

alpMedia Newsletter

A CIPRA information service – 19.05.2008, summary 06/08-09/08
www.cipra.org/alpmedia



The Alps as a Model Climate Region: cc.alps shows how it's done

(14.05.2008) Climate change is affecting the Alps more than other regions of Europe. That's why in many areas measures are now being adopted and prepared to reduce, or adapt to, climate change. CIPRA's new project "cc.alps" is designed to help ensure that these climate response measures are in keeping with the principle of sustainable development as far as possible.



When it comes to dealing with climate change CIPRA is encouraging people to "Think one step further!", for instance with its new cc.alps project.

The Alps have the potential to outperform Kyoto on climate protection and become a model climate region for the world. CIPRA wants to prevent measures being taken in the name of climate protection which would then have a negative impact on the environment or society. "For instance climate response measures must not reduce biodiversity nor waste precious resources of water and energy," says CIPRA Director Andreas Götz with reference to the challenges that cc.alps faces. On 21 May CIPRA will appeal to successful climate projects to take part in a competition endowed with substantial prize money. Climate experts will help CIPRA to gather knowledge on climate response measures and assess their sustainability. In June key players from the area of politics, administration, planning, industry and NGOs will contribute their know-how as part of a round-table. In a subsequent project phase CIPRA in co-operation with other institutions will publicise the knowledge gained throughout the Alps using workshops, publications and the electronic media. Pilot regions in all the Alpine countries will be assisted in implementing sustainable climate response measures.

cc.alps was launched in February with a term of 18 months and a budget of €1.2 m. The transfer of know-how and its implementation will be part of a follow-up project lasting two and a half years. cc.alps is financed by Switzerland's MAVA Foundation for Nature. With its cc.alps project CIPRA is following on from the success of its Future in the Alps Project, which ended in December 2007.

More information on cc.alps: www.cipra.org/cc.alps.

Contents

Page 1

The Alps as a Model Climate Region: cc.alps shows how it's done

Page 2

Citizens' Agora on the topic of climate change

Educational CD on sustainable development in the Alps

New publication on mountain dams

Energy supplies at risk from shrinking glaciers

Page 3

Successful destinations in alpine tourism

Ibex Label for Swiss youth hostels

Stable glaciers in Central Asia

Switzerland's first village hotel

Page 4

Miscellaneous

Agenda

Oh!...

Headlines:

Page 2: Citizens' Agora on the topic of climate change

On 12 and 13 June the European Parliament is inviting European civil society to the second citizens' Agora to express its views on the topic of climate change, submit analyses and proposals, and also define its role in future action.

Page 3: Successful destinations in alpine tourism

BAK - Basel Economics has been analysing the success and competitiveness of some 100 tourist destinations in the Alpine region on a regular basis since 2005; however the study focuses only on economic aspects and does not take ecological aspects into account.

Citizens' Agora on the topic of climate change

(30.04.2008) On 12 and 13 June the European Parliament is inviting European civil society to the second citizens' Agora to express its views on the topic of climate change, submit analyses and proposals, and also define its role in future action. The Agora, which takes place in Brussels, is made up of around 500 invited organisations. Five thematic workshops address a number of cross-sections of topics relating to climate change: Resources, Techniques, Solidarity, Economy and Governance. To involve the general public more effectively in the debate, citizens also have access to a virtual Agora in the form of an internet forum. The internet is widely regarded by EU institutions as a valuable instrument for making their activities more transparent.

The first Agora was set up as a new platform for "dialogue with civil society" to mark the 50th anniversary of the EU. In November 2007 more than 400 representatives of non-governmental organisations were invited to discuss the future of the EU together with representatives of the European bodies.

Source and information: <http://forum.agora.europarl.europa.eu> (en/fr/de/it)



The modern Agora under the artificial starry sky of the EU Parliament in Brussels.

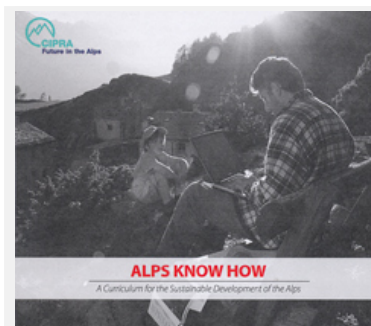
© European Parliament

Educational CD on sustainable development in the Alps

(15.05.2008) A new educational CD-Rom has been published, providing a wide overview of key issues affecting the Alps. The CD is entitled "Alps Know-How" and comprises extensive teaching materials: English-language tutorials on key issues such as regional value added, governance capacity, mobility management, new forms of decision making, protected areas, etc., have been complemented with other background topics such as mountain farming, mountain forestry, tourism, energy, climate, etc. Extensive further reading material is available in PDF form in various languages. The contents were compiled and edited by an international team of experts.

The CD is to be used at universities, colleges and in further education courses on sustainable development in the Alps. It is a result of the Future in the Alps know-how transfer project carried out by CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps. The CD-Rom can be ordered from CIPRA and costs CHF 10.00 (plus postage): <http://www.cipra.org/en/abo/order-cdrom>.

Information: <http://www.cipra.org/en/future-in-the-alps> (de/fr/it/sl/en)



New publication on mountain dams

(17.04.2008) The new March issue of the bilingual magazine *La revue de géographie alpine / Journal of Alpine Research* looks at impoundment dams and new challenges in mountain areas. It reveals two sides of hydroelectric power, which was only recently officially classified as a renewable resource by the Beijing Declaration on Renewable Energy for Sustainable Development (2005). On the one hand, it is indeed undeniably renewable and does not produce any greenhouse gases. It is also a symbol of progress, dominance of nature and political power. On the other, the building of impoundment dams has been met with some scepticism in recent years – whether because of the forced resettlement of usually poor sections of the population or the fact that half of the world's principal rivers are already interrupted by dams. The Journal focuses its attention on the ecological and social impact of these structures in alpine areas. Many of the negative repercussions of impoundment dams result from ignorance of the local socio-economic situation and the complex relationship between the population and the river.

Bibliography: *La revue de géographie alpine / Journal of alpine research*: Les barrages: vers de nouveaux enjeux pour la montagne. Dams: new stakes in their role in mountain areas, March 2008, Vol. 96, No. 1, ISBN: 978 2 200 92500 0.

To order: <http://iga.ujf-grenoble.fr> (fr)

Energy supplies at risk from shrinking glaciers

(30.04.2008) The shrinkage of the Mer de Glace in the French Alps is having a tangible impact on the use of hydropower. The sizeable shrinkage of the glacier is threatening the supply of the Bois hydropower station, which is fed by the runoff from the glacier. Since 1850 the overall length of the glacier has shrunk by 150 m and has on average lost around half its thickness. The glacier is currently losing around 30 m of its length and 4 to 6 m of its height every year. In view of the glacier's shrinkage the water catchment point at 1,490 m above sea level is now proving too low. The new catchment is to be relocated some 1,000 m higher up, at a site where the glacier currently has a thickness of around 200 m.

The power plant, which was built in the 1970s at a cost of around €20 m, currently supplies electricity to 40,000 people with an output of 115 million kWh a year.

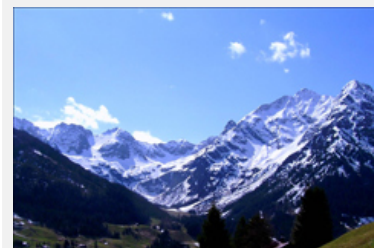
Source: <http://www.lefigaro.fr/sciences> (fr), 25.04.2008

Successful destinations in alpine tourism

(30.04.2008) BAK - Basel Economics has been analysing the success and competitiveness of some 100 tourist destinations in the Alpine region on a regular basis since 2005; however the study focuses only on economic aspects and does not take ecological aspects into account.

According to the study the 15 most successful destinations include four destinations in Switzerland, eight in Austria, two in Italy and one in Germany, with the resorts characterised by structural differences. While the list includes established resorts with a long tradition of attracting an international clientele such as Zermatt/CH, Kitzbühel/A and St. Moritz/CH, it also features less well-known destinations among its front-runners. The Kleinwalsertal in Austria for instance is a destination which is not as well known internationally, and yet it is regarded as the most successful of all the tourist regions under consideration.

The Alpine region as a whole is one of the most important tourist destinations worldwide in terms of the arrival of cross-border visitors. Information and download: http://www.bakbasel.ch/wDeutsch/bak/publications/special_reports_and_studies/978_tourismus_bak_topindexW3DnavidW26154.shtml (de/fr/it)



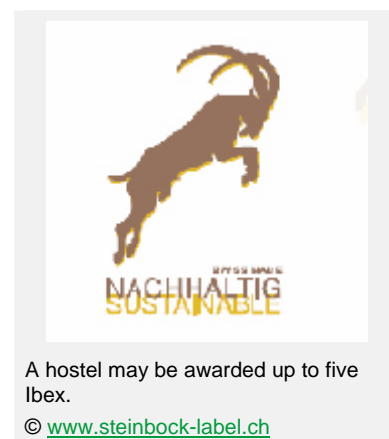
The Kleinwalsertal/A is one of the most successful summer and winter destinations.

© www.pixelio.de

Ibex Label for Swiss youth hostels

(15.05.2008) At the beginning of May ten Swiss youth hostels were awarded the Ibex Label, which has been presented to establishments operating according to sustainable management principles in Switzerland since 1994. During the certification process the hostels' environmental management, their preservation of natural resources and their regional focus are scrutinised along with other factors such as efficiency and hostel management.

Since 1996 a large number of Swiss youth hostels have embraced the energie2000 Programme aimed at sustainable management. The first youth hostel to operate in accordance with the *Minergie* Standard was opened in Zermatt in 2003, followed by the Scuol hostel in 2007. In 2006 the hostels in Valbella were completely restored in keeping with *Minergie* guidelines. Through co-operation with the Swiss climate protection organisation *myclimate* overnight stays and travel to the destination can now also be compensated directly – with a charge of CHF 0.60 per night earmarked for this purpose. Besides the Ibex Label the hostels also strive to achieve the EU Environmental Label. The first youth hostel was presented with this EU label in 2006. The aim is to ensure that the entire hostel network is certified by 2011. Sources: <http://www.presseportal.ch/de/pm/100002913/100560793/mail> (de), <http://www.steinbock-label.ch> (de)



A hostel may be awarded up to five Ibex.

© www.steinbock-label.ch

Stable glaciers in Central Asia

(30.04.2008) Global warming is not causing all the world's glaciers to melt at the same rate. Studies in the Karakoram mountain range in Central Asia show that a covering of debris is protecting the ice in the same ways as a layer of insulation. In recent years glaciologists from Germany and Italy have been carrying out extensive field research in the Karakoram range. While alpine glaciers have lost up to a third of their surface over the past century, it has been ascertained that the tongue of the Baltoro glacier in Pakistan has shrunk by only 65 m despite the rise in temperatures. This relative stability is due not only to the thick cover of debris but also to the fact that the glacier's catchment area extends up to high altitudes, where precipitations continue to fall as snow. Source: http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/wissenschaft/schutt_schuetzt_eismassen_vor_der_sonnenstrahlung_1.711176.html (de)

Switzerland's first village hotel

(17.04.2008) The entire village of Vnà in the Lower Engadine is to become a hotel as of May 1. The community of 70 inhabitants is using this measure to try and counteract the exodus of its population. The hotel project revolves around the Piz Tschütta guesthouse and cultural centre, which has stood empty since 1995 and is to house the reception, restaurant, lounge area, library, shop and five rooms. During the renovation of the 300-year-old building particular attention was paid to combining the old with the new. The building's historical fabric was retained. The other ten rooms are located in private homes and holiday apartments scattered across the village. Their guests have access to the hotel's entire infrastructure.

A private-public-partnership model was drawn up for Vnà to turn the idea for the project into a reality. The *Fundaziun Vnà* foundation set up for the project has set aside a budget of two million Swiss francs for its realisation. Just under half the funds are loans, with donations accounting for one quarter and the remaining quarter stemming from the share capital in the company Piz Tschütta AG, which is responsible for operations.

Source and information: <http://www.fundaziunvna.ch> (de)

Miscellaneous

ClimChAlp Project completed

(30.04.2008) The final conference in Laufen/D on 12 March 2008 marked the end of the Interreg IIIB Alpine Space Project "ClimChAlp" (Climate Change, Impacts and Adaptation Strategies in the Alpine Space). The project initiated by the Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment brought together 22 partners from all the Alpine countries to examine the impact of climate change in the Alps and highlight possible responses. The Project's homepage at www.climchalp.org (en) offers a wide range of downloads with information on the ClimChAlp Project and the topics of climate change and the environment.

Ecological networks in the Alps at the 9th Conference on Biological Diversity

(15.05.2008) More than 5,000 participants are expected in Bonn/D at the end of May for the 9th Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. One of the side events will focus on ecological networks in the Alpine region. Various initiatives are underway in the Alps and in the Carpathians to set up a network of biologically significant regions as a contribution to preserving biological diversity. To underline the importance of these initiatives, representatives of the Alpine Convention, the Carpathian Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity will sign a co-operation agreement as part of the side event. The side event is being held from 13:15 to 14:45 at the Federal Ministry for the Environment in Bonn on 29 May 2008.

Information: <http://www.cbd.int/register/side-events/list.aspx?mtg=COP-09> or silvia.reppe@bmu.bund.de

New alpine Natura 2000 regions

(03.04.2008) In spring 2008 a whole range of new alpine Natura 2000 regions were included in the EU-wide network of protected areas Natura 2000 and published in an updated list. 489 new regions covering a total of 18,784 km² were identified by the EU states between January and March – a sizeable share of them in Alpine regions. Besides the Natura 2000 regions of the new member states, Austria, France and Slovenia also specified new protected zones. In Europe the surface area covered by Natura 2000 regions, which are intended to bring a halt to the loss of biodiversity, now accounts for 20% of the land mass.

The updated list of alpine 2000 regions can be found at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2008:077:0106:0160:en:PDF>.

Source: <http://europa.eu/rapid/searchAction.do> (de/fr/sl/en) 28.03.2008

Agenda

Workshop: **Science for the Carpathians: S4C - Strategy Development and Networking Workshop**; 27-28.05, 2008, Kraków/Poland; language: en; organisers: Jagiellonian University, MRI, and others
Information: <http://mri.scnatweb.ch/content/view/220/43/> (en)

MtnClim 2008: **Mountain Climate Research Conference**: 9-12.06.2008, Silverton, CO/USA; language: en; organisers: Consortium for Integrated Climate Research on Western Mountains (CIRMOUNT)
Information: <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/mtnclim/> (en)

International conference on sustainability in the sporting goods industry: **2008 Sustainable Design in Sport Forum**; 10.06.2008, Lausanne/CH; language: en; organisers: AISTS, Lausanne, EPFL, ISEA
Information: <http://www.aists.org/sport-technology/sustainable-design-in-sport-forum.html> (en)

6th European Conference on Ecological Restoration. Towards a Sustainable Future for European Ecosystems, 8-12.09.2008, Ghent/Belgium; language: en; organisers: Flemish Research Institute for Nature and Forest
Information: <http://www.ser2008.be/> (en)

2nd Alpine Underground European Symposium: **Protection and the Valorization of the Underground Environment**; 27-29.08.2008, Lans-en-Vercors/F; languages: fr, en; organisers: European Speleological Federation (FSUE), Regional Natural Park of Vercors
Information: <http://www.vercors2008.eu/index.htm> (fr,en)

An **announcement form for forthcoming events** is now available for download from our homepage.
http://www.cipra.org/en/abo/announcement_form (en/de/fr/it/sl)

Strange but true!

...Mountains are full of risks. So what does one do if one wants to treat one's favourite cuddly toy to a risk-free ascent of the Matterhorn or the Mont Blanc? Fortunately, there's a company called "Teddy to the Top". So whether it's a teddy bear, a donkey or a cow, the company's trained mountain guides will take any cuddly toy safely up to the summit and back down again. Of course, a service as exclusive as this comes at a price, whatever the expedition. So while the Watzmann summit can be yours for only €239, getting your teddy up the Island Peak in Nepal will cost you the princely sum of €749. In return your favourite toy will come back with a full and extensive travel diary, complete with photos of the adventure. So which cuddly Messner or stuffed Loretan will be the first to do all Seven Summits? The mind boggles...
Information: <http://www.teddytothetop.com> (de/en)