

alpMedia Newsletter

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www.cipra.org/alpmedia



The Alpine Convention has no answer to climate change

At the 10th Alpine Conference held in Evian/F the Alpine states today debated a common approach to climate change. They were unable however to agree on a climate action plan for the Alpine region that is worthy of the name. Besides general formulations the climate action plan finally adopted by the Conference does contain a few concrete measures – thanks not least to pressure from CIPRA. However these measures are far too tentative to genuinely take climate protection in the Alps forward.



(12.03.2009) Individual states did today refer to the importance of climate response measures at the 10th Alpine Conference in Evian/F and expressed their disappointment with the proposal for resolution put forward. It proved impossible however to draw up a concrete catalogue of measures that would have won the consent of all the Alpine states. Ultimately the action plan only adopted the call for an alpine transit exchange by Moritz Leuenberger, the Head of the Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, and the proposal put forward by Michael Müller, the Parliamentary State Secretary at the Federal Ministry for the Environment Minister. Michael

Müller wants to examine whether it is possible to make the Alpine region carbon-neutral by 2050.

The project for a Climate Protection Action Plan was first raised at CIPRA's initiative at the 9th Alpine Conference in November 2006. For its term in office France, which has chaired the Alpine Convention for the past two years, had set itself the goal of making the Alps a model region for prevention and adaptation to climate change – at least that's what it said on paper. France's hesitant proposals were not significantly boosted within the Standing Committee of the Alpine Conference; in fact, they were even seriously undermined by some countries. The proposal of environmental associations and environmental ministers had already been criticised ahead of the Alpine Conference. On a number of occasions CIPRA also called for specific resolutions to be adopted and a time frame for their implementation to be defined. CIPRA formulated a comprehensive proposal for a concrete action plan already back in March 2008 and highlighted solutions in all areas where urgent action is required. At today's Alpine Conference CIPRA sharply protested against the fact that the member states of the Alpine Convention were failing to act. It added that they had missed a great opportunity over the past two years.

Slovenia now takes over as chair of the Alpine Convention for the next two years. It is called upon to come up with a response to climate change together with the other Alpine states and the European Union.

Source: CIPRA International

CIPRA's Climate Action Plan: <http://www.cipra.org/de/cipra-klimapakt> (de/fr/it/sl)

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Alpine glaciers melting the fastest

(12.02.2009) Data from the World Glacier Monitoring Service for 2007 once again underscores what everyone has feared: the world's glaciers are continuing to melt at an alarming rate. On average the glaciers have lost a snow, névé or ice layer corresponding to a 67 cm water column. A long-term series of measurements carried out on 30 glaciers in nine mountain regions also confirmed a melt rate more than twice as high. While ice melted by an average 30 cm of water equivalent per year between 1980 and 1999, the figure has risen to 70 cm since 2000.

Sizeable regional differences between the mountain regions have also been observed: in Scandinavia the ice thickness of glaciers in maritime locations such as the Nigardsbreen/NO (+ 1 m) has increased. By contrast Alpine glaciers have lost up to 2.5 m of water equivalent in ice. In 2007 a loss of ice was also recorded for all the glaciers observed in South America.

Information: <http://www.grid.unep.ch/glaciers/> (en)



Alpine glaciers are losing ice at a dramatic rate: Sonnblickkees/A: -2.2 m; Gries/CH: -1.7 m

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Browsing the essence of 58 Alpine projects

(26.02.2009) The Alpine Space Programme Interreg III B ran from 2000 to 2006. During that time 700 partners from 33 regions carried out a total of 58 projects with funds of around €120 million.

A richly illustrated brochure entitled *Bridging Potentials*, which features all the stories of the Interreg programme, explains exactly what is behind these figures. The reports are grouped into topic areas such as "Nature: Risk and Capital", the Interreg competition "Alliances for a Sustainable Economy", "Quality of Life – Taking Heart to Stay at Home", and "Mobility – Finding a Human Level". The publication contains lots of information on completed projects and calls for project ideas for the next funding period. The brochure, which is available in the Alpine languages French, Italian and German as well as in English, is given added spice with personal testimonials by people actively working in the alpine region.

The brochure can be ordered in a hard copy version or downloaded from the web at <http://www.alpinespace.org/> (de/en/fr/it).



International co-operation and the exchange of experience were key aspects of many projects.

© Rolf Eberhardt

"Cool heads in the hothouse! – Acting with Awareness in the Face of Climate Change"

(29.01.2009) On 2 and 3 April 2009 the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) and the municipality of Bolzano/It is organising an international conference entitled "Cool Heads in the Hothouse! – Acting with Awareness in the Face of Climate Change". The conference is being held in four languages (de, fr, it and sl) and focuses on sustainable climate response measures in the Alps. Key points include carbon-neutral towns and cities, energy self-sufficient regions and regional planning as the most important means of climate, and adaptation to climate change. After a first day dedicated to guest speakers, the six workshops held on Day 2 give participants an opportunity to discuss these and related topics at greater length. The programme is rounded off with theme-related field trips in the region around Bolzano.

The town in South Tyrol is the 2009 Alpine Town of the Year and intends to seize this opportunity to launch a climate pact aimed at achieving a carbon-neutral status. CIPRA for its part is seizing the opportunity to showcase the initial results of its climate project entitled "cc.alps – climate change: thinking one step further".

Programme and registration form: <http://www.cipra.org/cc.alps> (de/fr/it/sl)

Advanced studies in the field of sustainable tourism

(12.02.2009) The Swiss Tourism School Siders is offering a new Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS) in "Heritage and Tourism – The Mountains as a Living, Working and Recreation Environment" in conjunction with the UNESCO World Heritage property of the Swiss Alps Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn. The main objective is to formulate, implement, mediate and monitor innovations aimed at sustainable tourism in the mountain landscape as an integral part of regional development. The 2009 course is being held between April and November, with lectures given in German and English.

Another teaching course dealing with nature-orientated tourism is entitled "Tourism. Quite naturally" and is offered by *sanu | bildung für nachhaltige entwicklung* [education for sustainable development]. This certificate course lasts four-and-a-half days and is to be held between April and May in a number of Swiss towns and cities.

September also sees the start of the MSc course on the Management of Protected Areas at the University of Klagenfurt/A, an innovative education programme for planners and managers of protected areas. The continuing education course lasts four semesters and is held in English.

Sources: <http://www.sanu.ch/> (de/fr), <http://iet.hevs.ch/valais/> (de/en/fr), <http://mpa.e-c-o.at> (en)

Climate Star 2009

(26.02.2009) To the motto of a “Short Track to Climate Protection”, the Climate Alliance is inviting all European towns, cities and municipalities, for the fourth time, to apply for a Climate Star with an exemplary climate protection project of their own.

The Alliance is looking first and foremost for practical examples such as energy savings and the efficient use of locally available energy sources, heat insulation or electricity from renewable energy sources within a region. Measures such as these not only protect the climate, they also create jobs and keep the money for energy costs in the region. The “Short Track to Climate Protection” also includes urban planning and the reshaping of the urban environment, which combines living, working, shopping and leisure activities and also prioritises cycling, walking and the use of buses as the preferred means of transport. The theme also refers to goods that are produced and marketed within the region and to the short distances between the municipality and its citizens whenever sustainable solutions are developed and implemented together.

The closing date for applications for the Climate Star is 15 June 2009.

For more information: <http://www.climate-star.org> (de/en)



The Climate Alliance holds its Climate Star competition every two years.

© Climate Alliance

Latest update on ecological networks in the Alpine region

(12.03.2009) CIPRA has just expanded and updated its online dossier on “Relevant Instruments Relating to Ecological Networks in the Alpine Region”. The website www.cipra.org/alpmedia provides a background report in German, French, Italian, Slovene and English as well as language-related references to more detailed news, publications, links and now also to topical events on the subject. The background report on the dossier provides summary information on key instruments such as conventions, legislation, regulations and programmes relating to ecological networks at national and global level. Particular attention has been paid to updating the information from the Alpine region. The Report also explains why ecological networks are important and how they work. Examples of international, alpine-wide, national and regional projects illustrate what different stakeholders are doing to improve the network situation.

Source and information: <http://www.cipra.org> (de/fr/it/sl)



Creating an ecological network can help to bridge the barriers caused by unchecked urban development.

© Frank Schultze / Zeitspiegel

French municipality against heli-skiing

(29.01.2009) In mid-November 2008 the municipal council of Pralognan la Vanoise/F voted unanimously to put a stop to tourist helicopter traffic on its municipal territory in the Chavière/F valley. In particular it is against the tourist helicopter flights which pick up ski tourists at the Refuge de la Pêche on the edge Vanoise National Park. Winter-sports enthusiasts ski down to the refuge from the nearby ski area and then let themselves be flown back up to the ski area by helicopter after their snack. The municipality wants to prevent this in future and only grant approval to more nature compatible activities, in keeping with the spirit of a national park.

Heli-skiing is in fact prohibited in France. However the Act of 1985 legislates only on the use of helicopters for dropping skiers off, not for picking them up. It is this gap in the law which has been capitalised on in the Chavière valley. The mayor of Pralognan intends to appeal to the region’s *Préfet* and call on the authorities to deal with these abuses.

Source: *Montagnes Magazine* No. 337, January 2009

Results of the Workshop on Global Change Research in Mountainous Regions

(12.03.2009) A workshop on the global (climate) change and its impact on mountainous regions was held at the University of California Berkeley/US on 14 December 2008. The research summaries from the workshop organised by the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) are now available. Concentrated on a few pages is a wealth of information on global climate research. The researchers looked at the different mountain regions of the world, with climate change as the focal point of their work. While it is a well-known fact that glaciologists are involved in particularly intensive research work, other eco-systems such as mountain forests are also affected. Climate change is also impacting the usability of cultivated land and consequently the social fabric, too.

The conference book can now be downloaded from <http://mri.scnatweb.ch/dmdocuments/> (en)

Miscellaneous

Climate Action: Energy for a Changing World

(26.02.2009) In December 2008 the European Commission adopted an integrated energy and climate change policy and defined specific targets for 2020. The Commission has set out these objectives on the Climate Action web platform, along with related measures. Besides cutting greenhouse gases, the focus is on the use of renewable energies and increasing energy efficiency. There are also practical tips on how to cut household emissions and a link to the EU funding available for environmental and energy-related projects. For both private individuals and businesses the website is well worth a visit. Source: <http://ec.europa.eu/climateaction> (de/en/fr/it)

Alps Know-How CD now available for download

(12.03.2009) The Alps Know-How CD is one of the results of the Future in the Alps know-how transfer project. With an educational format it comprises tutorials in English on key issues such as regional value added, governance capacity, mobility management, new forms of decision making, and protected areas. This wealth of information is complemented by other background topics such as mountain farming, mountain forestry, tourism, energy, climate, etc. More in-depth reading material is available in PDF form in various languages.

All 1,000 copies of the CD have now been sent out; it is however available as a free download from <http://alpsknowhow.cipra.org/> (en).

Sylvia Hamberger awarded Bavaria's Nature Conservation Medal

(12.03.2009) On 12 March 2009 the German environmental organisation *Bund Naturschutz* awarded Bavaria's Nature Conservation Medal to Sylvia Hamberger in recognition of her exceptional contributions to the protection of the Alpine region. The co-founder of the Society for Ecological Research and member of the Alps Study Group of the *Bund Naturschutz* has dedicated the past thirty years to ecological education work. Many of the exhibitions she has helped to organise – classics such as *Grün kaputt* [Green kaputt], *Alpträum Auto* [The Automobile Nightmare] or *Sein oder Nichtsein* [To Be or Not To Be] – have become known far beyond the borders of Germany.

Information: <http://alpenarchiv.abgespiegelt.de/> (de)

A change of gender for alpMedia

(12.02.2009) For the past four years Felix Hahn has been the project manager in charge of the success of the alpMedia Newsletter. In some 200 Newsletters he used a wealth of expertise to collate news from the Alpine region on a fortnightly basis for the Newsletter's readership. Felix Hahn is leaving CIPRA International at the end of February. Anita Wyss is to take over as editor of alpMedia. Comments and remarks can be submitted in the usual way by e-mailing alpmedia@cipra.org.

Agenda

International Conference: **European Geosciences Union General Assembly**. 19-24.04.2009, Vienna/A; language: en; organisers: European Geosciences Union.

Information: <http://meetings.copernicus.org/egu2009/> (en)

International Geochronology Summer School. Dating anthropogenic and natural changes in a fragile alpine environment. 31.08-05.09.2009.

Leventina/CH; language: en; organisers: University of Zurich.

Information: <http://www.geo.unizh.ch/geochronology/> (en)

2nd European Congress of Conservation Biology: from science to practice. 01-05.09.2009. Prague/CZ; language: en; organisers: Society for Conservation Biology.

Information: <http://www.eccb2009.org/> (en)

1st International Conference for Energy Efficiency in Building and Reconstruction in Romania & South-East Europe. 26-28.03.2009,

Arad/RO; language: en; organisers: REECO RO EXPOZIȚII S.R.L.

Information: <http://www.enreg-expo.com/> (en)

4th International Symposium on Research in Protected Areas. 17-19.09.2009, Mittersil/A; language: en, de; organisers: Hohe Tauern National Park, ALPARC, ISCAR, IGF.

Information: <http://www.alparc.org/> (en/de/fr/it/sl)

Strange but true!

...Delays, long halts, cancellations? The *Cisalpino* railway company is well known for "amenities" such as these. Another one can now be added: if you travel from Milan/I to Zurich/CH (a journey that used to be direct), you board your *Cisalpino* train in Milan in the usual way, but now you have to get off again in Lugano/CH and change to a *Pendolino* train operated by the Swiss Federal Railways SBB. And as the SBB train is usually running on time and the *Cisalpino* usually arrives late, most passengers find themselves stranded, with lots of unexpected time on their hands for an unscheduled visit of Lugano – while waiting for the next connection to Zurich one hour later. In fact if things don't improve with the *Cisalpino*, the SBB may well only allow the perennial late-runner as far as the border town of Chiasso.

Source: <http://cessoalpino.com> (it)