



Swiss National Park: as the first national park in the Alps, Switzerland's largest protected area had a great influence as a role model on neighbouring countries. © padmanaba01, flickr

### From protected enclaves to regional managers

**The Swiss National Park in the canton of Graubünden is 100 years old. It was the first National Park in the Alps and is still a model of its kind – but it no longer ranks among the best of the protected areas.**

When the first National Park in the Alps was officially opened on 1 August 1914 under the aegis of the then Swiss Nature Conservation Federation, today Pro Natura, the notion of protection was paramount. By 1932 the park had grown from its original 100 km<sup>2</sup> to 170 km<sup>2</sup>. The creation of a such a large core zone without human usage would scarcely be possible today, says Thomas Scheurer, director of the research commission for the National Park. Now, when new protected areas are established, the first question is often how much value will be generated.

#### Numerous tasks

External influences – climate change, tourism, transport and energy production – have all increased. The tasks of the park authorities have therefore become more diverse and complex. Negotiations with different partners are required, says Scheurer. “There is no solution available for the park alone: there are only regional solutions.” Scientists hold up the dynamic remediation of the residual water in the Spöl stream as a “model for co-operation”. A solution however remains to be found for the ever-increasing traffic over the Ofenpass road, which runs through the middle of the National Park, towards Livigno in Italy.

Since 1914 the National Park has inspired numerous other protected areas in the Alps, some with very different orientations and tasks. According to Guido Plassmann of Alparc, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, more and more inhabited protected areas are being created with regional development responsibilities in addition to their nature protection function. Protected areas could provide many ecological services that cannot always be valued in monetary terms. “The conservation of biodiversity cannot simply be expressed in Euros”, he says.

#### Developments blocked

Many protected areas lack financial resources, skills or a clear strategic direction. For example, of the 24 national parks in Italy, only three have elected executive committees. This lack of strategic leadership means that the parks are even more at the mercy of outside forces. One of the oldest parks, the Stilsferjoch (Stelvio) National Park in the Italian Alps, will now be sacrificed to regional interests and divided into three parts, making any unified administration impossible. In France, too, protected areas face obstacles: for fear of interference, municipal representatives from around Vanoise, the oldest French national park, are blocking the overall concept developed under a broad participation process. The aim of the concept is to ensure lasting co-operation between the park and the surrounding municipalities.

Source and further information:

<http://www.nationalpark.ch/go/en/about/about-us/centenary/> ,

[http://www.wwf.it/news/sala\\_stampa/?8880/Ripartiamo-dai-parchi](http://www.wwf.it/news/sala_stampa/?8880/Ripartiamo-dai-parchi) (it),

<http://www.mountainwilderness.fr/se-tenir-informe/actualites/parc-de-la-vanoise-une-charte.html> (fr)

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## Point of view



Claire Simon is Executive Director of CIPRA International. © Martin Walser

### Macro-region Alps: get involved!

**The European strategy for the Alps could compensate for the shortcomings of the Alpine Convention, says Claire Simon, Executive Director of CIPRA International. Now, during the consultation phase, is an opportunity to participate and demand sustainability.**

The consultation on the proposed European Strategy for the Alps (EUSALP) has been open since 16 July 2014. CIPRA, too, has participated in various working groups and tried to introduce the demands for sustainability and participation into the draft, in line with its position paper “New solidarity between the Alps and surrounding areas” (see <http://cipra.org/en/positions/118>). While the draft Strategy does not fully meet our expectations, the process is not over yet. Every man, woman and organisation or institution can make their opinion heard by 15 October 2014 at [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/consultation/eusalp/index\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/consultation/eusalp/index_en.cfm). This chance should be taken. Nothing less than the future of the Alps is at stake.

On the one hand, the consultation allows residents and other actors in the Alps to comment on the draft Strategy itself. It provides a framework for future co-operation in the Alpine macro-region and opens up possible development objectives for selected topics. Sustainability in the sense of the Alpine Convention must be the basis for all decisions, with the Alpine Convention at the heart of EUSALP.

On the other hand, proposals for specific measures and projects are invited as part of the consultation to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy. These could then be included in the Strategy’s ActionPlan. EUSALP has thus an opportunity to make up for the lack of an implementation strategy in the Alpine Convention.

The consultation is an opportunity to participate in and contribute to the development and implementation of the Action Plan. CIPRA continues to press the EU and the national states for an opening of the political process. What good is the best strategy without the people, organisations, enterprises and institutions whose roots lie in the region and who fill it with life? We mean you, dear readers – now.

**Claire Simon**

**Executive Director of CIPRA International**

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## News from the CIPRA



The current issue of *SzeneAlpen* addresses the question of why Alpine policy needs to be reoriented. © Frank Schultze, *Zeitenspiegel*

### Alpine policy put to the test

With the development of a macro-regional strategy Europe's attention is increasingly turned to the Alps – at least for the present. The CIPRA publication *SzeneAlpen* focuses on the events.

Europe is at a turning point. Increasing nationalism and stronger regions face a globalised economy, with the Alps in the middle. Economic, social and territorial cohesion across areas with similar challenges and potentials, the so-called macro-regions, can be strengthened through European strategies. Such a strategy is also being developed for the Alps.

This development raises certain questions: Are the Alps seen in Brussels as a natural compensation space for urban areas and a natural and human habitat with particular needs? What opportunities and challenges result from the interaction between urban and rural areas in the Alps? In the current issue of *SzeneAlpen*, "Which way now? Why Alpine policy needs to be re-focused", CIPRA gives an overview of international policy on the Alps. This includes an illustration of the levers required to get heard in Brussels, how the interaction between the Alpine Convention and the European strategy could work and why the Alpine regions and civil society must be involved.

Further information:

<http://www.cipra.org/szenealpen> (de), <http://www.cipra.org/de/medienmitteilungen> (de)



The final conference of the greenAlps project will discuss how to maintain the diversity of nature in the Alps. © berggeist007 / pixelio.de

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### How policies can enable biodiversity

From 13 – 15 October 2014, the conference "How Policy can enable Biodiversity" will highlight opportunities for supporting biodiversity at the international and the local level. The conference, which will be held in Chambéry/F, will also present the findings of the greenAlps project.

Various sectors, such as land-use planning or agriculture, must be involved in order to ensure biodiversity in the Alps. In many regions, the results of projects and studies are often not known or not directly applicable. How can the framework for sustainable, effective European environmental policies be improved? And how can the new EU funding programmes contribute to maintaining biodiversity? These and other topics will be discussed at the international final conference of the greenAlps project, to which you are cordially invited.

The topics will be addressed by speakers from different perspectives, from European to local level, and discussed within the framework of workshops and field trips. The conference will take place from 13 to 15 October 2014 in Chambéry, France. Contributions will be translated into German, French, Italian and Slovenian. Participation is free of charge. The greenAlps project is co-funded by the EU in the context of the Alpine Space Programme in order to put into effect the results of current and completed projects in the area of biodiversity.

More information and registration: <http://www.greenalps-project.eu/finalconference>



St. Gerold community centre – a modern, multifunctional building made of local wood. © Caroline Begle, CIPRA International

### **Sustainable building and renovation in practice**

**Energy-efficient building methods and renovation are by no means utopian. How will such projects look? What needs to be done? A workshop in Idrija, Slovenia in October 2014 will provide the answers.**

In Europe, the building construction sector accounts for around 40% of energy consumption. From 2018 all new and renovated buildings throughout the EU must comply with the Low Energy Standard. How can municipalities build in a sustainable, energy-efficient way? Which partners and strategies are required for implementation? Examples of what communities are already doing to reduce costs and energy use and increase their quality of life will be discussed at the workshop entitled “Sustainable building and renovation: from strategy to implementation” to be held on 17 October 2014 in the Slovenian town of Idrija.

Bruno Summer, Mayor of St. Gerold in Austria, will be presenting the Vorarlberg’s first public building to be certified as a passive house and will talk about sustainable building construction in Alpine municipalities, local value creation and the need for co-operation with partners. Bruno Dujič, an expert on building in wood – the raw material of the Alps – will be speaking about wood as an opportunity and a challenge.

This interactive “marketplace of ideas” will allow participants to exchange knowledge and experiences of sustainable strategies and advisory packages for municipalities with experts and practitioners from the entire Alpine region, with examples from Italy, Slovenia and France. The French city of Chambéry will be presenting its service package, “build, plan and retrofit sustainably”, which incorporates findings from the MountEE project.

The event is being organised by the “Alpine Town of the Year” Association in Idrija (the 2011 Alpine Town of the Year) with the participation of CIPRA in the context of the MountEE project, which is in turn co-financed by the EU’s “Intelligent Energy Europe” programme. Deadline for registration is 10 October 2014.

Source and further information:

<http://www.alpenstaedte.org/de/aktuell/veranstaltungen/4984>, [www.mountee.eu](http://www.mountee.eu),

<http://cipra.org/de/climalp>

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## News from the Alps



More turmoil to come under the North Face of the Eiger? © Thanthia, flickr

### Express tourism on the Eiger

The North Face of the Eiger in the Bernese Oberland is an inspiration for every mountaineer. A new railway project is now intended to make the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau mountains even more accessible. Swiss environmental groups are, however, critical of the project.

The Jungfrauabahn AG company is seeking to refurbish its rail lines by 2016. A new lift system from the Grindelwald to the Eiger glacier is also being planned, the so-called Eiger Express. This will allow even more visitors to reach Europe's highest railway station, the Jungfraujoch, in record time. The operators argue that this will keep Switzerland competitive as a tourist region, creating and preserving jobs while boosting the local economy.

But what seems at first glance obvious, might in fact backfire. The Eiger Express allows visitors to be transported at high speeds. But express tourists leave behind little by way of value-added. Christian von Almen, a local businessman and an opponent of the project, states: "The unique Alpine landscape just becomes a backdrop when tourism is aimed solely at producing a spectacle for tourist groups". In the long term, the population of the valley, tourists seeking peace and quiet and above all the unique scenery of the mountain trio formed by the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau would also suffer. The project would, according to environmental organisations, be a major blot on the landscape as the construction of the Eiger Express would cut across the world-famous North Face of the Eiger. The area forms part of a UNESCO world heritage site and is listed in the federal inventory of landscapes and natural monuments of national importance. This is also why environmental organisations are demanding an appraisal of the landscape effects.

In October 2014, the voters of Grindelwald are going to the polls to vote on the change to the zone plan needed for the railway project – thus also voting on the development of tourism in their region. It is up to them whether the tourist infrastructures will be further upgraded or whether the Jungfraujoch will remain an unspoilt emblem of the region and beyond.

Source and further information: <http://www.eiger-express-nein.ch/> (de), [http://bo.bernerzeitung.ch/Region/dossier2.html?dossier\\_id=2298](http://bo.bernerzeitung.ch/Region/dossier2.html?dossier_id=2298) (de), <http://www.jungfrauzeitung.ch/news/dossier/10125/> (de)



The dream of a house in the country can often lead to additional land usage and urban sprawl. © Thorben Wengert, pixelio.de

### Preserving landscapes through smarter location choices

Ever more families in the Alps are realising their dream of a house in the country that is not too far from the city. This brings with it problems such as urban sprawl and high mobility costs. An online calculator can now show whether such a move is worth it.

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Economic development and population growth mean that towns in the Alps continue to spread outwards into the surrounding environment. Housing is often located some distance from good infrastructure. An online calculator developed under the MORECO (Mobility and Residential Costs) project allows mayors, elected representatives and local planners to determine which settlements should be developed for reasons of mobility, cost and sustainability – and which should not. In just a few clicks local people – who mostly continue to work in the city – can also calculate whether, given the extra time and costs involved in commuting, such moves are worth it.

MORECO also shows that municipalities with sustainable spatial development and well-planned mobility infrastructure can reduce both additional land usage and car dependency. The final declaration of the project partners thus also calls for settlements to be built only at mobility hubs, with the promotion of sustainable means of transport. One project partner, the Union of Alpine Towns and Municipalities, suggests that these mobility measures could be financed from toll revenues on Alpine roads.

Source and further information: <http://www.moreco-project.eu>, [http://www.moreco-project.eu/download/section\\_1\\_white\\_book/MORECO%20common%20declaration\\_EN.pdf](http://www.moreco-project.eu/download/section_1_white_book/MORECO%20common%20declaration_EN.pdf)

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## Agenda

**Workshop "The services of forest ecosystems in the Alps as a natural, economic and cultural resource for a Regional and European green economy"**, 12.09.2014, Pieve di Cadore/IT, Organisation: Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention. [More...](#)

**The Alps and the Ardennes: Sharing of Experiences between Transboundary Mountain Areas**, 15.09.2014, Charleville-Mézières / FR, Organisation: Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention, the University of Reims and the Regional Natural Park of the Ardennes. [More...](#)

**Mayors Adapt Signature Ceremony**, 16.10.2014, Brussels/Belgium, Organisation: Mayors Adapt initiative. [More...](#)

**Alpine Space 2020: Building on Experience – Cooperation towards 2020**, 21.-22.10.2014, Salzburg/AT, Organisation: Alpine Space Programme. [More...](#)

**CCSH15: 1st International Academic Conference on Climate Change and sustainable Heritage**, 18.-20.02.2015, Graz/AT, Organisation: TU Graz. [More...](#)

## Strange but true!

... it's a real "boar"! Wild pigs are conquering the Alps. And who is to blame? You! And indeed all of us: our excessive lifestyles mean that the climate is continuing to get warmer. And what are the greedy pigs doing? Taking full advantage of the situation, as now they can gorge themselves on the extra fruit produced by oak and beech trees thanks to the warm temperatures. With full bellies, wild pigs are nowadays multiplying faster, continuing to penetrate further through the Alps and "hogging" the Alpine space.

Source and further information: <http://salzburg.orf.at/news/stories/2648937/> (de)