Schaan, May 4th 2022

Press release: 70 years of CIPRA

CIPRA celebrates 70 years of Alpine protection

Connecting people, crossing borders, protecting the Alps: For 70 years CIPRA has been working for a good life in the Alps. What might the Alps of the future look like? On the occasion of its birthday on May 5th, CIPRA is also taking a fresh look at itself.

Palm-covered mountain peaks, digitised Alpine villages, extinct bees: What could the Alpine region of tomorrow look like? CIPRA's 70th birthday is also an occasion to look to the future and sketch out the vision for the years to come. "The challenges in the Alps today are greater than ever with advancing climate change and the threat of ecosystem collapse," fears Bianca Elzenbaumer. The Co-President of CIPRA International is convinced: "We need courageous people who think and implement new, more colourful and sustainable visions for the Alps." Without these people CIPRA would not even exist, as a glance at its history shows.

In the beginning there was a vision

Diverting rivers or even building a lighthouse on the Matterhorn? Plans like these in France and Italy are not geologist Edith Ebers' vision for the Alps in 1952. On May 5th she therefore invites representatives of all interested countries to the Bavarian town of Rottach-Egern/D to work out international guidelines together – this is the birth of CIPRA. Since 1983 CIPRA has had its headquarters in Liechtenstein, geographically the most alpine country of all the Alpine states.

A vision of civil society became a binding international treaty: it took about 40 years of informing, convincing and motivating before the Alpine countries and the European Economic Community (EEC) signed the Alpine Convention in 1991, and it came into force in 1995. Mario Broggi, CIPRA President from 1983-1992, remembers: "We initiated an Alpine approach that did not stop at national borders. This was the breeding ground for further initiatives in the Alpine region.”

Further milestones followed, due in part to CIPRA's involvement: The first networks of towns and municipalities "Alpine Town of the Year" and "Alliance in the Alps", which have been implementing the Alpine Convention locally since 1997. In 2000, the renunciation of the construction of new high-level roads for transalpine traffic in the Alpine Convention's transport protocol, such as motorways. The founding of the CIPRA Youth Council in 2013, where young people have been contributing ideas and participating in Alpine policy ever since. "These are just a few of the many successes of which we are proud," says Co-President Bianca Elzenbaumer.

The Alps of tomorrow

Can the climate catastrophe be averted? How can the different generations work together instead of against each other? Why do we have so many things, although we only really need a few? Isabella Helmschrott is thinking about these questions. The 26-year-old is involved in CIPRA's Youth Council (CYC) for a more sustainable future in the Alps: "Often, in the face of climate chaos and crises like Covid, you feel alone. In the CYC I feel: together we can make a difference." With the YOALIN (Youth Alpine Interrail) and Alptick projects they want to inspire their peers to travel sustainably by train, bus, bike or on foot. After all, mobility is responsible for around 30 per cent of CO2 emissions in the Alpine region. "For a future worth living in the Alps and beyond, we need a change of mindset – in our heads and in the system."

To mark its birthday, CIPRA has published the new issue of the AlpsInsight magazine "The Alps of Tomorrow – 70 Years of CIPRA", which is available in the four Alpine languages free of charge online: [www.cipra.org/szenealpen](http://www.cipra.org/szenealpen)

This release and print-ready photographs are available for downloading from [www.cipra.org/en/media-releases](http://www.cipra.org/en/media-releases)

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**CIPRA, a diverse and multifaceted organisation**

CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, is a non-governmental umbrella organisation with national representatives and one regional representative in the seven Alpine countries. It represents more than 100 associations and organisations. CIPRA works towards achieving sustainable development in the Alps; it also strives to preserve the natural and cultural heritage, maintain regional diversity, and bring about solutions to cross-border problems in the Alpine region. [www.cipra.org](http://www.cipra.org)