

Young people beyond boundaries



YPAC promotes dialogue: young people exchange views with representatives from the worlds of politics and civil society. © CIPRA

The Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention (YPAC), held in Chamonix, sought to find solutions for creating an open society. Political education and more information were uppermost on the wish list of the participants, who came from all of the Alpine countries.

Under the motto “My Alps beyond boundaries” some 90 young people aged between 14 and 19 years met in the first week of April 2014 in Chamonix, France, to develop solutions for the challenges facing the Alpine regions. The participants in the ninth Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention came from countries with different cultures and political systems. They all had one thing in common, however: the will to take joint responsibility for their habitat and their future.

Dialogue with politicians

Many of the demands that were ultimately adopted concerned political education and participation. More discussion and better access to information will allow young people to form their own opinions at an early age: Among other things, they therefore, suggested promoting political awareness at school through courses and debates. Similarly, some of the demands aim at the creation of more youth parliaments in cities and a news platform for information concerning the Alps as a whole. One group of young people, with the support of coaches, performed communications tasks, produced video clips and considered the long-term impact of their parliament.

An important experience for the young people at the YPAC was provided by the exchanges with representatives from the worlds of politics and civil society who had travelled there from various Alpine countries. The young people’s demands found a receptive audience: the president of “Environn’Mont Blanc”, Anne Lassman-Trappier, agreed that as much attention as possible should be given to the environment, civic commitment and youth training. As she said: “Schools should not simply limit themselves to conventional subjects.”

Important experiences for both sides

The exchanges also proved a rewarding experience for adults, as emphasised by Cassiano Luminati, President of the Swiss region of Valposchiavo: “This was a great opportunity for me to discuss with the delegates what us politicians can do and how we can take account of the needs of our young people.” The 2014 Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention was organised by the Frison-Roche High School in Chamonix with the participation of nine further high schools and the technical support of CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps. The Youth Parliament was made possible thanks to the financial support of the EU’s “Youth in Action” programme, the town of Chamonix, the department of Haute-Savoie and the Rhône-Alpes region.

Further information: www.ypac.eu

Point of view

Second homes – no end in sight



Dominik Siegrist is President of CIPRA International.
©Heinz Hess

By voting “Yes” in 2012 in the referendum “No to the unrestricted building of second homes”, Swiss voters expressed their desire for new tourism policies. Dominik Siegrist, President of CIPRA International, expresses doubt that the population’s demand can actually be implemented.

The Swiss Federal Council recently introduced its law on second homes, intended to implement the second homes initiative approved in 2012. The Swiss voted two years ago in favour of the popular initiative “No to the unrestricted building of second homes”. Since then the building of new second homes has been forbidden in municipalities where the proportion of second homes is over 20%. The Italian environmental protection organisation Legambiente even presented its “Green Flag” environmental award to those behind the initiative.

But the people’s will in the world’s “oldest democracy” – as Switzerland likes to describe itself – is worth less than is generally assumed. The results of a referendum are one thing, implementing them as actual policies is another. Thus the federal government decided, despite the clear mandate from the people as sovereign, to leave numerous loopholes in the law implementing the second homes initiative. First homes and unprofitable older hotels can in future still be converted into second homes, while nominal first homes are still possible. This has opened another round in the debate about the destruction of the Alpine landscape caused by second homes – which will probably end up as the subject of another referendum.

News from the CIPRA

Live simply!



The CIPRA annual report presents people, municipalities and projects who are consuming fewer resources yet are creating a better quality of life. © Heinz Hess

The Alps and their natural resources are coming under increased pressure. But how can a change in values open the door to an ecologically sustainable way of life? CIPRA investigates this question in its latest annual report.

The Alps are rich in natural resources such as water, wind, sun and biomass. The energy transition now means that greater use is to be made of them to replace fossil and nuclear energy sources. The resources offered by the Alps are not infinite, however, and a change in values resulting in a more sustainable way of life is urgently required.

In its annual report, CIPRA International shows that a simpler life can also make us happy and more content with what we have. As an example, the Alpine Dialogue is looking into topics such as how much energy we actually need, while the Alpstar project encourages commuters to travel to work by bus, train or bicycle.

Less is more: this too is the message of the re-designed knowledge and ideas platform at www.cipra.org. CIPRA's new online look gives a concise overview of current topics while offering easy

access to more detailed information on all the major Alpine themes. The content is, as ever, scientifically based and free to use.

Annual report and further information:

<http://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/international/publications/annual-reports>

Youth participation in the Alps: a situation report



The new CIPRA report shows that young people can and want to help shape the future of the Alps. © CIPRA

Where are young people involved in decision-making? How clearly are their voices heard? In its report CIPRA gives a first Alpine-wide view of the participation of young people.

Where in the Alpine states are youth parliaments involved in the decision-making process? What other institutions are there? What are the legal structures for youth participation? A report by CIPRA, “Youth Participation in the Alps”, is the first to compare the possibilities for young people to shape decisions in the seven Alpine states. The result gives a very varied picture: while Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Austria offer a robust framework for young people to have their say,

in some places, e.g. rural areas of Italy, the possibilities for young people to participate are lacking. CIPRA has prioritised the increased participation of young people in the Alps and is therefore supporting those who are enabling youth participation. The report explains how it intends to achieve this: in the coming years, CIPRA will develop an Alpine-wide network for youth participation. This will create the framework for a network of well-connected, knowledgeable young people able to help shape their own future in a responsible manner. This review sets out the different ingredients for building such a network.

The report was co-financed by the European Union’s “Youth in Action” programme and is available to download from the CIPRA website: <http://www.cipra.org/en/youth/youthbrochure.pdf/view>

Service as the key to success



Experts support sustainable building in municipalities in the Alps and other mountain regions. © CIPRA

Numerous mountain communities in Europe would like to build or renovate their kindergartens, schools or community centres in an energy-efficient way so as to save costs and energy. Implementation is a major challenge, however, as know-how and experience are still lacking. A service package can now provide further help.

The key to successful, sustainable building projects is a holistic and structured approach, from the idea, to planning and, finally, the end use. Regionally adapted service packages can now help municipalities keep track of the various aspects. Experts such as building ecologists and environmental consultants assist local authorities throughout the entire building process,

providing advice on matters such as energy conservation, ecological building materials and quality assurance. The packages are being developed and tested under the EU’s “MountEE – sustainable public building and renovation” project by mountain regions in Sweden, the Pyrenees and the Alps. The first of more than 30 building and renovation projects that were implemented with the help of regional service packages are now finished. The project website relates the initial experiences of an office building in Crolles, France, a kindergarten in Sagrado, Italy and a museum in Jokkmokk, Sweden.

CIPRA is co-ordinating the MountEE project which is being financially supported by the “Intelligent Energy Europe” (IEE) programme.

Further information: <http://www.mountee.eu/pilot-buildings/>

News from the Alps

Tomorrow's climate: warmer, wetter, costlier



Climate change means that natural disasters, such as mudflows, will occur more frequently in future – with greater damage and costs.
© CIPRA

This winter was the second warmest in Italy and one of the wettest since 1800. The world's largest reinsurer is now also warning of the increasing natural risks as a consequence of climate change.

Since records began around 1800, Italy has only once – in 1990 – experienced a warmer winter than 2013/14, reports the Isac-Cnr research institute. There was also an unusually large amount of precipitation, around 62% higher: the Alps saw a great deal of snow above 1,200 metres, while lower altitudes had considerably more rainy days than is normally the case. The Swiss government is also addressing climate change. Its conclusion is that landslides, rock falls, rock slides and mudflows may all occur more frequently in the mountains in coming decades. At the beginning of April 2014 the Swiss

adopted a further action plan for adapting to climate change. For the period 2016 to 2019 the Federal Government has earmarked 40 million Swiss Francs for measures to ward off the effects of global warming, for example by investing in the maintenance of protective forests.

In a recently published forecast, Allianz, the world's largest insurance group, makes the assumption that the frequency and severity of natural disasters will also increase on account of climate change. The costs of adaptation will substantially increase with the continuing change in climate, adds the Swiss Federal Council. It is a fact that those who take preventive measures in good time will pay considerably less than those who have to repair damage later.

Sources and further information:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/368na1.pdf>,

http://www.isac.cnr.it/climstor/climate_news.html (it),

<http://www.nimbus.it/clima/2014/140305Inverno2014.htm> (it),

<http://www.montagna.tv/cms/56991/febbraio-e-inverno-2014-i-secondi-piu-caldi-dal-1800> (it),

<https://www.news.admin.ch/message/index.html?lang=de&msg-id=52605> (de),

http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20140402_OTS0035/allianz-risikoforschung-deckungsluecke-von-80-prozent-bei-erdbeben-und-hochwasser (de)

Municipal network for nature protection



Preserving biodiversity is a central issue for the 25 Alpine municipalities involved in the dynAlp-nature project. © Katharina Wieland-Müller, pixelio

Nature knows no bounds. Therefore, 25 members of the “Alliance in the Alps” network of municipalities are now working together to ensure greater biodiversity and quality of life. Below is a summary of the aims of the international dynAlp-nature projects.

Plants and animals pay no heed to either municipal or national borders. Neither should nature conservation work, and consequently members of the “Alliance in the Alps” network are now working together on four projects: visitor direction, ecologically valuable urban greenery, wetlands and the marketing of regional products. Municipalities from all seven Alpine countries are involved in co-operation. As an example, Chambéry métropole in France is implementing its action plan

to protect and restore its wetlands. It is receiving additional technical support from the Austrian village of Krumbach, which some years ago decided against the building of a public swimming pool and for the preservation and sustainable use of its moorlands instead. The Slovenian municipalities of Kranjska Gora and Kamnik are cultivating old fruit varieties in their orchards. Along with municipalities from France, Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland they are sharing the effort of introducing ecologically valuable urban greenery.

The projects, which are being realised under the name “dynAlp-nature”, allow municipalities to look further afield and choose paths for which they would otherwise lack the resources. In the past there have been three such DYNALP programmes for network members. CIPRA has been supporting the dynAlp projects from the outset.

Sources and further information: <http://www.alpenallianz.org/de/projekte/dynalp-nature/projekte> (de)

Agenda

C3-Alps Adaptation Measures Survey, 15.02 - 01.06.2014. Organisor: CMCC – Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Climate Change, [More »](#)

3rd International Workshop "Mountain Environmental Education in Alpine Protected Areas", 20.10 - 22.10.2014, Organisor: ALPARC, [More »](#)

Managing visitor access to natural and protected areas, 22.5.2014, Organiser: Department of Economics and Management, [More »](#)

Mountain Research Initiative Key Contact Workshop, 26.4.2014, Organiser: Mountain Research Initiative MRI, [More »](#)

For a strong Alpine area – recent developments in the implementation of a macroregional strategy for the Alps, 14.6.2014, Organiser: CIPRA Österreich, [More »](#)

Oh!...

... *Winter ade, scheiden tut weh* – Winter must go, parting hurts, as the old German folk song runs. The little Austrian community of Ramsau is now ignoring this piece of wisdom, as well as the laws of nature. The village, in the Dachstein region, counts 2,800 inhabitants, 6,500 hotel beds and one cross-country ski trail. To make sure the trail can be used in autumn, while the surrounding area is still green, old snow will be stored over the summer under a cover of foil and matting. A stock of artificial snow has been produced in recent months, at the cost of large amounts of water and power. Now the unused remains of this year's snow will also be scraped together. Such recycling is purely money-driven, as can be seen from the figures: this “snow management” saw the Ramsau cross-country ski trail increase its turnover by 400,000 euros this year.

Sources and further information:

<http://fm4.orf.at/stories/1735556/> (de),

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g5tR-DuYms> (de),

http://www.ramsau.com/fileadmin/pdf/Presse/2014/Winterstatistik_Aussendung2014.pdf (de),

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1BDI8l4RB4> (de)