

alpMedia Newsletter

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www.cipra.org/alpmedia



New ideas for life in the Alps in the post-fossil age

Last week's annual CIPRA conference on the subject of growth attracted some 200 attendees to Liechtenstein. There was a consensus that our limited resources mean that growth is finite. Numerous ideas were offered and calls made for a response to the inevitable downsizing process. CIPRA summarised the most urgent calls in a catalogue of ideas.



Globalisation expert Franz Josef Radermacher drawing future scenarios for the post-fossil age at CIPRA's annual conference

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(24.09.2009) CIPRA cast its net wide with its annual conference on "Growth come what may? The Alps in search of happiness?", which was held in Gamprin/FL. The German globalisation expert Franz Josef Radermacher, a prominent member of the Club of Rome, opened the conference with an introduction to the mechanisms of globalisation and said, "If you address the question of growth, you are confronted with a world that will have a population of ten billion by 2050." What this means at times of dwindling resources was discussed by Daniele

Ganser from the Department of History at the University of Basle/CH on the second day of the conference. The discovery of new oil reserves, he said, will peak some time in the next twenty years. His conclusion: "We should leave oil before it leaves us." In other words, we need to plan an exit scenario instead of continuing to trust in economic growth based on fossil sources of energy.

CIPRA also took advantage of the conference to involve the Alps, which are impacted by the global cycles, and to promote a dialogue at several levels. The 200 attendees from various countries made full use of the workshops, discussions and personal contacts. There was a general agreement that in order to escape from the dictates of growth, new ideas are needed in terms of satisfaction, acceptable levels of income and the quality of life. What scope for action do we have if the Alps are to make an active contribution to global policies? At the end of the conference CIPRA presented a catalogue of ideas on the subject.

CIPRA's catalogue of ideas, short interviews with the speakers and the presentations held at the conference are available in English and German at <http://www.cipra.org> (de/fr/it/sl).

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In the last few years, lack of snow was a major problem for the ski area in Abundance/F, which is located at 1500 m above sea-level. Because of the poor snow conditions, the lifts did not open at all in the last two winter seasons.

Page 3: The Alpine Convention in small bites

"The Alpine Convention in Small Bites" is the name of a new page on the website operated by the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, which provides short summaries of the main contents of the Alpine Convention.

Abondance Ski Area reopened

(10.09.2009) In the last few years, lack of snow was a major problem for the ski area in Abondance/F, which is located at 1500 m above sea-level. Because of poor snow conditions, the lifts did not open at all in the last two winter seasons.

Now the AAI group of US investors is about to re-open the installations. 40,000 cubic metres of water will be made available for snow guns in order to ensure adequate snow cover.

As for CIPRA France, the local authority would have been better advised to close the ski area, in spite of the difficulty of taking such a decision. That would have made it possible to lay the foundation for redevelopment towards a sustainable future for the region.

Instead, the Americans' "love at first sight" for Abondance will lead to expansion of the ski area and the provision of additional hotel capacities. CIPRA France remains sceptical of a policy that insists on maintaining winter sports facilities at such low altitudes and is based on a model for development whose limits have already been demonstrated.

Source and further information: CIPRA France, http://www.actumontagne.com/abondance-va-rouvrir-son-domaine-skiable-article_0906.html (fr)



The ski area in Abondance/F is re-opening for business in December 2009.

© www.actumontagne.com

Latest edition of the Journal of Alpine Research now available online

(10.09.2009) The latest edition of the international and multidisciplinary "Journal of Alpine Research" is now available online under the title "Mountain Regions as Referents for Collective Action". It addresses the question of the conditions under which a mountain range can serve as a reference for a regional network and contains previously unpublished papers on politics, organisations and regional identity in the Alpine Arc and other mountain areas.

In her article on "The institutionalization of the alpine region: an analysis based on a study of two pan-alpine networks (Alliance in the Alps and Alparc)", Cristina Del Biaggio describes the role of networks in the process of uniting the countries of the Alps to form one big cross-border region. Among other things, the author describes the functions and challenges faced by "Alliance in the Alps" and the role played by CIPRA in the foundation of the community network.

Bilingual articles are available for download at: <http://rga.revues.org/> (fr/en).

Mountain film festivals at a glance

(10.09.2009) A good overview of the main mountain film festivals in the Alps is provided by a new brochure on "Mountain Film Festivals in the Alps" published by the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. The brochure includes fifteen film festivals, many of which were involved in founding the International Alliance for Mountain Film in 2000 as a platform for promoting the members' respective events. In addition to a short historical introduction, the brochure lists the themes, special features and supporting programmes of the various film festivals.

The purpose of the compilation is to stress the common cultural identity of the Alpine space beyond all national borders. "As an element of the rich cultural heritage of the Alps, film festivals attract thousands of people and in so doing play a key role in cultural exchange and dissemination," says Marco Onida, Secretary General of the Alpine Convention, in the foreword to the brochure.

The brochure can be downloaded as a pdf file in English and the languages of the Alps at: http://www.alpconv.org/documents/Permanent_Secretariat/web/FilmF/Opusc_FestivalAlpi_100dpi_ING.pdf (de/fr/it/sl/en)



"Mountain Film Festivals in the Alps" is the name of a brochure created to attract the attention of a wider public to today's mountain film festivals and the Alpine Convention.

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Beacons of energy-efficient construction in the mountains

(24.09.2009) The summer of 2009 saw the opening of the first mountain chalet to be built to the Minergy-P standard. Located in the ski area of Zermatt/CH at an altitude of 3,883 metres, the Matterhorn Glacier Paradise is a model of ecological construction at the foot of the Klein Matterhorn. It has a south-facing façade completely covered with solar panels, and the energy produced is used for heating and building management services. The shell of the building has excellent insulation, and a heat pump is employed for the optimum use of energy.

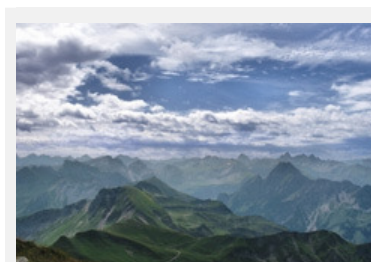
A second beacon of ecological construction and energy efficiency is the New Monte Rosa Cabin, which also stands above Zermatt at the foot of the Dufour Peak. It will be officially opened on the weekend of 26/27 September with a media event and a party for the various sponsors who made it possible to build the new refuge. The New Monte Rosa Cabin will reopen after winter break in spring of 2010. Built by the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) in co-operation with the Zurich Federal Institute of Technology, the building is expected to become a benchmark for ecological and energy-efficient construction.

Source: Die Südostschweiz, 21 September 2009, <http://www.neuemonterosahuette.ch/> (de/fr)

The Alpine Convention in small bites

(24.09.2009) "The Alpine Convention in Small Bites" is the name of a new page on the website operated by the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, which provides short summaries of the main contents of the Alpine Convention. The first summaries on "The Alps", "Population and Culture" and "Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development" are already available and further summaries will be added to the website at regular intervals in the next few months. Those who prefer a more detailed account of the Alpine Convention and its contents can go to the same page to download a book entitled "The Alps – Eight Countries, a Single Territory", which was published by the Permanent Secretariat in March. It is available in English and all the languages of the Alps.

Further information and files for download at <http://www.alpconv.org/> (en/fr/de/it/sl)



The website is designed to introduce the general public to the contents of the Alpine Convention in a simple and dynamic way.

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11,000 invasive species in Europe

(13.08.2009) The first complete European report on the presence of invasive alien species of flora and fauna is now available for download at the DAISIE website. The DAISIE project was initiated by the European Commission to obtain an inventory and a documentation of the effects of immigrant species in Europe. The pan-European report lists the impacts of invasive species in terrestrial, marine and aquatic inland habitats. In the Alpine countries, too, the local flora is being displaced by invasive plant species on some sites at lower altitudes. For this reason, national organisations are working to develop management strategies in response to these alien species. In Europe there are currently 1094 species that have proven ecological impacts and 1347 species that cause economic costs. The taxonomic groups on the list of invasive alien species with the most pronounced effects are terrestrial invertebrates and terrestrial plants.

Source: <http://www.europe-aliens.org/index.jsp> (en)



The giant hogweed, an immigrant from the Caucasus, is spreading into montane regions. Skin contact causes burns and blisters.

© Kenko/ Flickr

Report on the water resources of the Alps and climate change

(24.09.2009) An English-language report on the water household of the Alps in times of climate change was recently published under the title "Regional Climate Change and Adaptation - The Alps Facing the Challenge of Changing Water Resources". The authors consider specific options for adaptation to changes in the availability of water in the Alpine region, including the keys to success and the obstacles to be overcome.

The report has been published by the European Environment Agency (EEA) in collaboration with the German Federal Office of the Environment (UBA), the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), the European Academy in Bolzano (EURAC), the Slovene Environmental Authority, the University of Savoy and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention.

The report is available for download at http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/alps-climate-change-and-adaptation-2009?utm_campaign=alps-climate-change-and-adaptation-2009&utm_medium=email&utm_source=EEASubscriptions (en)

New publication: Mountain Biodiversity and Climate Change

(27.08.2009) On the basis of papers presented at the International Mountain Biodiversity Conference held in Kathmandu/NP in November 2008, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has published a brochure on biodiversity in mountain landscapes and climate change. With its question-and-answer format and generous use of illustrations, the brochure presents a number of selected ideas, which are discussed by representatives of the eight countries of the Hindu Kush region of the Himalayas. The publication illustrates the need for co-operation in research and data capture to facilitate a more effective response to the impacts of climate change in this and other mountain ranges. The complete conference proceedings and the brochure are available on CD.

Both documents are also available for free download at following websites:

<http://books.icimod.org/index.php/search/publication/613> (en); <http://books.icimod.org/index.php/search/publication/612> (en).

Miscellaneous

Mountain hike for climate protection

(27.08.2009) On 15 August 2009, some seventy hikers went up to the Goldbergkees glacier on the Hoher Sonnblick in Salzburg/A to draw attention to the impacts of global climate change. The event was organised jointly by Greenpeace and the Austrian Nature Friends in the framework of a campaign entitled "One million deeds for climate protection". The famous mountaineers Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner and Kurt Diemberger agreed to act as patrons to the event, which was held to call upon the Austrian government to work for an ambitious climate protection agreement at the Climate Conference in Copenhagen/DN in December. The Alpine glaciers have lost more than half their total volume since the middle of the 19th century, and glacial retreat in the Alps has clearly accelerated in the last few years. For more information, go to www.greenpeace.at/klima_forderungen.html (de).

Special edition of the Mountain Forum Bulletin now online

(13.08.2009) The July edition of the Mountain Forum Bulletin, entitled "Mountain Biodiversity: Lifeline for the Future", is now available for download at www.mtnforum.org/rsmfnews.cfm?newsid=52 (en). The publication is a product of collaboration between the Mountain Forum, the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment (GMBA) and the Mountain Research Initiative with the support of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). The bulletin offers a summary of research results, strategies and initiatives of the three networks and their partners. There is also a section devoted to useful links to various organisations, projects and resources relating to biodiversity in the mountains.

350 newly discovered species in the Himalayas

(13.08.2009) A flying frog and the world's smallest deer are among the species discovered in the Himalayas in the last ten years. According to a report recently published by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), between 1998 and 2008, a total of 353 new species were identified. The discoveries include 242 plant species, 16 amphibian species, 16 reptile species, 14 fish-, two bird-, two mammal- and at least 60 species of invertebrates. Biological diversity in the region is nevertheless under threat from climate change, deforestation and overgrazing by livestock, and only one quarter of all habitats can still be considered intact. Source: <http://wwf.ch> (de/fr/it)

New ALPARC brochure available

(24.09.2009) "Large Carnivores in the Alps and Carpathians: Living with the Wildlife" is a recently published brochure containing the results of the conference on large carnivores held in Slovakia at the beginning of July. The purpose of this joint venture by ALPARC and the CNPA (Carpathian Network of Protected Areas) was to establish a dialogue to guarantee the protection and future survival of large carnivores in the Alps and the Carpathian Mountains.

More information and the brochure for download are available at <http://www.alparc.org/news/international-news/a-new-thematic-brochure-of-alparc> (de/fr/it/sl/en)

Agenda

Educational: **International School on Alpine Ecology and Global Change.** 04.-08.10.2009. Tyrol/A. Language: en; organiser: Innsbruck University.

Info: <http://c719-71-22.uibk.ac.at/ecoschool/> (en)

Conference: **Europe's Mountain Bonus.** 14.-16.10.2009. Oñati/ES; languages: en, fr, es; organiser: EU Commission (DG Agriculture and Rural Development), IKT.

Info: http://www.euromontana.org/English/events/conference_Arantzazu_EN.htm (en/fr/es)

Conference: **International Mountain Summit. South Tyrol.** 03.-09.11.2009. Bressanone/I, languages: de, it, en; organiser: International Mountain Summit.

Info: <http://www.ims.bz/it/ims-info.html> (de/it/en)

Conference: **Large Landscape, Connectivity, Conservation and Climate Change.** 10.-12.11.2009, Merida/MEX; language: en; organiser: The WILD Foundation.

Info: <http://www.wild9.org> (en)

Convention: **Delivering Biodiversity Targets: 2010 and Beyond - Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in Europe** 25.-27.01.2010. Madrid/ES; language: en; organiser: Spanish Ministry of the Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs.

Info: <http://www.cipra.org/en/alpmedia/events/2511> (en)

Strange but true!

... Who wants to go without a cigarette after a good meal or a glass of wine? Exactly! For all those who refuse to forego the pleasures of life and see no attraction in the stressful experience of trying to kick the habit, there is now an interesting alternative: Up, up, and save yourselves! Scientists have discovered that the climate at high altitudes provides protection from heart attacks and strokes. They say that people in the Alps have far fewer disorders of the cardiac and circulatory systems than lowlanders, although they do not smoke less, weigh less or have a healthier diet. Why is that? The risk of dying of a stroke or heart attack declines by 22% for every one thousand metres of vertical! So if you know the altitude of your home, you can easily calculate the probability of dying of a disorder of the cardiac or circulatory system ... Source: <http://www.welt.de/die-welt/wissen/article4228936/Hoehenklimate-schuetzt-vor-Herzinfarkt-und-Hirnschlag.html> (de).