



CIPRA
LIVING IN
THE ALPS

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Media release on CIPRA's Annual Conference

Society's demands mark the landscape

Conflicting needs and exaggerated expectations collide when it comes to spatial planning. Its role needs to be rethought, with a move away from overall planning and a shift towards guidance and awareness-raising. This was the tenor of the CIPRA Annual Conference held on 29 and 30 September 2017 in Innsbruck, Austria.

"Spatial planning must bid farewell to its claim to optimal overall design." Thus the words of speaker Friedrich Schindegger at the CIPRA Annual Conference entitled "Alpine spheres – natural limits, infinite possibilities", held in Innsbruck, Austria on 29 and 30 September 2017. It simply cannot live up to this claim: the individual interests of agriculture, businesses, investors and political entities today set the tone. Schindegger, an Austrian spatial planner, stated: "Landscape is the footprint of the values and the power distribution of the societies living there." Spatial planning should reorient itself by taking responsibility for the common good and channelling general principles that are capable of appealing to the majority.

CIPRA Austria and CIPRA International, together with invited speakers, offered a very wide-ranging programme to the 200 or so participants from the worlds of science, business, politics and civil society. Gianluca Cepollaro, the director of "step", the school for spatial and landscape planning in the Italian city of Trento, questioned the predominant notion of spatial planning: the image of man dominating nature is now obsolete. Today humans are seen as a part of nature; the Alpine regions are witnessing a growing awareness of habitats, especially among younger people. This notion must therefore also be integrated into planning, he said.

"We have to re-appropriate space"

The report entitled "State of Spatial Planning Policy in the Alpine Regions" provided plenty of room for discussion on the podium. Markus Reiterer, Secretary-General of the Alpine Convention, criticised the fragmentation of its contents: "Tourism and transport policies are also ultimately matters of spatial planning". Instead of simply navel-gazing, spatial planning should face up to more open discussions, demanded Gerlind Weber, while Janez Fajfa, mayor of the Slovenian town of Bled, clearly illustrated the drawbacks that can result from misdirected planning at municipal level. Workshops in the afternoon provided the opportunity to exchange views on the topics of congestion in valleys, tourism centres, and rural areas caught between



the pressures of development and emigration. Peter Haßbacher, President of CIPRA Austria, emphasised: "Spatial planning in the Alps is under pressure from the unchecked growth of certain tourist centres".

Katharina Conradin, President of CIPRA International, said in conclusion: "We actually have a whole range of tools available for use in spatial planning." Such tools are however often overridden ad hoc because of individual interests. Her call to the participants from all Alpine countries: "We have to re-appropriate space".

An urgent need for action

In an open letter written in 2016, CIPRA demanded that the Ministers for Spatial Planning in the Alpine countries should adopt new approaches to the protection of ecosystem services. New insights from such fields as psychology, sociology and cultural studies can help secure an understanding and acceptance of such spatial planning measures. In order to ensure that not only experts take part, this would require the involvement, aptitude and participation of all interested parties. Policymakers should, in dialogue with citizens, stakeholders and experts, develop new skills such as facilitation or mediation.

Further information in German, French, Italian or Slovenian is available in [InsideAlps Nr. 101](#), in the [Web-Dossier](#) and the [alpMonitor](#) project.

Programme, image gallery and presentations: www.cipra.org/de/jft2017 (de)

This release and print-ready photographs are available for downloading from <http://www.cipra.org/en/press/press-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