

## Climate check-up for the Alps



Preserving the Alpine idyl: special glacier films are to help extend the winter sports season, as here on the Diavolezza Glacier in the Grisons/CH

**What sort of impact and side effects do climate response measures have? CIPRA's latest issue of AlpsInsight entitled In the Name of Climate Protection looks at how climate change issues are being addressed in the Alps and points the way towards sustainable action.**

Glaciers are melting; oceans are rising; streams and rivers are bursting their banks, and storms are becoming ever more violent. So far, so bad - but at least it's a known quantity. Virtually everyone now acknowledges climate change, and most people are familiar with the scenarios. But a global problem needs a

global strategy, which is what is being sought at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen/DK in early December 2009. It also calls for a local awareness of responsibility and for local action - also (and particularly so) in the Alps. And while the Alps are one of the causative factors of climate problems, they are particularly hard hit by climate change. A lot of pointless things, not to say detrimental things, are being done in the name of climate protection and adaptation to the consequences of climate change. In the Name of Climate Protection is the latest issue of AlpsInsight. CIPRA's feature magazine looks at the impact and side effects of climate response measures in the Alpine region. The topic is not addressed in an abstract or scientific way, but tangibly and vividly using a range of themes and examples. It examines what is being done in specific areas such as nature conservation or transport, and what else could and should be done - and what should not. It is a mouthpiece for people who are actively engaged in climate protection. It also features "climate pilots", i.e. projects and initiatives that are leading the way. In the Name of Climate Protection is based on the alpine-wide project cc.alps. As part of the project CIPRA took a closer look at 300 climate response measures; indeed, such a comprehensive "climate check-up" is a unique achievement worldwide. For more information: AlpsInsight No. 92 In the Name of Climate Protection can be ordered free of charge from CIPRA International, [international@cipra.org](mailto:international@cipra.org). The magazine can also be downloaded as a PDF file at <http://www.cipra.org/szenealpen> (de/fr/it/sl)

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## Club Arc Alpin makes a stand on climate change, the expansion of fixed rope routes, and motorised offroad traffic



Opening up the mountains to outdoor sports in a way that is compatible with nature: the CAA is calling for restrictions on the expansion of fixed rope routes.

document, which looks at offroad traffic, the CAA expressed its clear opposition to any form of offroad motorised activities away from the official highways and byways of the Alps. It also called for stricter checks and fines. The policy documents and the climate change demands can be downloaded from the CAA's website: Climate change demands: <http://www.club-arc-alpin.eu/fileadmin/downloads/Papers/>

[Klimaforderungen\\_Politik\\_eng\\_korr.pdf](http://www.club-arc-alpin.eu/fileadmin/downloads/Papers/Klimaforderungen_Politik_eng_korr.pdf) (en) Source: <http://www.club-arc-alpin.eu/>

## The 2009 Climate Winners



Wildpoldsried's winning project: Regenerative all-inclusive supply with regional value added

[option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=185&Itemid=329](http://www.klimabuendnis.org/index.php?id=207&L=1) (de)

The winning municipalities of the 2009 Climate Star were presented with their awards in Melk in Lower Austria on October 22, under the motto of "Fast Track to Climate Protection". The proud winners from the Alpine region were the local authorities of Lustenau in Austria and Sand in Taufers in South Tyrol/I. The record participation of 444 municipalities from eleven European countries, with a very strong showing by local authorities in the Alps, highlights the importance now attached to climate protection. The German Solar Prize 2009 was awarded in Karlsruhe/D on October 17. The big winner from the Alpine region was the municipality of Wildpoldsried/D. The German Solar Prizes have been awarded yearly by EUROSOLAR since 1994 to municipalities, businesses, individuals and organisations for outstanding services rendered in the utilisation and application of solar energy in all its available forms. <http://www.klimabuendnis.org/index.php?id=207&L=1> (de) [http://www.eurosolar.de/de/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=blogcategory&id=185&Itemid=329](http://www.eurosolar.de/de/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=185&Itemid=329) (de)

## Catalogue of connectivity measures: new publication in English, French, German and Italian

The Continuum Project just published online a catalogue of possible measures for improving ecological connectivity in English, French, German and Italian language. The catalogue explains how extensivisation of agricultural use, species conservation measures along transport routes or creating synergies with tourism can contribute to the implementation of ecological networks. 69 exemplary measures from all Alpine countries show how areas or structures can be created, conserved or restored so that they can play a role as connecting elements within an ecological network. An associated Excel database helps people in pilot regions or in all other regions where connectivity needs to be improved to find measures corresponding to different contexts. The translations have been financed by the German and French Environment ministries. The catalogue and the database can be downloaded on: <http://www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/services-mainmenu-8/downloads-documents>

## Poisonous glacier melts

A new study has confirmed that melting glaciers release chemical substances that have long been banned and are not longer produced by industry. Researchers from Swiss education institutes took frozen sediment core samples from the Oberaar reservoir in the Grimsel area in Switzerland and used the layers to reconstruct the history of the lake back to when it was first established in 1953. It appears that the number of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) has risen sharply since the 1990s. This increase is due to the higher melt rate of the Oberaar Glacier, which provides the lake with the bulk of its water, in recent decades. In the last ten years alone the glacier tongue has shrunk by more than 120 m, releasing relatively large quantities of stored toxic substances as a result. Environmental researchers have long suspected that glaciers represent serious secondary sources for new emissions of POPs into the environment, and this research now provides proof of that for the first time. Sources: <http://www.news.admin.ch/message/?lang=de&msgid=29485> (de) <http://www.lepoint.fr/actualites-sciences-sante/2009-10-29/quid-novi-glaciers-toxiques/919/0/390179> (fr)

## Extremes of climate affect spread of tree species

In a recently published study scientists at the WSL (the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape) working with an international research team demonstrated for the first time that the disappearance of tree species in certain regions is due not just to the higher mean temperature but also to extremes of climate-related events. Using comprehensive meteorological data on climate variability in Switzerland and national dissemination data for eleven species of trees the research team found that the survival of certain tree species had been hindered - not to say rendered impossible - by extended periods of drought and sharp frosts. The new findings are of significance to the global discussion on the impact of climate change, especially since climate researchers are expecting an increase in extreme climatic events. Sources: [http://www.wsl.ch/news/091117\\_klimavariabilitaet\\_DE](http://www.wsl.ch/news/091117_klimavariabilitaet_DE), <http://www.pnas.org/content/106/> (en)

## New issue of the Eco.mont magazine

The latest issue of eco.mont - Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research is now available. It features scientific articles from European mountain regions and the Himalayas, with articles on amphibians, visitor monitoring, information management, resource utilisation, and the perception of biodiversity changes. Twice a year eco.mont publishes peer-reviewed research articles and reports in English on protected mountain areas. Besides publications on management tasks in protected mountain areas and the implementation of protection concepts the magazine also addresses issues relating to sustainable regional development, special research findings on flora and fauna, as well as geographic mountain research. Other key topics include global change and its impact on mountain areas as well as the ecology of alpine landscapes. The Journal can be ordered as a print version from <http://www.uibk.ac.at/iup/verlagsverzeichnis/zeitschriften.html> (de) or as an e-journal at <http://epub.oew.ac.at/eco.mont> (en).

## New builds to meet tough climate requirements by 2020

From 2020 new builds in the EU will have to comply with tough energy balance requirements. Last week representatives of the European Parliament and EU states agreed that new builds should in future have virtually zero greenhouse gas emissions. Any remaining energy requirements should also be met essentially from renewable sources. These stipulations are to come into force two years earlier for public buildings. The EU states must also push forward with measures to convert existing buildings into zero-energy homes. To this end the EU states should promote solar installations and efficient heating and air conditioning systems. EU subsidy programmes are being drawn up alongside state financing schemes to help fund the conversions. Special provisions are to apply to holiday homes and to religious and listed buildings, etc. These provisions have yet to be adopted by the EU Parliament and the member states. The relevant decisions are due to be taken in early January 2010. EU states would then have two years to implement the provisions. Sources: <http://www.faz.net/>, <http://umweltenergie.blogspot.com/2009/11/bmu-pressdienst-nr-34709-klimaschutz.html>

## Alpine Convention acts as a guide for the Dinaric Alps

CIPRA Slovenia has successfully completed its project entitled "Knowledge transfer in the area of sustainable development from the Alpine Convention to the municipality of Mojkovac in Montenegro". The project provides a good starting point for the comprehensive promotion of nature conservation and sustainable development in the Dinaric mountain range.

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## Miscellaneous

### Alpine Convention's climate portal now online

The Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention has gone online with its climate portal, in time for International Mountain Day and the climate negotiations in Copenhagen. The climate portal collates and disseminates information on events, activities and developments relating to climate change in the Alps. Climate-related information from throughout the Alpine region can be submitted to the portal for publication. The climate portal is also to be used to publicise successful projects so others can benefit from the experience gained and learn from the knowledge acquired. Regional and local stakeholders from all over the Alps are asked to submit good practice projects which help mitigate climate change or address the issue of how the Alpine regions can adapt to the impact of climate change. With its climate portal the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention has not only created a tool that contributes towards implementing the action plan on climate change in the Alps. It also supports the plan of the contracting parties to the Alpine Convention to turn the Alps into a model region with regard to climate change issues. The climate portal is available in five languages, i.e. the four official languages of the Alpine Convention and English, at the following link: [http://www.alpconv.org/climate/index\\_en](http://www.alpconv.org/climate/index_en)

### New alpMedia dossiers now online

The alpMedia dossiers on energy and nature conservation are now available in German and English on the CIPRA web. Besides a report the dossiers consist of more detailed information such as news items, publications, events and examples of best practice. The "CIPRA compacts" are one of the highlights of the dossiers, i.e. background reports from the cc.alps climate project that provide readers with all the latest findings in a compact, clearly structured form. The idea behind the CIPRA compacts is to use the specific transfer of knowledge to prevent any of the undesirable side effects of climate response measures. To this end CIPRA compiled a list of activities on climate protection and adaptation and put them to the test. CIPRA also uses the compacts as an opportunity to voice its position and formulate its demands. Other compacts on areas of activities such as construction and renovation, transport, energy self-sufficient regions, regional planning, tourism, natural hazards, agriculture, forestry and water are to be published soon as part of the alpMedia dossier series. Links to the dossiers: <http://www.cipra.org/de/alpmedia/dossiers/15>, <http://www.cipra.org/de/alpmedia/dossiers/16>

## Tourism in mountain areas put to the test

The new December 2009 issue of *Revue de géographie alpine / Journal of alpine research* looks at mountain tourism and sustainability. Six articles examine the sustainability of current practices in tourism and take a closer look at the experience gained with sustainable tourism. The examples from the Pyrenees, the Himalayas and the Alps show that the tourist offer in mountain regions is being replicated more and more. The contributions also make clear that any re-examination of the situation is at best hesitant. In their article on Mountain Tourism and Sustainability Pierre Dérioz and Philippe Bachimon attribute this inertia to deeply rooted mentalities. This resistance and the undeclared, but implicit, continuing attachment to the cycle of heavy investment in sports facilities and increases in the number of visitor beds all act as a brake on implementing stated intentions such as limiting visitor numbers or protecting area of natural beauty. Can sustainable tourism protect nature and culture and at the same time produce prosperity and economic development? Some answers and more questions still can be found in English and in French at: <http://rga.revues.org/index961.html> (fr/en)

## AlpHouse combines traditional trades & crafts and energy efficiency

The new three-year Alpine Space Project entitled AlpHouse was launched in early October. AlpHouse strives to enhance the competitiveness of SMEs, especially in the area of trades & crafts, by providing them with the knowledge, skills and tools for top-quality renovations of old buildings in the Alpine region. The highest energy efficiency standards are to be observed while preserving regional cultural and architectural characteristics and the local expertise in alpine architecture. The lead partner for the project is the Chamber of Trade and Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria, which is to develop a web-based information platform on the knowledge currently available on energy technology and regional alpine architecture. Close co-operation is also being sought with the Enerbuild project, which specialises in promoting SMEs in the area of energy-efficient construction. The AlpHouse project is to run for a term of three years. For more information: [http://www.alpine-space.eu/the-projects/running-projects/?tx\\_txrunningprojects\\_pi1%5Buid%5D=28&tx\\_txrunningprojects\\_pi1%5Bview%5D=singleView#project\\_partner](http://www.alpine-space.eu/the-projects/running-projects/?tx_txrunningprojects_pi1%5Buid%5D=28&tx_txrunningprojects_pi1%5Bview%5D=singleView#project_partner) (en)

## Agenda

Conference : **Growth in Transition**. 28.1.2010 – 29.1.2010. Vienna. language: de, en.  
Organisation: Lebensministerium, AT-1200 Wien, Österreich.  
Info: [www.growthintransition.eu/conference/](http://www.growthintransition.eu/conference/).

**Post-2010 Biodiversity Vision and Target**. 26.1.2010 – 27.1.2010. Madrid.  
language: en. Organisation: Spanish Presidency of the European Union.  
Info: [agenda.espaces-naturels.fr/node/117](http://agenda.espaces-naturels.fr/node/117).

Conference: **International Disaster and Risk Conference in Davos 2010 (IDRC)**. 30.5.2010 – 3.6.2010. Davos. Organisation: Global Risk Forum GRF Davos, CH-7270 Davos.  
Info: [www.davos2010.org/](http://www.davos2010.org/).

Conference : **Delivering biodiversity targets: 2010 and beyond - Protected Areas and Ecological Networks in Europe**. 25.1.2010 – 27.1.2010. Madrid. Organisation: Spanish Ministry of Environment and Rural and Marine Affairs, ES-Madrid.  
Info: .

## Strange but true!

... Do you dream of peace and quiet, of fragrant alpine flowers with bees buzzing soothingly as they dance around them? Nothing beats that genuine alpine experience and nature at its best, far removed from the hectic pace of modern life.

... Do you dream of peace and quiet, of fragrant alpine flowers with bees buzzing soothingly as they dance around them? Nothing beats that genuine alpine experience and nature at its best, far removed from the hectic pace of modern life. Well, a Swiss tour operator is now offering all that and much more besides. Just book your place in a "silent hike" group and you can enjoy the tranquillity of the mountains in complete silence, with not a word spoken or a mobile ring tone within earshot. Each hiker is left in his or her own little world, hiking in single file at intervals of at least 100 m. Then, come the evening, you can share all your experiences with your fellow hikers. Ideal for people who find it hard to unwind on their own - or to keep their mouth shut. Source: DAV Panorama 5/2009