, the financial burden has proved simply too great. The ski resort was devouring up to 50% of the municipality's budget – in poor years even as much as 80%. And so the facilities have stood still since the start of this winter.

Sources: http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/schweiz/skigebiet_1.675667.html (de), <http://tages-anzeiger.ch/dyn/news/wirtschaft/844419.html> (de), F.A.Z., 14.02.2008,



Snow guns are not a cure-all for the impact of climate change.

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Monitoring tool and strategies for regional development

(14.02.2008) The DIAMONT Interreg IIIB project (for Data Infrastructure for the Alps. Mountain Orientated Network Technology) came to an end with a conference in Innsbruck/A on February 1. It has provided a wealth of different monitoring tools and strategies designed to improve the monitoring of the Alps and sustainable regional development in the Alpine region.

Results include a database with information on regional development in the Alps aimed at creating a system of indicators. Among other results is the documentation of best practice models and a series of strategies for lasting regional development, which were drawn up in co-operation with citizens. The last of the English-language reports – Managing Alpine Land Resources. Approaches and Instruments – was recently completed and can now be downloaded from the internet.

Information and download: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/diamont> (en).

Award for sustainable projects in water management

(13.03.2008) This year again Swiss Re, a major reinsurance company, presented its ReSource Award. This Award is bestowed to innovative projects in water management as part of an annual competition. In so doing, Swiss Re supports the planning, assessment and implementation of projects which promote awareness in all matters relating to water and encourage the efficient use of water. It showcases pioneering concepts whose application goes beyond the scope of the actual project and which are effective at integrating local and regional players.

The Award has prize money worth USD 150,000 and goes to one or more projects, to be selected an international jury. The prize money can only be used to implement the projects. NGOs, private, scientific or public bodies, and similar stakeholder groups from all over the world are invited to compete for the Award by 31 May 2008. Information: <http://www.swissre.com/resource> (en)

EU funds for fifty harmful projects

(13.03.2008) At the end of February Friends of the Earth Europe and CEE Bankwatch published a list of 50 environmentally damaging and economically dubious infrastructure projects in Central and Eastern Europe, which are either financed or planned to be financed by the European Investment Bank (EIB) and EU regional development funds. Financing is already planned for a majority of the projects, and nine have already been financed – with a possible investment volume of around EUR 22 billion.

One of the projects is the power plant block in Šoštanj, Slovenia. There the EIB granted a loan for the construction of a new lignite-fired power plant. Lignite is one of the least efficient and most polluting energy sources, and CO₂ emissions are set to increase significantly as a result of the power plant. The other questionable projects include waste incineration plants promoted at the expense of recycling, and motorways to be routed through natural areas or residential zones. Also to be financed are river engineering and other water management projects which are more likely to destroy than protect the wetland areas and their biodiversity. A list of the projects has been published at www.bankwatch.org/billions (en).

Source: http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2008/Feb25_EU_funds_for_fifty_harmful_projects.html (en)



Despite existing alternatives the D8 motorway in the Czech Republic is to be built through the protected area in the České Středohoří mountains.

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Freight traffic in Europe: costs and alternatives

(14.02.2008) The European Commission has just released a handbook on the internationalisation of external costs in the transport sector. The handbook features proven methods for estimating and monetising the costs caused by air pollution, noise, climate change, congestion and accidents. It also contains examples and best practice methods for internalising the external costs of all modes of transport.

The objective of the EUREKA research project SPIN-ALP (Scanning the Potential of Intermodal Transport on Alpine Corridors) launched at the end of 2007 is to make a tangible contribution to transferring more road transport in the Alpine region to the railways. One of its goals is to develop a new software tool designed to enable transport companies to analyse and plan alternative modes of transport across all means of transport.

Sources and information: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/costs/handbook/index_en.htm (en), <http://www.lifep.r.de/presse-meldungen/ptv-planung-transport-verkehr-ag/boxid-30706.html> (de)



A boost is to be given to alternative modes of transport in Europe.

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Conference on climate change in mountain regions

(31.01.2008) An international workshop on climate change and sustainable development in mountain regions is being held in Innsbruck/A from 7 to 9 April. The aim is to identify future research work necessary in connection with sustainable development in mountain regions. The results are to provide rationales and guidelines for the work to be carried out by researchers, scientists and politicians.

The conference is divided into two main areas. While the first is to address scientific topics of general relevance to mountain regions, the second is to focus on regional issues. Although the organisers give special emphasis to the Alps, other mountain systems are also to be reflected. Key topics to be addressed by the Workshop include multifunctional land use, sustainable tourism, water and transport. The conference is to be held in English. Information and registration: <http://bfw.ac.at/rz/bfwcms.web?dok=6211> (en)

New publication on alpine landscapes

(31.01.2008) The December 2007 issue of the bilingual *La revue de géographie alpine / Journal of Alpine Research* focuses on the Forum Alpinum held in April 2007, which was dedicated to the topic of landscape development in mountain areas. The articles look at the different aspects of landscape. They analyse the findings of the Swiss research programme NFP 48 "Landscapes and Habitats in the Alps", the significance of social capital for rural development, the influence of urban developments in mountain areas on land use, potential instruments for landscape development illustrated by the creation of a biosphere park, and the political dimensions of landscape.

The Journal also refers to the cultural, historical and social importance of landscapes and the significance of landscapes as vectors of ecological diversity, tourism resource, and business location.

Bibliography: *La revue de géographie alpine/Journal of alpine research*, Vol. 95, No. 4, 2007, Paysages alpins en perspective/Alpine landscape – Views and prospects. ISBN 978-2-200-92331-0

Miscellaneous

Laser scanner to protect against floods

(14.02.2008) As part of the EU-sponsored research project FloodScan the German Land of Bavaria is to be photographed and surveyed from the air using laser scanners. With the help of the accurate photographs of the terrain, areas susceptible to flooding can be determined using computer simulation, which in turn allows maps of flood areas to be drawn up. Three quarters of Bavaria have already been surveyed in this way, with aerial photographs of the remaining surface area to be completed by 2010. This project takes account of the EU directive on flood protection, according to which all EU member states are to draw up flood maps by the end of 2013.

Source: <http://www.stmugv.bayern.de/aktuell/presse/detailansicht.htm?tid=13714> (de)

Information: <http://www.wzw.tum.de/floodscan> (de/en)

Will Europe's largest photovoltaic installation soon be in the Alps?

(14.02.2008) Europe's largest photovoltaic installation is set to be built in the French *département* of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence. Negotiations have already taken place for the lease of the plot of land on which the installation is to be built, at an altitude of 1,000 m above sea level. By 2009 the installation could have a capacity of 30-50 megawatt. This would make the plant, which is due to be built in the early summer of 2008, Europe's most powerful. The main benefit for the installation is its location: the area around Curbans is considered to be one of the sunniest on the French mainland. The project is expected to require investments of between 150 and 250 million euros.

Source: <http://www.journaldelenvironnement.net/fr/document/detail.asp?id=14382&type=JDE&ctx=259> (fr)

A new forum for mountain book enthusiasts

(31.01.2008) Anyone wanting to share their opinions or impressions of a mountain book they have read now have a new medium to do so. A new forum for the exchange of views among mountain book enthusiasts has been up and running since December 2007 on the www.livres-montagne.com website (fr/en). The site is designed to help users search for books and films about mountains with the help of other users; the forum even incorporates a Poems section. Besides books and films *livres-montagnes* also features photos from many different mountain regions of the world.

Agenda

9th Swiss Global Change Day; 01.04.2008, Bern/CH; language: en; organisers: ProClim- Forum for Climate and Global Change, Platform of Swiss Academy of Sciences

Information: <http://www.proclim.ch/Events/2008/9CHGCDay/9thSGCD.html> (en)

International conference on perceptions of forests in peri-urban areas: **Perceptions des forêts péri-urbaines et aménagement durable**; 13-16.05.2008, Grenoble/F; languages: fr, en; organisers: Musée Dauphinois, MSH Alpes, ADAYG, La Passion du Bois, Association des Amis du PNR Chartreuse, laboratoire PACTE

Information: <http://www.pacte.cnrs.fr/spip.php?article376> (fr)

Conference on migration in mountain areas for reasons of landscape and cultural appeal: **Conference on Managing Amenity-led Migration in Mountain Regions**; 15-19.5.2008, Banff/Canada; language: en; organisers: International Amenity Migration Centre

Information: <http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/mtnconferences/am/> (en)

11th Interpraevent Congress 2008 on protection from environmental catastrophes; 26-30.05.2008, Dornbirn/A; languages: de, fr, it, en; organisers: Interpraevent Research Association, Forest Technical Service for Torrent and Avalanche Control

Information: <http://www.interpraevent2008.at/index.php4> (de/en)

International Disaster and Risk Conference Davos 2008 - From thoughts to action; 25-29.08.2008, Davos/CH; language: en; organisers: IDRC

Information: <http://www.idrc.info> (en)

An announcement form for events is now available for download from our homepage.

http://www.cipra.org/en/abo/announcement_form (en/de/fr/it/sl)

Impressum: CIPRA International • Im Bretscha 22 • FL 9494 Schaan • Tel 00423 237 40 30 • Fax 00423 237 40 31 • alpmedia@cipra.org
Translation: Stephen Grynwasser

Strange but true!

...Forgetting travelling for hours to get to skiing areas; all you do is step onto your skis after work or after school... at least that's what many residents of Munich are hoping. The 75 m Fröttmaninger Berg, a rehabilitated landfill site on the outskirts of the city, has been equipped with two ski lifts, snow guns and a snow groomer in time for this season. However the ski enthusiasts are still waiting for better days. Because of the high temperatures there has been no snow as yet and no artificial snow either. But of course next season will be quite different! The main partner in the project is a company specialising in snowmaking equipment. That's why the president of the Munich Ski Association is convinced that, providing that partner stays on board, things are bound to improve by next season so skiing on top of the landfill can go ahead.
Source: Süddeutsche Zeitung 9.2.2008