

## Taking small steps together



Different topics, interactive sessions, multicultural audience - lively exchanges took place at AlpWeek under the slogan "Alps and people" "Alps and People" © CIPRA International

Last week's AlpWeek held in the German town of Grassau saw the focus on people and their relations with the Alps. The topics of migration and youth participation were particular subjects of discussion.

Progress can only be made together, in small steps: this was a central fact recognised in numerous discussions during the fourth AlpWeek held from 11 to 15 October 2016 in Grassau, Germany. Harald Welzer of Futurzwei for instance highlighted social relationships and processes, as he stressed at the opening of the international conference held under the slogan "Alps and People", stating: "It is not technical but rather social intelligence we need." According to historian Bernhard Tschofen of the University of Zurich, Switzerland, the issue is to bridge the divide between the Alps and the surrounding areas, between city and country, traditional and modern as well as incomers and locals. Sandrine Percheval of the French organisation Adrets and Anne Lassman-Trappier of Environn'Mont Blanc addressed these very different spheres.

## Fruitful exchanges between generations

The 400 participants from every Alpine country included numerous young people. "At AlpWeek 2012 we were more or less decoration", says Luzia Felder from Entlebuch, Switzerland, a member of the CIPRA youth advisory council. This year it was completely different. "We were part of the whole, we could ask questions and people listened to us." Markus Reiterer, general secretary of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, also found the exchanges inspiring: "It is easier to be bold if we exchange ideas with young people."

In its contributions, CIPRA brought the discussion of values to centre stage. The fourth and final stage of the "Youth Alpine Express" and the climate game "100max" addressed the issue of sustainable lifestyles. The workshop entitled "Da röhrt der Hirsch, da rauscht der Bach [Where the deer bellows and the stream rushes]" discussed the idea of wilderness, which arouses different emotions wherever it is mentioned. "We must speak of values, not of definitions", stressed one participant from the field of science.

## The Alpine Convention: coming closer to people

Another component of AlpWeek was the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Alpine Convention. Among other things, environment ministers adopted the long-term work programme for the years 2017 to 2022, with a focus on people and culture as one of its priorities.

Austria, which took over the presidency from Germany at Grassau, will in the next two years add the role of women in mountain regions as another issue within the area of culture. Austria will also emphasise traffic and mobility, mountain farming and mountain forests, nature conservation, water, climate change, energy and natural hazards. An Alpine status report will be prepared on the latter topic.

AlpWeek was organised by CIPRA, ISCAR, the "Alpine Town of the Year" association, the "Alliance in the Alps", the CAA, the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention, the Interreg Alpine Space programme and Ökomodell Achenal. The German Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety, and the Bavarian Ministry for the Environment and Consumer Protection provided financial support.

Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/en/cipra/about/conferences/alpweek-2016](http://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/about/conferences/alpweek-2016)  
[www.alpweek.org/2016/welcome/welcome/](http://www.alpweek.org/2016/welcome/welcome/)

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## Point of view: A strategy for people in the Alps



Andreas Pichler, Director, CIPRA International. © Marcel Hagen

The European strategy for the Alps is intended to create new relationships between Alpine regions and the surrounding areas. This however requires oversight to ensure the reconciliation of interests as well as sustainable development, says Andreas Pichler, director of CIPRA international.

The starting signal for the implementation of the European Strategy for the Alpine Region (Eusalp) was given in February 2016 at a conference in the town of Brdo, Slovenia. The procedures have in the meanwhile become clearer and the competing interests are gathering momentum. CIPRA is participating in two of a total of nine action groups, addressing the topics of natural resources (Group 6) and ecological networking (Group 7).

The procedure, composition and goals of the various action groups are very different. It is thus all the more important that the heads of the action groups and the Eusalp committees ensure a fair exchange of interests and a solution-oriented working method so that the more powerful players are held in check and the common vision of sustainable development in the Alps is kept in the foreground.

It is not the strategy's area of application, but rather the people who live and work in the Alps who are at the centre of Eusalp. CIPRA has from the outset lobbied for the involvement of civil society, which must be guaranteed representation on all working groups and at all levels.

The members of the working groups must ensure that the focus is not only on growth and economic development, but also on the needs of nature and society. Sustainable development should be a specific and common theme for all working groups.

We should consider the goals of the macro-regional strategies that pursue a "locally oriented" political approach: the aim is not just to secure European policies in the regions, but also to take account of the regional characteristics, potentials and challenges of larger, supra-national areas with a functional reference – such as the Alps. These characteristics, potentials and challenges must first be identified and aligned in a joint co-operation exercise.

Sustainable regional development relates to the public good, the cultural, scenic and natural heritage and the preservation of common assets in the Alps. The Alpine Convention can serve as a basis here if stakeholders, including NGOs like CIPRA, succeed in meshing it with the Eusalp goals and advocate for development that is compatible with the Alps. Such co-operation will mean a lot of hard work for everyone – we stand ready.

Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/en/news/alpine-regional-strategy-on-the-starting-blocks](http://www.cipra.org/en/news/alpine-regional-strategy-on-the-starting-blocks)

[www.cipra.org/en/positions/118](http://www.cipra.org/en/positions/118)

[www.ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/alpine/](http://www.ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/cooperation/macro-regional-strategies/alpine/)

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## On foot through the Alps



Following the trail of change in the Alps. © Zeitenspiegel Heinz Zeiss

From June to September 2017 the "whatsalp" group of mountain enthusiasts will be crossing the Alps from east to west, documenting the changes to the Alpine regions as they go. CIPRA will be accompanying them as a project partner.

How have the Alps changed over the last 25 years? How will we overcome the major challenges of the future? The "whatsalp" walking group will be asking these questions during its four-month Alpine crossing from Vienna in Austria to Nice in France. Both the beauty and the destruction of the Alps will be noted during their trek. This documentation of the state of the Alpine region is to be compared with the results of the "TransALPedes" walk that followed almost the same route in 1992, thus making the changes in the Alps more visible and tangible. Avid walkers can join up with the "whatsalp" group at their own initiative. Their experiences and

encounters along the way will be continually updated on [whatsalp.org](http://whatsalp.org) and in CIPRA media.

Interested persons, institutions and organisations from the Alps are invited to meet up with the "whatsalp" group along their route and initiate events together. The aim is an exchange between the inhabitants of the Alpine regions and the walking group in order to discuss the changes in the Alps and to highlight the challenges and current issues. Those interested in meeting up can contact the "whatsalp" group directly.

Further information and contact:

whatsalp: Dominik Siegrist: [dominik.siegrist@hsr.ch](mailto:dominik.siegrist@hsr.ch)

CIPRA: Michaela Hogenboom: [michaela.hogenboom@cipra.org](mailto:michaela.hogenboom@cipra.org)

[www.whatsalp.org](http://www.whatsalp.org)

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## Media address expansion of winter sports



Bigger, higher, further – Alpine ski areas are seeing excessive development. Pictured is the

The call by CIPRA to end the constant upgrading of ski areas has found considerable support. Facts such as climate change, stagnating numbers of skiers and falling profits underline the urgency of these demands.

The Alpine countries are at present falling over themselves to expand their ski areas: in Germany two municipalities on the Riederberger Horn are trying to get around the approved Bavarian Alpine Plan and push a ski area connection through a protected zone. The planned link between the Austrian glacier valleys of the Ötztal and Pitztal, or the expansion of the Haider Alm and Schöneben areas outside the permitted skiing zones in the South Tyrolean Vinschgau Valley are further examples. The arguments against the excessive development of ski areas are based in particular on climate change, stagnating numbers of skiers and falling

South Tyrol ski area of  
Schöneben, Italy, which plans to  
expand. © Marius Brede/flickr

profits. Many of these areas are even today fighting for economic survival: in  
Switzerland, for example, only one in three ski areas is profitable.

At the end of September 2016, therefore, CIPRA representatives from Germany,  
Austria, South Tyrol and CIPRA International sounded the alarm at a joint press  
conference held in Innsbruck, Austria. They demanded an Alpine-wide moratorium on the expansion of ski areas and a  
sustainable strategy for development in the Alpine regions, based on the Alpine Convention, that takes full account of  
current agreements, spatial planning and climate change. Katharina Conradin, President of CIPRA international, stated:  
"It is vital for such a reorientation to focus on promoting projects that meet strict sustainability criteria – in all of the  
Alpine countries." As a consequence, she continued, improved Alpine-wide co-operation in the tourist industry is  
essential.

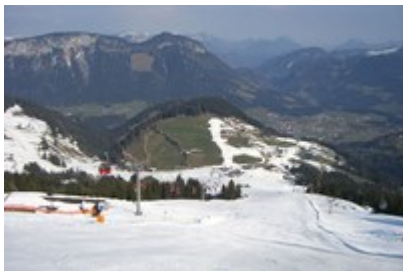
CIPRA's call has attracted considerable attention amongst the public in the German-speaking Alpine countries.  
Numerous media outlets have used it as an opportunity to address the future of winter sports, with both supportive and  
critical viewpoints being expressed.

Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/de/news/internationaler-stopp-fuer-flaechenhafte-erweiterung-von-skigebieten-gefordert](http://www.cipra.org/de/news/internationaler-stopp-fuer-flaechenhafte-erweiterung-von-skigebieten-gefordert)  
[www.cipra.org/de/medienmitteilungen/wintertourismus-in-den-alpen-wachstum-auf-teufel-komm-raus](http://www.cipra.org/de/medienmitteilungen/wintertourismus-in-den-alpen-wachstum-auf-teufel-komm-raus)  
[www.cipra.org/de/cipra/oesterreich/#wintertourismus-in-den-alpen-wachstum-auf-teufel-komm-raus-1](http://www.cipra.org/de/cipra/oesterreich/#wintertourismus-in-den-alpen-wachstum-auf-teufel-komm-raus-1)

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## The Alps are losing their snow



The Alps are losing their snow,  
yet at the same time there is more  
and more investment in classical  
winter tourism. © bookhouse  
boy/flickr

A recently published study shows that winters are ever shorter and the amount  
of snow is decreasing. The main reason for long winters becoming more and  
more a thing of the past is the earlier spring thaw.

Climate warming is apparent even at higher altitudes, as a recent study by the  
University of Neuenburg and the Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research at the  
Swiss Federal Research Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape shows.  
Researchers analysed data from eleven weather stations in Switzerland located at  
around 1100 to 2500 metres above sea level. The results clearly demonstrate that  
the snowy season at all stations today begins on average twelve days later and  
ends approximately 25 days earlier than 45 years ago. This means an average of 37  
days less snow cover in winter. The maximum quantity of snow has also decreased  
by one quarter. There is thus not only snow for a shorter period, but also less snow  
altogether.

At the same time winter sports areas across the Alps are investing in the expansion  
of cable cars, lift systems and ski pistes, as CIPRA recently stated at a media

conference in Innsbruck, Austria. But it is not only tourism that is affected by this development: less snow means less  
meltwater, so the quantity of water available for society and ecosystems in summer is reduced.

Sources and further information:

[www.slf.ch/dienstleistungen/news/paper\\_rebetez/index\\_EN](http://www.slf.ch/dienstleistungen/news/paper_rebetez/index_EN), [www.badische-zeitung.de/suedwest-1/immer-weniger-schneetage-auch-im-schwarzwald-127868680.html](http://www.badische-zeitung.de/suedwest-1/immer-weniger-schneetage-auch-im-schwarzwald-127868680.html)  
[www.tdg.ch/suisse/La-duree-d-enneigement-est-toujours-plus-courte/story/22818412](http://www.tdg.ch/suisse/La-duree-d-enneigement-est-toujours-plus-courte/story/22818412)

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## Wolves once more in the firing line



The political resistance to the wolf  
is growing at the European level.  
To what extent will people allow  
wolves to occupy their natural  
habitat in future? © Chad  
Horwedel/flickr

Downgrading the protected status of the wolf, control, even wolf-free zones:  
these are some of the demands of the Alpine farming federations in the Alpine  
regions as part of the fitness check conducted on the Fauna Flora Habitat  
(FFH) directive. Nature conservation organisations respond.

After an absence of many decades from the Alps, the wolf is slowly reconquering its  
natural habitat. This has been made possible because, following their previous  
extermination, wolves are today under the protection of international agreements  
such as the FFH directive and the Berne convention. This return has resulted in  
conflict as people have forgotten how to live with the wolf. Untended grazing for  
sheep, goats and cattle on open pastures has become generally accepted, making  
them an easy source of food for wolves. Alpine farming federations in the region  
thus wish to see a downgrading in the protected status of these large predators.  
Of all the farm animals that die in summer, only five percent can be blamed on the  
wolf. The remainder die because of bad weather, sickness or falls in rough terrain. In  
a letter to the permanent secretariat of Alpine Convention, nature conservation



bodies refer to the small amount of damage caused by wolves. They however recognise the increasingly difficult economic situation of mountain farms and therefore demand support for protective herding. Politicians at the national level are singing the same tune as the farming federations, as for example recently in Switzerland. A motion to the Federal Council demanded an analysis of a possible exit from the Berne convention. This analysis was not carried out, but a “wolf concept” was developed in order to permit the co-existence of wolves with farming. Now the motion has again been tabled and the debate continues.

Sources and further information:

[www.nzz.ch/schweiz/nationalrat-will-den-wolf-nicht-laenger-schuetzen-ld.116771](http://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/nationalrat-will-den-wolf-nicht-laenger-schuetzen-ld.116771)

[www.cipra.org/de/news/vermitteln-zwischen-mensch-und-raubtier](http://www.cipra.org/de/news/vermitteln-zwischen-mensch-und-raubtier) (de, fr, it, sl)

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[www.protectiondestroupeaux.ch/en/international/](http://www.protectiondestroupeaux.ch/en/international/)

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## The Alpine Convention in action



The City of Klagenfurt wants to reduce CO2 emissions. © Stadtpresse-E-Mobilität

Urban areas are not often directly thought of in connection with the Alpine Convention - “the Alps are mountains, not cities” is the refrain. The Austrian city of Klagenfurt contradicts such views.

A study carried out on behalf of the Austrian city of Klagenfurt shows that no fewer than 134 of the 174 environmental targets contained in the protocols to the Alpine Convention are relevant to cities. For example, according to article 2 of the energy protocol, the obligations of the signatory nations include concrete measures to promote energy conservation. One of the environmental targets of the city of Klagenfurt is now to increase the percentage of buildings being renovated. In addition, over the next years energy requirements are to be reduced by around 30% and CO2 emissions by 50%.

In Germany too, the protocols of the Alpine Convention have been closely examined. It was previously a matter of debate as to whether these were directly

applicable to the parties to the Convention, i.e. without any prior implementing law on the part of the authorities or courts. Four execution protocols – tourism, soil conservation, traffic and nature & landscape conservation – have now received such status from the German federal government and the Bavarian state government.

Thus, twenty years after they were drawn up, the protocols to the Alpine Convention are still relevant and offer numerous proposals for sustainable environmental and regional development policies, including in urban areas such as Klagenfurt. The challenge is to adapt the sometimes abstract aims to the specific conditions and established structures found in cities and municipalities.

Source and further information:

[www.e-c-](http://www.e-c-o.at/data/publikationen/literaturdienst/Alpenkonvention_und_Alpenstaedte_eine_Allianz_mit_Perspektive_zollregional.pdf)

[o.at/data/publikationen/literaturdienst/Alpenkonvention\\_und\\_Alpenstaedte\\_eine\\_Allianz\\_mit\\_Perspektive\\_zollregional.pdf](http://www.e-c-o.at/data/publikationen/literaturdienst/Alpenkonvention_und_Alpenstaedte_eine_Allianz_mit_Perspektive_zollregional.pdf)

[www.merkur.de/lokales/region-miesbach/miesbach/neues-gutachten-veroeffentlicht-durchbruch-sachen-landschaftsschutz-6660466.html](http://www.merkur.de/lokales/region-miesbach/miesbach/neues-gutachten-veroeffentlicht-durchbruch-sachen-landschaftsschutz-6660466.html)

[www.alpconv.org/en/convention/default.aspx](http://www.alpconv.org/en/convention/default.aspx)

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## Oh...

...” Ah! Eh! Ih! Oh! Uh!” comes a rough voice from the loudspeaker. He said nothing for 5,300 years: but now Ötzi, the famous Man from the Ice, has found his voice again.

He is probably the most thoroughly investigated mummy in the world: we know what colour his eyes were, about his tattoos, what he wore, the tools he used, that he was struck from behind by an arrow, even what his last meal was. Now, using today’s technology, scientists have managed to reconstruct the Iceman’s voice. It is true that we do not know what his last words were. But project manager Francesco Avanzini imagines that it could well have been a last cry of pain shortly before his death: “Perhaps an ‘Aagh’ as he was hit by the arrow.” Articulating the vowels is thus a good match, and Ötzi has now become a YouTube star with nearly one million hits registered for his voice. The internet community finds it all highly amusing and is already looking forward to a new ringtone and techno remixes.

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## Agenda

**ALPARC 4th Workshop “Mountain Environmental Education in the Alpine Protected Areas”**, 18.10. - 19.10.2016, Mercantour National Park/FR, Organisation: ALPARC. [More...](#)

**EUROPARC Conference 2016**, 18.-22.10.2016, Vallée de Joux/CH, Organisation: EUROPARC. [More...](#)

**Sondrio Film Festival**, 07.11. - 13.11.2016, Sondrio/IT, Veranstalter: Sondrio Film Festival. [More...](#)

**Reading Mountains**, 11.12.2016, different locations in the Alps, Organisation: Alpine Convention. [More...](#)

**5th Biomass Conference**, 18.01. - 20.01.2017, Graz/AT, Organisation: Österreichischer Biomasse Verband. [More...](#)