

## Creating and testing new ways



Making ideas work together: social innovations as solutions to challenges in the Alps. © CIPRA

**Climate change, scarce resources, development pressures: there is a global need for new ways and forms of social and economic cohabitation. The Alps too are the setting for social innovations.**

Unconventional ideas develop when creative people meet others from different backgrounds: city and mountain dwellers, young and old, as well as representatives from the worlds of science, culture and art. Numerous projects and initiatives in the Alps show that people and organisations are actively looking for new ways to foster sustainable development.

## Looking to the future

Plans are underway to revive Istria, the area bordering Slovenia to Croatia, by supporting new ideas. The “Sustainability Park Istra” is a youth project intended to provide an impulse for young people to get involved and come up with ideas for sustainable development in concert with the local population.

The MonViso Institute in Ostana, Italy, has adopted an experimental approach to its research into sustainable change and design. Six abandoned buildings in the mountains have now been converted into a campus to serve as a laboratory for the use of students, scientists, artists and tourist professionals alike. The proximity to nature and the open landscape are intended to help visitors think creatively.

The Future Academy at Rätikon, Switzerland, is dedicated to the question of what are the possible, reasonable and desirable future scenarios for the Alps. It awards project grants to a pilot community in collaboration with the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) to enable young artists and scientists to gain a direct insight into various areas such as crafts, farming or tourism, and to create scenarios and project ideas for the future development of the municipality.

## Taking up good ideas

Together with representatives from the fields of tourism and science, CIPRA Switzerland is pursuing a trans-sectoral approach with the “innovation-generator”. The aim is to stimulate ideas for more sustainability in tourism. The most promising project ideas are selected and technical and financial support provided to develop them into business plans.

CIPRA's fourth and last I-LivAlps-Workshop is also offering a sort of on-the-spot laboratory: September 2017 will see young adults, experts and representatives of various organisations developing prospects for remote mountain areas in Italy's Valle Maira. “Innovation processes offer a new perspective for the sustainability debate”, says Andreas Pichler, Executive Director of CIPRA International. The co-existence of cultures, participation processes and the testing of sustainable lifestyles have not only produced new solutions, they have also provided spaces to permit the creation of a sense of community and shared responsibility.

[www.innovationsgenerator.ch](http://www.innovationsgenerator.ch) (de, fr) , [parkistra.com](http://parkistra.com) , [monviso-institute.org](http://monviso-institute.org)

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## Point of view: Biodiversity Conservation: less talk, more action



Martha Dunbar, project manager “Biodiversity and Landscape”, CIPRA International © Caroline Begle

**May 22nd marks the International Day for Biological Diversity, an initiative brought into life by the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2000. Martha Dunbar, Project Manager for Biodiversity and Landscape, fears that now in 2017 we are still treading water.**

During the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio “Earth Summit”), which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature. Since then, the term biological diversity, or biodiversity, has become widely spread. Also the Alpine Convention has made the conservation of alpine biodiversity a priority of the Multi-Annual Work Programme of the Alpine Conference. Twenty-five years after the Rio Summit and signing of the Alpine Convention we are still losing biodiversity at a remarkable rate. So why do we remain incapable of acting on this need?

“Let us have the courage to look in the eyes of our children and admit that we have failed, admit that we continue to lose biodiversity at an unprecedented rate, thus mortgaging their future.” A clear message delivered by Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention for Biological Diversity at the time, at the follow-up summit in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates the rate at which species are becoming extinct to be up to 10,000 times the natural rate. In Europe, for example, every fourth mammal and every eighth bird are at high risk of extinction. In the Alps 45 percent of plant species will face extinction by 2100.

In 2017, it is safe to say that we will not achieve the goal of halving the rate of loss of natural habitats. Perhaps the future lies further away from national governments and international treaties and closer to the people: participatory approaches to environmental governance are on the rise. But this means shifting the power away from governments and towards the people. Do we have the necessary trust in local citizens to actively involve them in the decision making process?

This year's May 22<sup>nd</sup> theme of “Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism” could not be further removed from the action needed to protect biodiversity. Under the pretence of pursuing the positive contribution of tourism to biodiversity awareness we continue to create new ecotourism destinations and other luxurious perversions of “sustainable” measures. Scientists and experts must have the facts and figures, but we all must be aware of the responsibility we carry. In collaboration with our partners we are working on raising the necessary awareness – on the International Day for Biodiversity, and on every other day of the year.

[www.alpconv.org/en/publications/alpine/Documents/MAP\\_2017-2022\\_EN.pdf](http://www.alpconv.org/en/publications/alpine/Documents/MAP_2017-2022_EN.pdf)

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## A beacon for sustainable tourism



The traditional fire across the Alps is a sign both of the vulnerability of Alpine regions and the courage to bring about change. © Reto Solèr

**The second weekend in August will once again see the “Fire across the Alps” burning. In this, the UN Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, these watch-fires are intended to stimulate ideas as to the necessary changes for tourism in the Alps.**

Winter tourism faces varying challenges in the Alpine countries. Everywhere, however, rising temperatures and changes in visitor behaviour now require new strategies and approaches. In its position paper, CIPRA demands change that would place the quality of life of both guests and locals at the centre of things. But this in turn needs high-level strategies that will include all areas of economic activity and life.

Over the weekend of 12-13 August, CIPRA Switzerland, the Alpen Initiative and mountain wilderness Switzerland are inviting contributions to address this change in tourism. The action will be accompanied by the whatsapp walking group. Since 1988

these fires in the Alps have become an annual message, calling both for the preservation of the heritage of the Alpine regions and resistance to the destruction of this sensitive ecosystem.

In addition to the events to be held in Switzerland and Austria, Slovenia too is supporting the action. As organiser, CIPRA Slovenia is putting the focus on mobility in tourism, with the intention of informing tourists and locals about the problems and challenges. As an example, some 80% of leisure trips in Slovenia are made by car. Their projects, “Driven by mountains”, “Timetables in the Alps” and “Actively to school”, are all aimed at encouraging “soft” mobility.

Sources and further information:

[www.feuerindenalpen.com](http://www.feuerindenalpen.com) , [www.aktivnovsolo.si](http://www.aktivnovsolo.si) (sl)  
, [www.cipra.org/en/vozniredi2017](http://www.cipra.org/en/vozniredi2017) , [www.cipra.org/en/positions/winter-tourism](http://www.cipra.org/en/positions/winter-tourism) , [www.whatsalp.org](http://www.whatsalp.org)

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## Give youth a voice! How youth participation can be encouraged in the Alpine space

**How can young people become more involved in political processes? What good examples already exist for this? These questions were the central issues at a workshop held in the context of the GaYA project in Bozen/Bolzano.**

Young people in some Alpine regions are faced with a number of difficulties: poor job prospects mean that many leave their home regions and try their luck in the larger economic hubs. The political participation of youth in the Alpine regions is also often weak. The GaYA (Governance and Youth in the Alps) project, in which CIPRA International Lab is a - project partner, is taking steps to change matters. The aim is to develop new impulses to ensure that the younger generation is



Representatives from the fields of politics and administration in every Alpine country came to Bozen/Bolzano to discuss the topic of youth participation. © EURAC

better involved in political structures and decision-making processes. The workshop “Youth participation in political decisions in Alpine regions”, held on 29 June in Bozen/Bolzano, saw participation by the eight project partners as well as numerous representatives from municipalities and the political sphere from all over the Alpine space, with initiatives from the Alpine regions introduced and discussed. A video presents some of these initiatives, for instance the youth parliament in Lausanne, Switzerland, or the youth region of Traunstein in Austria.

Tobias Stecher of the Obervinschgau youth service sees positive results: “The workshop has shown that the political will exists on the part of administrations to achieve something in this field”. Senator Francesco Palermo from Bozen/Bolzano also underlines the relevance of the topic and urges that there be the political will to encourage more youth participation, as “without participation, political decisions are not seen as legitimate.” CIPRA is further promoting the topic of youth participation in Alpine areas with projects such as I-LivAlps or youTurn.

Video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLG5qtgZpnQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLG5qtgZpnQ)

Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/de/cipra/international/projekte/laufend/gaya](http://www.cipra.org/de/cipra/international/projekte/laufend/gaya) (de, fr, it, sl) , [www.cipra.org/en/youth/cipra-activities](http://www.cipra.org/en/youth/cipra-activities)

## Pesticides: a tug of war



Pesticides harm the environment, biodiversity and people. © Ed Wohlfahrt\_flickr

**Pesticides damage the environment, threaten useful species like bees, pollute the water in the Alps, while some are suspected of causing cancer. They nevertheless appear to be indispensable in conventional agriculture.**

Herbicides, fungicides and insecticides: a cocktail of chemicals is to be found in Alpine waters. A study carried out on behalf of the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment showed that the water quality did not meet legal requirements in any of the waterways examined. More and more pesticides are also to be found in drinking water, with the national ground water monitoring body, Naqua, reporting that tolerance values were exceeded at one out of every five measuring points. The existing regulations are clearly failing.

The topic is also raising temperatures in Italy. In a 2014 referendum, the South Tyrol municipality of Mals decided to ban the use of pesticides on its territory. The decision was vehemently protested by both the authorities and farmers. Three years on, the municipality is still battling for its right to decide on the pesticide issue. The benefits to agriculture are still not yet clear, as a recent study by the Free University of Bozen/Bolzano in South Tyrol shows: the use of glyphosate has devastating consequences for the quality of grapes.

There is also international controversy regarding the use of the herbicide glyphosate. In June the European Union's authorisation for glyphosate was extended by ten years, as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) had determined it was safe to use. The international cancer research agency IARC and the US state of California, however, have both placed glyphosate on their list of potential carcinogenic substances. The EU decision means that the only possibility of achieving a ban is now at national level.

France has taken on a pioneering role here: the government has now forbidden the use of pesticides in public spaces, and this will be extended to private gardens by 2019. As from 2018 France will also be the first EU state to ban pesticides of the neonicotinoid family, which studies have shown to be especially harmful to bees. France has also submitted a motion to ban the non-agricultural use of pesticides throughout the entire European Union.

This is a step in the right direction, but should we perhaps be questioning the very use of pesticides? A UN report on the hazards that pesticides raise for global nutrition shows that the negative effects as regards climate change and loss of biodiversity are potentially huge. The conclusion is that, instead of favouring the prevailing industrial cultivation model, the answer is ecologically-oriented farming.

Sources:

[www.greenpeace.de/sites/www.greenpeace.de/files/greenpeace\\_dauergifte\\_in\\_den\\_alpen\\_report\\_0.pdf](http://www.greenpeace.de/sites/www.greenpeace.de/files/greenpeace_dauergifte_in_den_alpen_report_0.pdf)(de) , [www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-66224.html](http://www.admin.ch/gov/en/start/documentation/media-releases.msg-id-66224.html) , [nzzas.nzz.ch/notizen/achtung-pestizide-im-trinkwasser-ld.1301514](http://nzzas.nzz.ch/notizen/achtung-pestizide-im-trinkwasser-ld.1301514) (de) , [www.dervinschger.it/de/gesellschaft/kleiner-aber-wichtiger-sieg-23641](http://www.dervinschger.it/de/gesellschaft/kleiner-aber-wichtiger-sieg-23641) (de) , <https://www.unibz.it/de/news/124523-studie-zum-gewuerztraminer-glyphosat-zur-unkrautbekaempfung-hat-folgen-fuer-den-most> (de, it) , [documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/017/85/PDF/G1701785.pdf?](http://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G17/017/85/PDF/G1701785.pdf?)



## Alpine Convention puts equality on the agenda



Representatives of mountain regions from all over the world attended the Women's Conference held in Alpbach, Austria. © Robert Strasser

**With a women's conference and a declaration, the Austrian presidency has placed a new topic on the agenda of the Alpine Convention – and raised expectations. But where do things go from here?**

The Austrian presidency of the Alpine Convention boldly attempted a balancing act: the conference on “The role of women in mountain regions” held on 18 and 19 April 2017 in Alpbach, Austria, addressed the roles and issues of women from very different mountain regions. Women from the Alps, from Nepal, Bhutan, Argentina and Zambia were all represented, from the areas of agriculture, research, administration and civil society.

In her presentation, Marianna Elmi, Deputy Secretary-General of the Permanent Secretariat, stressed that “women play a crucial role in sustainable development”. They ensure that our knowledge of how to confront nature and society is retained and expanded, an especially important matter for mountain regions. But limiting women to such roles runs the risk of underestimating their potential. Women in many

Alpine regions are already very highly skilled, meaning that they move away in search of work, for example.

As Secretary-General Markus Reiterer stated, gender questions do not in fact feature in either the framework convention or in the protocols. Now however this topic should be further pursued within the scope of the Alpine Convention, for instance in the next Report on the State of the Alps, which is to address natural hazards. “Women play an important role in this area and this knowledge should be reflected in the report.” The Austrian Minister for the Environment, Andrä Rupprechter, provided a further indication with a declaration submitted to the conference. It is also planned to discuss the topic at the next standing committee.

As an observer, Barbara Wülser – deputy director of CIPRA International – followed the conference with a critical eye. Limiting the role of women to that of advocates for change and sustainable development is a sensitive issue. “Are we not just reinforcing stereotypes in this way?” Or, in the words of conference chair Patti Basler: “We cannot speak about the role of women without also speaking about the role of men.”

Quellen und weitere Informationen:

[www.fraueninbergregionen.at](http://www.fraueninbergregionen.at), [www.alpconv.org/en/newsevents/latest/newsdetails.html?entryid=123088](http://www.alpconv.org/en/newsevents/latest/newsdetails.html?entryid=123088) , [www.cipra.org/de/news/gleichstellung-betrifft-uns-alle](http://www.cipra.org/de/news/gleichstellung-betrifft-uns-alle) (de) , [www.cipra.org/en/news/point-of-view-a-mans-world-and-womens-work-time-to-move-on](http://www.cipra.org/en/news/point-of-view-a-mans-world-and-womens-work-time-to-move-on)

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## No ski-lift connection permitted in nature reserve



The Warscheneck is one of Europe's most impressive karst landscapes – the northern section, pictured here, has been a protected natural area since 2008. © R. Mayr

**The Federal State of Upper Austria gave its legal opinion on the expansion of the “Höss-Wurzeralm” ski area in April. The matter is now on file.**

The development project in the “Warscheneck-Nord” nature reserve in Upper Austria was intended to connect the two ski areas of Höss and Wurzeralm by means of lifts and ski runs. Plans have existed for a long time: in 2011 the legal service centre of the Alpine Convention in CIPRA Austria gave a negative opinion, stating that the development could not go ahead owing to international agreements – such as the nature conservation protocol of the Alpine Convention – that Austria had ratified. The project planners did not give up, however, and wanted to establish whether it was legally permissible to construct a cable car to traverse the nature reserve. A further opinion from the legal service centre at CIPRA Austria and a legal opinion given by the University of Linz on behalf of the Federal State of Upper Austria, presented in April by the Councillor for Conservation Affairs, Mr Haimbuchner and the Councillor for Economic Affairs, Mr Strugel, have now clearly confirmed the opinion of the legal service centre. Such clarity means that the region can address the alternatives, bringing conservation and economic matters under one roof.

The “Warscheneck” case is part of the “Protected Areas in Transition” map of Alpine flashpoints in terms of nature protection. It was produced as part of the “alpMonitor” project and highlights the endangered protected areas in the Alps.

Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/en/cipra/austria](http://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/austria) , [www.cipra.org/de/alpmonitor/natur-und-mensch](http://www.cipra.org/de/alpmonitor/natur-und-mensch) (de, fr, it, sl)

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Oh...



© Hugo Raetzo

Climate change as a spectator sport: the melting of the Aletsch glacier in Switzerland caused a huge shift in the rock, creating a 20-metre wide fissure. One hotelier spotted the tourist potential of this event: he filmed the devastated landscape and encouraged people to watch the spectacle live on location: "Come to the Riederalp and witness the massive goings-on in the Aletsch Forest!"

This model could certainly be applied throughout the Alps. Thus for example all the glaciers in the Bavarian Alps will melt in the coming 20 to 30 years. A trip to Bavaria's last glacier would be a true highlight. Beach-lovers too will find the mountains to their liking, as climate change is creating numerous new lakes in the Alps. It is simply a matter of perspective. One thing is for sure: there will be massive

goings-on in the Alps!

Video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4ELQSHuyCs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4ELQSHuyCs)

Sources:

[www.infosperber.ch/Umwelt/Riederalp-Aletsch-Schweizweit-grossten-Felsverschiebungen](http://www.infosperber.ch/Umwelt/Riederalp-Aletsch-Schweizweit-grossten-Felsverschiebungen) (de)

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, [www.welt.de/wissenschaft/umwelt/article126298067/Klimawandel-laesst-in-den-Alpen-neue-Seen-entstehen.html](http://www.welt.de/wissenschaft/umwelt/article126298067/Klimawandel-laesst-in-den-Alpen-neue-Seen-entstehen.html) (de)

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## Agenda

**Photo competition Us & The Alps!** 13.02.-31.07.2017, The Alps. [More...](#)

**Swiss Mountain Film Festival**, 07.-12.08.2017, Pontresina/CH. [More...](#)

**Fire across the Alps**, 12.-13.08.2017, Alps. [More...](#)

**International Conference on the Future of Mountain Agriculture in the Alps**, 13.-14.09.2017, St. Johann im Pongau/A. [More...](#)

**Forest summit protection.forest.climate**, 18.09.2017, Innsbruck/A. [More...](#)