

## Eurovignette III: no HGV toll for the Alps



In the future haulage companies in the EU could have to pay for environmental damage. The EP Transport Committee has agreed to the proposal. But environmental organisations feel the proposal does not go far enough - especially in the Alps.

The draft bill for the amendment to the Eurovignette Directive stipulates that HGVs should pay to use motorways and, for the first time, pay an additional small "external costs charge" for noise and air pollution. The European Parliament is currently reviewing the Directive. The Transport Committee approved the proposal with a large majority in mid-April. However, according to environmental organisations, these measures are not very ambitious; in fact, they are disappointing. They felt there were numerous loopholes and that sensitive regions such as the Alps were receiving far too little attention. They even wondered whether the interests of transport companies had prevailed. For example there appear to be discounts for frequent drivers, which has a particular impact on the Alps as a transit region. An additional fee can be levied for investments into alternative transport projects and the upper limit for air and noise pollution costs are slightly higher. However, compared with the costs actually incurred for environmental damage it was far too little, as Heike Aghte of the LSVA for Europe Alliance remarked. The Transport Committee also rejected the multiplier factor of 5 for noise costs in mountain regions. The MEPs also said no to the possibility of charging an additional fee for particularly sensitive Alps alongside the fees for external costs. This would only be possible for the most highly polluting HGVs of EURO classes 0 to 3. However, there are now very few of these HGVs on the road in the Alps.

Nonetheless, "the amendment to the Eurovignette Directive will at least provide practical ways of adding a few more cents per kilometre," says Aghte. The MEPs have rejected additional bureaucratic obstacles that would have made it very difficult to internalise external costs. Fees can also be levied for up to eight hours for regions frequently subjected to congestion. These fees are around 200 per cent higher than the fees for periods without congestion. And last but not least the EU Commission will be required to introduce proposed legislation for internalising the costs for the climate and the loss of biodiversity. The European Parliament will vote on the Directive on the charging of heavy goods vehicles in a plenary session to be held in June. The Council is to deliberate once again in the autumn. Sources: [www.eu-koordination.de/umweltnews/news](http://www.eu-koordination.de/umweltnews/news) (de), [www.lsva.eu/EU/110410-vignette-vote.html](http://www.lsva.eu/EU/110410-vignette-vote.html) (de), [www.actu-environnement.com/ae/news](http://www.actu-environnement.com/ae/news) (fr)

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## Idrija is the Alpine Town of the Year 2011



Idrija/SL: a small town with ambitious environmental protection objectives

The label for sustainable development was awarded to the Slovenian town of Idrija for its commitment to climate protection among other initiatives. The "Alpine Town Year" was ceremoniously inaugurated in February. During that year Idrija intends to pursue existing projects such as a farmers' market with local organic produce as well as taking up new ideas. The 12,000 inhabitant community is working on a local energy supply concept involving renewables and plans to cut its CO2 emissions. Cycle paths are to be expanded to help promoting ecotourism. Idrija is opening the Alpine Town Year with a review of what has already been achieved, including a project for reducing light pollution. Idrija is also well-known for its lace making and the town is organising a lace festival in the summer. The festive year is to close in November with a lecture on how human beings and wild animals live side by side.

After Maribor (in 2000), Idrija (2011) is the second Slovenian town to be awarded as Alpine Town of the Year. For 500 years the small town tucked away in the alpine foothills of Slovenia was known for its

mercury mine; today it is world-famous for its lace making.

Source: [www.alpenstaedte.org/de/presse](http://www.alpenstaedte.org/de/presse) (de/fr/it/sl)

## Sustainable Alps: Architecture Prize Awarded



The municipal building in Raggal/A: built with sense and sensuality.

Constructive, the Alpine-wide architecture award for sustainable construction and renovation has been presented to three architects and developers. Three further projects are equally to be commended. But Constructive is not just about energy efficiency. It is about a comprehensive notion of sustainability, i.e. selecting ecological building materials, ensuring good public transport links, and social aspects.

One such project combining economic, functional and aesthetic aspects is the municipal building in Raggal/A. Raggal's municipal forest consists of silver fir and spruce trees. Processing locally sourced timber provides work for woodcutters, joiners and carpenters in the valley. After all, sustainable construction also means promoting the regional economy. The award-winning building was built by Austrian architect Johannes Kaufmann.

The Principality of Liechtenstein launched the award with prize money totally of EUR 50,000 for the winning projects - one of the very few and arguably the most concrete implementation of the action plan

for climate change in the Alps at state level. The competition attracted a total of 201 projects from seven Alpine states. The Jury invited 25 developers and architects to compete in a second round. These nominated projects are to be shown at an exhibition going on tour.

Source: [www.constructive.li](http://www.constructive.li) (de/fr/it/sl).

## Olympic bid by Annecy: repercussions underestimated

French environmental protection agencies have said that the "impact of the Olympic Games on the environment are widely underestimated in the application documents". In an open letter to the IOC Evaluation Committee, France Nature Environnement, Fédération Rhône Alpes de Protection de la Nature (FRAPNA) and CIPRA France have all warned about the major event's foreseeable repercussions.

Particularly affected are Chamonix/F, the Semnoz high-plateau and the Aravis Massif. Indeed, it appears that seven new sports facilities are now to be built even though the original dossier stipulated that existing venues would be used. For the Semnoz plateau this would mean that the artificial snow required on site would be produced using water from Lake Annecy 1200 m lower down.

In January CIPRA France withdrew from the Council for "Sustainable Development and the Environment". "The environmental compensation measures we called for such as the protection of the Aravis valley were not taken into account," explains Patrick Le Vaguerèse, representing CIPRA France in the council.

In July 2011 the IOC will decide whether the 2018 Winter Olympics are to be held in Munich/D, in the South Korean region of Pyeongchang or in Annecy.

Sources: [www.cipra.org/fr/CIPRA/cipra-france/presse](http://www.cipra.org/fr/CIPRA/cipra-france/presse), [www.lemonde.fr/sport/article/2011/02/07](http://www.lemonde.fr/sport/article/2011/02/07) (fr)

## The bear's about!

Clearly the big omnivore feels at home in the Trentino/I. A total of 27 bears were counted there last year, compared with a mere three or four in the 1990s. Meanwhile ten Slovenian bears have settled in the Adamello-Brenta Nature Park as part of the "Life Ursus" campaign. The population has now stabilised, and there are now more bears in the Trentino than anywhere else in the Alps. Full details are to be found in the Bear Annual Report published by the Autonomous Province of Trento. The plantigrade species occurs mainly in the Brenta Group, in the Paganella, and west of Trento in the Giudicarie area. 2010 saw the birth of five cubs. Another bear left the Province altogether, travelling a total of 320 km as the crow flies on his travels to southern Slovenia. It is the first time such a vast distance has been recorded for an Alpine bear.

The operations team for bear-related emergencies was called out only twice last year. Nonetheless 237 damage reports were filed. The Autonomous Province of Trento paid out a total of EUR 118,000, more than in 2009. The main causes included the behaviour of individual bears, a shortage of food, and inadequately well protected bee hives.

Source: [www.orso.provincia.tn.it/rapporto\\_orso](http://www.orso.provincia.tn.it/rapporto_orso)

## Common Agricultural Policy for the Alps

A new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is being negotiated in Brussels/BE. And as the CAP is also to take account of the particular conditions of agriculture in the Alps, in April the ministers of the Alpine states drew up a declaration at the International Mountain Region Conference in Oberammergau/D. In the declaration, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, France, Austria and Switzerland advocated the principle of "protection through use". They state that it is only through active management that customs and handicrafts can be preserved, a contribution to tourism to be made, and a minimum of settlement be secured. In the Oberammergau Declaration the signatory countries also state that together they intend to draw up measures to deal with the impact of globalisation and climate change and also to jointly market agricultural produce. According to Ilse Aigner, the German Minister of Agriculture, the proposals could be substantiated in the Alpine Convention's Mountain Agriculture Platform. In 2006 the EU ratified the Mountain Agriculture Protocol and committed to sustainable, site-specific and environmentally compatible mountain farming in the Alpine region.

The Verein zum Schutz der Bergwelt also feels that the previous CAP took insufficient consideration of the Alps. It believes it was tailored to lowland areas and it was particularly inadequate when it came to protecting biodiversity. It also states that environmental compensatory payments are rarely tied to specific ecological targets.

The Council and the European Parliament are to vote in the coming year on the new CAP for the period 2014 to 2020. It accounts for around 40 per cent of the EU budget.

Sources and additional information: [www.bmelv.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen](http://www.bmelv.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen) (de), [www.vzsb.de/pdf](http://www.vzsb.de/pdf) (en), [www.laendlicher-raum.at/article/articleview](http://www.laendlicher-raum.at/article/articleview) (de)

## The spectacle of a new Mont Blanc cable car

Ground-breaking ceremony for Courmayeur/I's new cable car up to the Pointe Helbronner: Over a four-year construction period the glass and steel colossus, which is set to cost over EUR 100 million, is to replace the installation built in the 1940s and 1950s - and showcase the Mont Blanc even more magnificently. The valley, middle and mountain stations with restaurants, a cinema and a museum are also to be rebuilt. The cable car is to feature round, fully glazed rotating cabins and will transport 300,000 people a year from the valley station in Entreves/I up to the Pointe Helbronner at 3,452 metres above sea level, i.e. four times as many people as it does today. A likewise revolving platform measuring 14 m in diameter is to be built at the mountain station. From there visitors will be able to venture a walk out onto the glacier, and even admire the mountain peaks of the Mont Blanc Massif in slippers and high-heeled shoes. Through a gallery cut into the granite a lift will also take the visitors to the Turin Hut at 3,335 m.

Nature conservationists are baffled not just by the vast quantities of steel and concrete required for the new installation. They are calling for the cable car to be upgraded without further increasing the already sizeable pressure by the tourist industry on the high-altitude mountain range.

Sources: [www3.lastampa.it/costume/sezioni/articolo](http://www3.lastampa.it/costume/sezioni/articolo) (it), <http://mountainwilderness.it/mw/campagne> (it)

## Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention convened in Herisau

The outcome of the event held from March 29 to April 1 is a 13-page resolution catalogue. It illustrates how important young people feel about being able to shape a viable future for the alpine region. "Transport and Transit" was the theme of this year's meeting. The schoolchildren put forward future-oriented proposals for solutions to draw the attention of politicians in Alpine countries to key issues. For instance the Youth Parliament is calling for the implementation of an Alpine Crossing Exchange, something which the Alpine Initiative proposed a long time ago. The 16 to 19-year-olds are also demanding "no-pollution areas" in town and city centres and at sites under preservation orders as well as an international information and booking platform for ecological means of transport.

The Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention was launched in 2006 by the Akademisches Gymnasium Innsbruck and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. It offers young people from all the Alpine countries an opportunity to draw up proposals for the sustainable development of the Alps and to try out democratic processes themselves. In 2012 the Youth Parliament is to be held in Liechtenstein.

Sources and additional information: [www.ypac.ch](http://www.ypac.ch)

## Dinaric Alps Conference: laying the foundations for the protection of the Dinaric Alps

The countries of the Dinaric Alps met in Brdo near Kranj, Slovenia, on March 8 and 9 for the first ever Dinaric Alps Conference. Concurrently the ministers of the Alpine states convened at the 11th Alpine Conference. The Alpine Convention's 20th anniversary was intentionally chosen as the kick-off date for the conference, not least because of the fact that Slovenia as the link between the Alps and the Dinaric Alps is striving to make the Alpine Convention applicable to the Dinaric Alps.

The representatives of the Dinaric countries adopted a resolution for the sustainable development of the Dinaric mountain range. It was signed by Albania, Monte Negro, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia and Slovenia. Serbia and Bosnia are also planning to sign the document. The resolution provides the mainstay for a common policy of sustainable development, ecological integrity and territorial cohesion.

As Slovenia holds the presidency for the first year, it has taken charge of implementing the resolution and taking the Dinaric process forward.

Source: CIPRA Slovenia

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## Miscellaneous

### Publication: The Alps in 2010

The new publication titled The Alps by the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention provides a comprehensive overview of the Alps, including a wealth of cartographic material. For over a thousand years the Alpine landscape has been used as a cultural landscape. The land-use hot spots are all shown on the maps along with all the tourist destinations, which attract around 120 million visitors a year.

The aim of the English handbook is to give a vivid illustration of the realities of Alpine regions and the challenges they face.

The publication and the individual maps are available at: [www.alpconv.org/documents/Permanent](http://www.alpconv.org/documents/Permanent), <http://217.199.4.34/Alpine>

### Changing forests

The seminar titled Forestry and Climate Change - Thinking One Step Ahead! looks at the consequences of global warming on the timber industry, forestry and its functions. What sort of strategies are needed to ensure the sustainable development of the forest within the context of regional development? During lectures and a field trip participants will find out about the significance of adaptive management in forestry. They will learn to appreciate the consequences of actions in their own environment and find out about the results of the cc.alps - climate change: thinking one step ahead project.

The seminar is organised by CIPRA International and by the Further Education in Forestry and Landscape Association, and takes place in Interlaken/CH on June 30 and July 1. Registrations can be made up until May 15 at [www.fowala.ch](http://www.fowala.ch) (de).

Sources: [www.fowala.ch/manager/upload/T689B007-Flyer](http://www.fowala.ch/manager/upload/T689B007-Flyer) (de), [www.weiterbildung.ch/alisearch/Glarus/Fowala](http://www.weiterbildung.ch/alisearch/Glarus/Fowala) (fr)

### Belgian support for the protection of the Alps

Established in Belgium at the start of the year, the ALPY Association "Alpen en Pyreneeën, Ontdekken en Ondersteunen" is committed to sustainable development in the Pyrenees and the Alps. ALPY sees itself as an interface between the lowland regions and the mountains. Its aim is making people aware of the ecological and cultural particularities of the two European mountain ranges. To do so, it organises exhibitions, lectures and film evenings. Culinary treats are also part of the programme. For more information: <http://alpyvzw.wordpress.com> (de/fr/it/es)

### Loss of biodiversity in the mountains particularly severe

A study carried out across Europe using new measurement methods has shown that climate change impacting particularly heavily on plants in mountain regions. The vastly different mountain ecosystems are being recorded on a very small and accurate scale using special computer models. As a result the forecasts are more accurate. Previously such prediction models existed only on a much larger scale. The future is bleak for over 2,600 plant species. According to the topographic and climate models a large number of mountain species are set to lose more than 80% of their habitat by 2070-2100. Higher temperatures and lower precipitation are stated as the main causes.

Sources: [www.umweltbundesamt.at/aktuell/presse](http://www.umweltbundesamt.at/aktuell/presse) (de), [www.eu-umweltbuero.at/cgi-bin/neu/cont](http://www.eu-umweltbuero.at/cgi-bin/neu/cont) (de), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j>

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## Agenda

Demonstration / Campaign: 5th International Wild Flower Festival. 21.5.2011 –

4.6.2011. Bohinj. Language: de, en, sl. Organisation: Turizem Bohinj, Bohinjska Bistrica/SI.

Info: [www.bohinj.si/alpskocvetje/eng/index.php](http://www.bohinj.si/alpskocvetje/eng/index.php).

Excursion: The Super Alp! 5. 4.7.2011 – 12.7.2011. CH, F, I, A, SL. Language: en.

Organisation: Ständiges Sekretariat der Alpenkonvention, Goldenes Dachl, 1. Stock, Innsbruck/AT.

Info: [www.alpconv.org/documents/Permanent\\_Sekretariat/superalp5/superalp5.pdf](http://www.alpconv.org/documents/Permanent_Sekretariat/superalp5/superalp5.pdf).

Conference / Congress: Climate Change in High Mountain Regions. 29.8.2011 –

1.9.2011. Salzburg. Language: en. Organisation: ZAMG Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik, Wien/AT.

Info: [www.sic-adapt.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Events/Programm\\_2011\\_08\\_29-09\\_01\\_Climate\\_Change\\_in\\_High\\_Mountain\\_Regions.pdf](http://www.sic-adapt.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Events/Programm_2011_08_29-09_01_Climate_Change_in_High_Mountain_Regions.pdf).

Conference / Congress: Alp-Water-Scarce Final Conference. 20.9.2011 –

21.9.2011. Old University Graz. Language: en. Organisation: Amt der Steiermärkischen

## Strange but true!

... You've heard of car-free and bikini-free zones in city centres, smoke-free zones in restaurants, dog-free zones on trains, germ-free zones in hospitals and even men-free zones in thermal spas. Well, for the Bavarians, that's not enough.

They are now demanding that their Alps be designated a wolf-free zone. The intention is a good one. As with motoring and smoking, it's all about the well-being of others. The alpine farming association Almwirtschaftliche Verein Oberbayern looks after livestock and money matters. That is why in a policy document it called on the state government of Bavaria to work towards ensuring that no more "animal border

Landesregierung, Graz-Burg/AT.  
Info: [www.alpwaterscarce.eu/](http://www.alpwaterscarce.eu/).

Workshop / Seminar: MountainTRIP Final Conference. 17.11.2011. Brüssel.  
Language: en. Organisation: Institute of Mountain Research: Man& Environment (IGF), Austrian Academy of Sciences, Innsbruck/AT.  
Info: [www.mountaintrip.eu/](http://www.mountaintrip.eu/).

crossers" pose a threat to sheep and cattle. It also demanded that wolves that had migrated to the region be "removed without delay". The Free State of Bavaria should also work towards ensuring that Austria also examines the creation of wolf-free areas. Why not declare the entire Alps a wolf-free zone at the same time?  
Source: [www.tt.com/csp/cms/sites/tt/%C3%9Cberblick](http://www.tt.com/csp/cms/sites/tt/%C3%9Cberblick) (de).

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