

alpMedia Newsletter summary 04-07/15

Crying wolf?



Politics: an increasing threat to wolves in the Alps. © Lawria / flickr.com

Sheep farmers have achieved their aim: six wolves were released into the wild for killing in the French department of Savoy, while at the national level the easing of protected status is to be discussed. Early in September the farmers had held captive the president, the director and an employee of the Vanoise National Park for fifteen hours. While politics is now breathing down the neck of the wolf, the hostage-takers got away scot-free.

Environmental groups acknowledge that the return of the wolf presents farmers with certain challenges, but that a better and more comprehensive solution is required than mere culling. Wolves are not the cause of the problems in the Alps, but in France simply reveal the problems of farming in general and of animal husbandry in particular, states Marc-Jerôme Hassid, executive director of CIPRA France. "It is the farming model that is sick and needs to be rethought to permit the cohabitation of humans and nature."

Local hunters set the agenda

In Switzerland the protected status of wolves living in packs was recently relaxed, just before a second pack appeared in the canton of Ticino. There also exists controversy regarding the rule that cantons may decide for themselves whether the statutory conditions for culling have been met. The canton of Valais immediately exercised its right, punishing a wolf for its raids even though the flocks of sheep it had attacked were inadequately protected. Yet a survey carried out in the canton of Graubünden (Grisons), where Switzerland's second wolf pack lives, shows that the population mostly favours a natural reintroduction of this large predator.

Solutions for co-existence

The Alpine countries have repeatedly expressed their approval for co-existence between humans and large carnivores, inter alia in the Alpine Convention, the Berne Convention and the EU's fauna-flora habitat directive. Implementation of this commitment requires protection of flocks and herds, compensation schemes, monitoring and the raising of the awareness of the population. CIPRA is also increasing the latter with a contribution at its 2015 annual conference from Duccio Berzi, chairman of Canislupus Italia, a mediator in conflicts in Italy involving wolves and livestock farming.

Source and further information:

http://www.vanoise-parcnational.fr/fr/documentation-en-ligne/doc_download/2657-150904-cp-sequestration-a-bramans.html (fr)

<http://www.cipra.org/de/dossiers/grossraubtiere> (de)

<http://www.pronatura.ch/news-de/items/wolf-im-wallis-abschussbewilligung-nicht-rechtens> (de)

Point of view: Change begins in the heart



Claire Simon is executive director of CIPRA International
© CIPRA International

If we also want our children to enjoy a good life in the Alps, we will have to change both our individual and our collective living and working habits, whether by reducing the rise in global temperatures, for example, or adapting to the changes already taking place and preventing a dramatic deterioration of the situation. More than just in the laws and regulations adopted in the past decades, sustainable development has to be firmly anchored in the hearts of those living in the Alps.

Changes in behaviour do not begin in the head, but rather with the emotions. This has been shown by various cognitive and social science studies, including that carried out by Annette Jenny, who reported on the results obtained to the 2015 CIPRA annual conference. Citizens' initiatives in the Alps put this knowledge into practice and address the challenges of sustainable development with their experiences and emotions. Noteworthy examples are pop-up veggie cafes, alternative workplace models and garden co-operatives. Using projects such as the "Youth Alpine Express" or the "100max" climate game, CIPRA encourages residents in the Alps to try out more climate and environmentally friendly lifestyles, travel and eating habits.

For these pioneering initiatives to be able to spread, representatives of the worlds of politics and business have to be open to current changes and support such actions. We need to learn to work differently in order to ensure a fruitful exchange between civil society, politics and business – for the good of everyone and for the good of the Alps.

Further information: <http://www.cipra.org/de/medienmitteilungen/man-muss-veraenderung-ueben> (de, fr, it, sl)

CIPRA strengthens youth participation



Young people from the "Youth Alpine Express" project discuss sustainable lifestyles with participants at the CIPRA annual conference in Liechtenstein. © CIPRA International

Young people are one of the keys to sustainable development, and Alpine networks are becoming ever more conscious of this fact. Numerous young people who are interested in participation are thus now working together with members and partner organisations. The YAPP online platform brings together young people with such initiatives.

The www.yapp-network.org website offers information about projects, events and organisations that address youth participation and sustainable development in the Alpine regions. Organisations can upload their data and offerings free of charge to this multilingual platform.

One example of successful youth participation presented on YAPP is the "Youth Alpine Express" project, in which CIPRA encourages

young people to consciously travel in a climate-friendly way. As part of the project, last weekend 23 participants travelled to the CIPRA annual conference in Liechtenstein, showing how it is possible to reduce CO₂ emissions in small increments. They calculated their consumption for that day, consuming points for each activity – eating, travelling, taking a shower – and for each product – apple, coffee, computer game on a mobile phone. The aim was to consume no more than 100 points per person per day.

The “Youth Alpine Express” project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Construction and Nuclear Safety and the EU Erasmus+ programme. The YAPP web platform was created through the collaboration of CIPRA International, Alparc and Educ'Alpes, and is funded by the European “Youth in Action” programme and the Gerda Techow Foundation.

Source and further information:

www.yapp-network.org

www.cipra.org/de/medienmitteilungen/man-muss-veraenderung-ueben (de, it, fr, sl)

Sustainable building from the Arctic circle to the Mediterranean



One aim of the MountEE project is to give new life to old structures. © Parc Pyrenees Catalanes

According to the EU directive on the energy performance of buildings, from 2018 all new public buildings must meet the “nearly zero energy” standard. The know-how and technology are available, but municipalities need support to ensure implementation of the directive. Under the MountEE project, experts have helped to improve construction and renovation strategies in six European mountain regions, from northern Sweden to the Pyrenees, with the aim of greater energy efficiency and sustainability.

The key to success was a comprehensive, professional and structured approach to the entire construction process, from the conceptual and planning stages right through to implementation. The

Austrian province of Vorarlberg has considerable experience in sustainable building and renovation: taking this as a model, a service package was further developed in all regions for use with the 35 pilot buildings to be renovated or newly built.

From 2012 to 2015 MountEE received financial support from the European Union in the context of the “Intelligent Energy Europe” programme. CIPRA International was responsible for the project co-ordination and publicity work.

Further information:

<http://www.mountee.eu/>

<http://www.mountee.eu/infoservice/downloads/>

No pardon for crimes against the environment



The “Via Lattea” ski area is being investigated on account of unauthorised terrain alterations. © Marla / flickr.com

The new Italian law covering crimes against the environment was applied for the first time in summer 2014 following illegal works on the ski slopes of the “Via Lattea” in Cesana and Claviere. Deep cuts were made into the mountain for a new ski piste without stabilising the soil, leading to landslides and a rockfall. The judicial investigation was only instigated following a fatal accident involving a young skier who came off the slope: the inquiry into the accident revealed that the works had not been approved. The management of the cable car company and the mayors of the two municipalities stand accused of failure to perform their duty of supervision.

According to the law, an irreversible change to the balance of an ecosystem may be punished with from five to fifteen years imprisonment. The penalties are increased if the offence is committed in a protected area or against protected species. The new law might well have a deterrent effect on those offences that damaged the ecosystem but were previously regarded as petty crimes.

An English-language book recounts the development of environmental legislation from a personal perspective. In “Wolfgang E. Burhenne – A sustainable life” Vivienne Klimke not only describes the life of the CIPRA co-founder, but also gives an insight into the environmental movement during and since the Second World War. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP, the United Nations Environment Programme, praised Burhenne for his commitment, wisdom, vigour and acuteness: “Wolfgang Burhenne has had a profound and lasting impact on the conceptualization, enactment and implementation of environmental law and policy.”

Source and further information:

www.artemis-pr.de

<http://www.lastampa.it/2015/09/01/cronaca/indagati-i-sindaci-di-cesana-e-claviere-per-la-morte-di-un-quattordicenne-sulle-piste-del-vialattea-8VnipMAtvN1JBqwYplzMP/pagina.html> (it)

<http://www.valsusaoggi.it/piste-di-sci-vialattea-la-procura-usa-i-droni-per-dimostrare-il-disastro-ambientale-guariniello-scrive-al-ministro-il-nuovo-tracciato-della-pista-non-e-sicuro> (it)

<http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2015/05/28/15G00082/sg> (it)

A warm welcome to the new Alpine residents!



Chiappera in the Italian Alps is

Recently released by the Alpine Convention, the fifth State of the Alps report shows the nature of demographic change in the Alps: the population is growing in the central and northern parts of the Alps, while it is shrinking in the eastern Alps. It paints a very heterogeneous picture: differences in population growth can be attributed to such factors as accessibility, attractiveness of the landscape and socio-economic factors.

(still) affected by emigration. ©
comune.acceglio.cn.it

Ernst Steinicke of the University of Innsbruck stresses that the Alps – apart from eastern Austria – are no longer facing depopulation, stating: “In the Italian Alps we see a positive migration balance of over ten percent in some areas”. Thus since the new millennium some 3,000 new immigrants – the so-called “new Highlanders” – have each year moved into peripheral Italian mountain communities.

“The State of the Alps report paints a complex and fascinating picture”, says Markus Reiterer, Secretary-General of the Alpine Convention. He provides policymakers and other actors with up-to-date and reliable data, a useful tool as demographic change already features on the political agenda of numerous municipalities. Thus in April 2015 a call was made at the meeting of the “Alliance in the Alps” network of municipalities to recognise the risks, break away from old models and to create structures that will for instance promote sustainable mobility.

Sources :

http://alpenallianz.org/en/news?set_language=en

<http://www.alpconv.org/en/AlpineKnowledge/RSA/demographic/default.html?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

<http://www.uibk.ac.at/ipoint/news/2015/lieber-besiedelte-als-unbesiedelte-alpen.html.de> (de)

Better protection for Alpine rivers



A landmark EU decision has now made it more difficult to obtain permission for new hydropower plants. © Xenos_wikimedia commons

should not be restricted.

The European Court of Justice has recently made clear that changes to rivers that worsen their condition are not permitted. Exceptions for hydropower plants or snow guns will now only rarely be granted. It is emphasised that interventions are prohibited even if they do not entail a downgrading in quality. The legal basis for this decision was the European water framework directive, prompted by the proposed deepening of the Weser river in Germany.

The immediate reaction shows the degree of pressure facing Alpine rivers: several Austrian politicians – including Andrä Rupprechter, the minister responsible for the environment and water – have requested that the water framework directive be revised. They base their reasoning on the notion that the expansion of renewable energies

Rivers in South Tyrol also face an “uphill” battle: the water protection plan recently adopted by the provincial government permits a further expansion of hydroelectric power. The draft was originally produced by local authority specialists, but then debated by representatives of the energy industry at the so-called “energy table” and subsequently watered down. Andreas Riedl, Executive Director of CIPRA South Tyrol, showed his disappointment, stating: “The political credo in South Tyrol is clear: the exploitation of water as a resource takes priority over its protection”.

Back in 1992 a CIPRA study found that less than ten percent of Alpine rivers existed in a natural or near-natural state. In 2014, the Umweltdachverband listed 212 hydropower plants that were planned for Austria alone, with around half of them in environmentally sensitive locations.

Sources and further information:

<http://www.oekobuero.at/eugh-staerkt-europaeischen-gewaesserschutz> (de)

<http://www.argealp.org/meldungen/arge-alp-vorstoss-zur-aenderung-der-eu-wasserrahmenrichtlinie> (de)

<http://www.tt.com/politik/10271153-91/rupprechter-attackiert-eu-bei-wasserkraft.csp> (de)

<http://www.umwelt.bz.it/index.php?>

[option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=608_04ffa1e716485c03092434c251084938](http://www.umwelt.bz.it/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&task=download&id=608_04ffa1e716485c03092434c251084938) (de)

Strange but true...

The Kaunertal glacier in Austria was this summer used for a special purpose, however: over two weeks some 100 experts sampled the conditions for a manned trip to Mars. Just in time as, if the first trip to our planetary neighbour does not go ahead as planned within the next twenty years, the Austrian Space Forum will have to find a new training area for its space travellers. Glaciologists in fact reckon that most glaciers in the Alps will have melted by the end of this century. If we do not manage to save our climate by then, we might at least soon be able to look for suitable living conditions on other planets.

<http://www.welt.de/wissenschaft/article144783202/Forscher-simulieren-Mars-Mission-in-den-Alpen.html>
(de)

Agenda

The new EU Strategy for the Alpine Region - Challenges to Implementation, 05.10.-06.10.2015, Hagnau am Bodensee/DE, Organisation: Europa Zentrum Baden-Württemberg (EZBW) Stuttgart, GFGZ Neuhausen am Rheinfall/CH, Arbeitskreis Europäische Integration e.V. (AEI) Berlin, Gemeinde Hagnau am Bodensee. [More...](#)

World Resources Forum 2015, 11.10. - 14.10.2015, Davos/CH, Organisation: World Resources Forum. [More...](#)

Open Days 2015: 13th European Week of Regions and Cities, 12.10. - 15.10.2015, Brussels/BE. [More...](#)

Walk21 Vienna 2015, 20.10. - 23.10.2015, Vienna/AT, Organisation: Walk21. [More...](#)

EUROPARC Conference 2015: Protected Areas in a Changing World, 26.10. - 27.10.2015, Regensburg/DE, Organisation: EUROPARC. [More...](#)