

## Tourism: two sides of the same coin



The CIPRA and AidA conference was held in the Slovenian tourist destination of Bled. © CIPRA/Maya Mathias

**Caught between the difficulties of growth and the quest for sustainability, tourism has a polarising effect. At the end of May 2018 over 200 participants at a conference in Bled, Slovenia discussed how Alpine tourism and the quality of life can complement one another. The event was staged by CIPRA together with the “Alliance in the Alps”.**

People from all over the Alps and beyond met on 25 and 26 May 2018 in the Slovenian town of Bled for the annual conference of CIPRA International, CIPRA Slovenia and the “Alliance in the Alps” network of municipalities. Under the title “Alpine tourism: quality of life included!”, over 200 participants discussed how sustainable tourism can make a contribution to good living in the Alps – and what are the hazards of excessive tourism.

The conference venue, Bled, is a classic example: its idyllic location on a lake and its historic castle have made this 8,000-strong municipality in the Slovenian Alps a magnet for tourists, who come in droves from all over the world: along with the main cities, it now forms an essential part of any European tour. With its 8,000 hotel beds, the population of Bled doubles during the high season. While this means good money, the municipality sees little of it: most flows to the state or to foreign investors.

Some of the problems of the growth in tourism are reflected in Bled, as in other Alpine municipalities: “Only if tourism avoids exploiting nature and people can it be sustainable,” stated Katharina Conradin, President of CIPRA International, in her opening speech. Marc Nitschke, President of “Alliance in the Alps”, went further: “Tourism and quality of life cannot be allowed to cancel each other out.” This has now been demonstrated by various members of the association.

### Dangerous growth spiral

Tourism indeed has many positive aspects, noted Jana Apih of Goodplace, a Slovenian association for sustainable tourism. People have never been so mobile as they are today, while every tenth person worldwide works in tourism, and there is growing prosperity in tourist regions. However, every hotel has a capacity limit – as do tourist attractions and destinations. As examples she pointed to such tourism hotspots outside the Alps as Venice, Barcelona and Amsterdam, where there is ever more resistance to mass tourism. Christian Baumgartner, Vice-President of CIPRA International, highlighted similar problems in the Alps, summarising his conclusions to the conference with “Twelve steps for a better quality of life in Alpine destinations”.

### Increasing the quality of life in Alpine destinations – but how?

In Baumgartner’s view, “Sustainable solutions need to be developed together with local people”. Such solutions include visitor management, encouragement of overnight tourism, and discussion of capacity limits. Bled, according to its Director of Tourism, Tomaz Rogelj, is thus planning no further hotel beds: “We believe that we currently have the right number of beds to offer visitors what they want in Bled, namely tranquillity, nature and relaxation.” Locals too will be able to continue enjoying the benefits of Bled.

Baumgartner further underlined the importance of good working conditions and alternative business models in order to make working in tourism more attractive to local people. “It is clear that all ideas and offers must be equally attractive to visitors and locals alike.”

Participants held workshop discussions on the conflict lines in tourist destinations, such as nature conservation, the local economy and mobility. Possible solutions were also presented and developed, such as the promotion of natural diversity in municipalities, or new training and work models. Thanks to the inclusion of the “Living Labs” project, some 30 young people were also given the opportunity to take part in the conference. In all of the discussions every participant had a common goal in mind: finding ways to create a sustainable form of tourism for tomorrow that will contribute to the quality of life in the Alps.

The “Twelve steps for a better quality of life in Alpine destinations” can be found in document form on the websites of CIPRA and the “Alliance in the Alps”.

### Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/de/jft18](http://www.cipra.org/de/jft18) (de, it, fr, sl)

## Point of view: The tourism dilemma



Barbara Wülser, deputy director of CIPRA International © Martin Walser

**Travel threatens the very values upon which tourism in the Alps depends, creating a real dilemma. Sustainable mobility in tourism is not simply a competitive advantage, but a “must”, states Barbara Wülser, deputy director of CIPRA International.**

How do we travel? The question is becoming ever more urgent. This, and communication in general, were the themes of the Tourism Mobility Day organised by the Federal Ministry for Sustainability and Tourism in the Austrian city of Graz in mid-May 2018. There are numerous reasons to foster sustainable mobility options for tourist destinations in the Alps.

Nowadays, 60% of all passenger kilometres in the Alps are accounted for by holiday- and leisure-related traffic, double the figure compared to the 1960s. A further increase of 30% in leisure traffic is predicted by 2030. Alpine tourism is thus destroying the very basis for its existence: the Alpine landscape, the natural diversity, the peacefulness and seclusion.

The more accessible a place is, the quicker visitors can reach it – and also leave, thus losing added value.

Three-quarters of tourist CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are due to traffic. Public transport only represents a small proportion: 84% of holiday trips in the Alps are made by private car. There are however big differences between individual countries. Public transport services are nevertheless in decline throughout the Alps, especially in rural areas. The Alpine countries prefer to concentrate more on the high-speed network for rail traffic.

But the rail system is reaching its limits, as in the case of Switzerland. Satisfying every need is a logistical and communicative balancing act: high-speed trains compete with regional transport and freight transport, not to mention air traffic. Instead of taking an overnight train to the Alps, today’s tourist will take a cheap flight to the Maldives. In this light it is hard to understand why the Alpine countries, with the exception of Austria, are cancelling their night train services.

Western European society is gradually becoming more and more aware of environmental issues, including sustainable mobility options; however, we also prize our flexibility. In this respect, no public transportation system – no matter how sophisticated – can match having your own car. The question is thus to compensate for the lack of flexibility with other benefits, which requires imagination and a spirit of innovation. While E-mobility offers interesting new possibilities, it still means a further increase in traffic volumes and energy consumption.

Sustainable mobility solutions in tourism need the involvement of local people – as hosts, as multipliers, as users. Results-oriented processes and participatory spaces to think will allow account to be taken of the various experiences and perspectives of tourists and locals. The co-operation of tourist mobility with everyday mobility will offer an even greater choice.

But new behavioural patterns are required, which in turn demand low-threshold services. The “Youth Alpine Interrail Pass” is one such offer. Developed by the CIPRA Youth Advisory Board, it encourages young people between 16 and 27 years of age to travel by train through the Alps and to record their experiences online.

Ultimately, however, we cannot avoid the question of the limits on growth in tourism. The most sustainable solution would be to stay at home – but then there would be no more tourism. At any rate, travelling to the Alps means a lesser likelihood of flying to some distant destination.

#### Sources and further informations:

[www.bmnt.gv.at/service/kalender/Tourismus/5.-Tourismus-Mobilit-tstag-2018.html](http://www.bmnt.gv.at/service/kalender/Tourismus/5.-Tourismus-Mobilit-tstag-2018.html) (de), [www.alpconv.org/de/AlpineKnowledge/RSA/tourism/Documents/RSA4%20de%20WEB.pdf](http://www.alpconv.org/de/AlpineKnowledge/RSA/tourism/Documents/RSA4%20de%20WEB.pdf), [www.cipra.org/de/alpmonitor/trends#zunehmende-mobilitaet](http://www.cipra.org/de/alpmonitor/trends#zunehmende-mobilitaet) (de, it, fr, sl), [www.cipra.org/en/positions/winter-tourism?set\\_language=en](http://www.cipra.org/en/positions/winter-tourism?set_language=en), [www.yoalpin.org](http://www.yoalpin.org)

## Youth participation – but how?



**More youth participation in the Alps is the aim – but the process is often slow to take shape in cities and towns. The “Toolbox for Youth Participation”, produced by the GaYA project, offers help in starting up.**

Existing approaches to youth participation frequently try to force young people into existing bureaucratic processes. Young people are often not involved in party politics, however: they are instead politically active on social media or in various cultural, sports and social organisations.

A new Toolbox helps to stimulate youth participation. © CIPRA International

The project partners in the INTERREG Alpine Space Project Gaya (Governance and Youth in the Alps) have developed a toolbox for youth participation: the GaYA Toolbox for Youth Participation demonstrates new ways and approaches to participation to meet the needs of both young people and politicians. For GaYA project partner Matevž Straus, an adviser to the Slovenian town of Idrija, there is no one-size-fits-all solution: “Young people are not a homogeneous group and this should be reflected in how we approach youth participation.” The objective should rather be to stimulate bespoke participatory processes at local level.

The Toolbox contains selected case studies from throughout the Alps that show the diversity of participation processes, from simple steps such as listening to young people, to more complex and comprehensive activities aimed at involving youth in sharing power and responsibilities. Templates make it easier to create individual participation processes, while cards suggest solutions to common problems, such as the alleged lack of interest or unrealistic demands.

The Toolbox and its contents are available for download in all the Alpine languages at [www.alpine-space.eu/projects/gaya/en/project-results/participation-toolbox](http://www.alpine-space.eu/projects/gaya/en/project-results/participation-toolbox).

Sources and further information: [www.alpine-space.eu/gaya](http://www.alpine-space.eu/gaya)

## New strength for the Alps



Meeting in Bled: board representatives and delegates of the executive management and youth advisory council. © CIPRA/Maya Mathias

**In June 2018 Kaspar Schuler took over the leadership of CIPRA International, based in Schaan, Liechtenstein, with changes also made to the executive board.**

Alpine herdsman, member of the Graubünden association of environmental organisations, interim director of Greenpeace Switzerland and freelance organisation developer: Kaspar Schuler has already performed various functions for the benefit of sustainable development. Having taken over the reins of CIPRA International in June 2018, he will now be fully focused on the Alps. In the view of the 59-year-old Swiss national, “There are two forms of conduct that are absolutely central when travelling in the mountains: standing together with the community, and finding your own way from there”.

Kaspar Schuler succeeds Andreas Pichler from South Tyrol, who is taking on a new challenge in Vorarlberg, Austria. Andreas had been with CIPRA since 2015 and significantly assisted in the further development of the organisation. “We are convinced that Kaspar Schuler will continue the excellent work done by Andreas Pichler and strengthen the position of CIPRA as an advocate for a sustainable future for the Alps”, underlines Katharina Conradin, President of CIPRA

International.

The delegates meeting in Bled, Slovenia welcomed two new faces at the end of May and thanked the departing board members – youth counsellor Eva Sabic and vice-president Marko Slapnik from Slovenia – for their efforts. Their places will be taken by Miro Kristan, from Slovenia’s Soča Valley, head of activities for Tolmin as Alpine Town of the Year 2016, and the long-time President of CIPRA Germany, Erwin Rothgang.

## Fire and flames across the Alps



The first symbolic fire in the Alps was lit 30 years ago in order to draw attention to climate change. © Katharina Conradin

**On 11 August 2018 the “Fire across the Alps” will be lighting up peaks and valleys for the thirtieth time. The idea behind the anniversary fires is to draw attention to climate change.**

Permafrost is thawing, glaciers are melting, mudslides are carrying away villages and roads. The Alps represent a highly sensitive ecosystem that is especially vulnerable to global warming. This year’s “high fires”, staged by three organisations whose aim is to protect the Alps – Alpen-Initiative, CIPRA and Mountain Wilderness Schweiz – will send a signal against the causes of climate change.

The first bonfires were lit in Switzerland in 1988. Today they inspire people across the entire Alpine arc, from Slovenia, via Vienna, as far as Nice; on remote mountain peaks and close to cities, each year fires are lit to encourage the preservation of the Alpine heritage and protest against the destruction of this sensitive ecosystem. Kaspar Schuler, since June 2018 Director of CIPRA International, has been a participant in “Fire across the Alps” from the very outset. Whether in his role as Alpine herdsman, environmental activist or spectator, Schuler believes that the fires are an opportunity to reaffirm his

kinship with the Alps: “The fires not only draw attention to issues such as climate change and traffic congestion, they also bring people together and create a moving experience in an almost archaic setting”.

### Come and join in!

It is not difficult to build a fire in solidarity. The location, events programme and themes can be freely chosen, but should support the idea of sustainable development. For more information and registration see [www.feuerindenalpen.com](http://www.feuerindenalpen.com).

## Alpine Convention against the Alemagna motorway



The decision opposing new motorways across the Alps was unanimous. (c) Jean-Loup Bertez

**In recent years there have been several attempts to reintroduce the Alemagna motorway from Venice to Munich onto the European agenda. The Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention has now adopted a resolution against this new transalpine motorway.**

The Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention is very clear: Article 11 states that “the contracting parties shall refrain from building any new, large-capacity roads for transalpine traffic”. However, voices from the Veneto region are repeatedly calling for a new motorway to run between Munich and Venice, even though every country concerned (Germany, Austria and Italy) has ratified the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention.

At the initiative of CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention unanimously decided at its meeting on 13 June 2018 to clearly position itself against this new motorway across the Alps. Katharina Conradin, President of CIPRA International, expressed her satisfaction about this

clear commitment: “The Alps suffer enough as it is from transalpine traffic, noise, air pollution and, finally, climate change. This clear commitment by the parties to oppose the expansion of the transalpine road network is thus all the more gratifying.”

### Sources and further information:

[www.cipra.org/en/media-releases/alpine-convention-reaffirms-opposition-to-new-alpine-motorways](http://www.cipra.org/en/media-releases/alpine-convention-reaffirms-opposition-to-new-alpine-motorways) (de, fr, it, sl),

## Then there were two...



The campaign against the Winter Olympics in Sion was successful. © Olympia2026Nein/facebook

**After the rejection by the Swiss city of Sion, there remain just two candidates in the Alps for the 2026 Winter Olympics. But here too the final word has yet to be spoken.**

First Innsbruck in Austria; then Graubünden in Switzerland and Munich in Germany; now the population of the Canton of Wallis has voted against Sion becoming a candidate for the 2026 Winter Olympics. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) regrets the result of the referendum and with it another “no” from a “traditional winter sports area”, as the IOC refers to the Alpine countries. Stefan Grass, head of the “*Olympiakritisches Graubünden* (Graubünden critical of the Olympics)” committee, closely followed the vote in Wallis and was not surprised by the result: “Many people do not want the burdens that the IOC contract places on the city hosting the Winter Olympics”. The financial argument weighs most heavily, but environmental and transport issues are also raised by this major event, as shown in the CIPRA position paper “Alps without Olympics”.

The Austrian city of Graz, which is still on the list of potential host cities, is also seeing more and more demands for answers to such questions. Tina Wirsberger, Graz’s councillor for the environment, used the visit of IOC vice-president Juan Antonio Samaranch as an opportunity to ask questions about financing, safety and contracts. “No concrete answers were forthcoming: instead there was plenty of talk about ‘Olympic values’”, as she later posted on Twitter. Meanwhile the Communist Party in Graz, which is also critical of the Olympics, is collecting signatures to force a referendum on the matter. The organisers are currently some 500 signatures short of the 10,000 required. Discussions are also ongoing in Italy, where Cortina d’Ampezzo, Milan and Turin have all expressed an interest in hosting the games. Here too there are major questions regarding the expected costs, both financial and ecological, which cannot be drowned out even by noisy productions such as the pro-Olympics FlashMob recently organised in Turin.

### Sources and further information:

[www.olympia-nein.ch/go/aktuelles/meldungen/sion.php](http://www.olympia-nein.ch/go/aktuelles/meldungen/sion.php) (de), [www.lematin.ch/suisse/sion-2026-5105/story/14427188](http://www.lematin.ch/suisse/sion-2026-5105/story/14427188) (fr), [http://www.cipra.org/en/positions/alps-without-olympics?set\\_language=en](http://www.cipra.org/en/positions/alps-without-olympics?set_language=en), [www.kleinezeitung.at/steiermark/chronik/5450952/IOCvizepraesident-im-Rathaus\\_Fuer-Winterspiele-braucht-Graz-ein](http://www.kleinezeitung.at/steiermark/chronik/5450952/IOCvizepraesident-im-Rathaus_Fuer-Winterspiele-braucht-Graz-ein) (de), <https://twitter.com/tinawirsberger/status/1009793570184859648> (de), [www.kpoe-graz.at/nein-zu-olympia-2026-in-der-schweiz.phtml](http://www.kpoe-graz.at/nein-zu-olympia-2026-in-der-schweiz.phtml) (de), [www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2018/03/11/olimpiadi-invernali-2026-quattro-motivi-per-cui-sono-contrario-alla-ricandidatura-di-torino/4216316](http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2018/03/11/olimpiadi-invernali-2026-quattro-motivi-per-cui-sono-contrario-alla-ricandidatura-di-torino/4216316) (it), [www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/Olimpiadi-a-Torino-tensione-in-Giunta-M5S-Sindaco-Appendino-Se-non-passano-si-va-tutti-a-casa-f4bc3d77-771d-4588-a376-71fa6315f9d9.html](http://www.rainews.it/dl/rainews/articoli/Olimpiadi-a-Torino-tensione-in-Giunta-M5S-Sindaco-Appendino-Se-non-passano-si-va-tutti-a-casa-f4bc3d77-771d-4588-a376-71fa6315f9d9.html) (it), [www.futura.news/2018/06/23/olimpiadi-paralimpiadi-torino-2026-un-flash-mob-olimpico-piazza-castello-dire-si-candidatura-fotogallery\(it\)](http://www.futura.news/2018/06/23/olimpiadi-paralimpiadi-torino-2026-un-flash-mob-olimpico-piazza-castello-dire-si-candidatura-fotogallery(it))

## Wolves: we need to debate values openly



Our image of the wolf is influenced by our culture.

**No animal can match the wolf when it comes to media attention. Sensation often obscures our view of the essential. Various initiatives in the Alpine region are dedicated to improving the image of the wolf.**

The probability of a wolf attacking a human is virtually zero. Wolves are shy animals: so shy that Swiss nature photographer and author Peter Dettling had to wait over ten days when filming in Switzerland’s Calanda region before he saw the local wolf pack for the first time. Yet wolves seem to be an ever-present. The media, always on the lookout for scandals, depict mutilated sheep and goats and publish polarising images and stereotypes.

Projects such as “LIFE WOLFALPS” attempt to correct this distorted view. Since 2013 the project has been addressing negative reporting and its consequences. Taking as its motto “first listen, then talk”, the aim is to analyse how best to communicate the return of the wolf, followed by targeted communication and awareness activities to improve knowledge and tolerance among the population.

The University of Zurich project "Wolves: knowledge and practice. Ethnographies of the return of wolves in Switzerland" is currently examining why the image of the big bad wolf is still anchored in our minds. According to the project leader, Bernhard Tschofen, our society has held this image for centuries. Confronting the wolf also means a confrontation with ourselves: "It is important that we debate values openly", he says.

The Italian province of Trentino, which is home to bears in addition to wolves, aims at peaceful co-existence with these large carnivores. There are annual reports, an informative website and funding for these on the subject because, alongside effective herd protection and compensation measures, sustainable wolf management above all requires an educated population.

**Sources and further information:**

<http://peterdettling.com> , [www.lifewolfalps.eu](http://www.lifewolfalps.eu) , <http://www.lifewolfalps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Abstract-Book-WEB.pdf> , [www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vqL1g9Qlt4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vqL1g9Qlt4) (it), [www.isek.uzh.ch/de/popul%C3%A4rekulturen/forschung/projekte/drittmittelprojekte/wolf.html](http://www.isek.uzh.ch/de/popul%C3%A4rekulturen/forschung/projekte/drittmittelprojekte/wolf.html)(de), <https://grandicarnivori.provincia.tn.it/Il-lupo> (it), [www.eurac.edu/de/research/mountains/regdev/publications/Pages/dossier/Dossier-lupo-Alto-Adige.aspx](http://www.eurac.edu/de/research/mountains/regdev/publications/Pages/dossier/Dossier-lupo-Alto-Adige.aspx) (de, it)

"The wolf is back. A human exhibition" is being staged by the University of Zurich and the Alpine Museum from 30 June 2018 to April 2019 at the Lucerne Natural History Museum and can be seen from May 2019 in the Zerne National Park Centre. The accompanying publication can be ordered via [info@alpinesmuseum.ch](mailto:info@alpinesmuseum.ch)

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Oh...



Visualisation of the new Crystal Ride cabin with its Swarovski embellishment © Zermatt Bergbahnen

...A gondola that wants to make it to the top! "Premium meets Premium" is the motto in Zermatt, because the latest lift there boasts not only advanced technology, but also sophisticated design. The first cabins, embellished with Swarovski "crystal rocks", are due to make the ascent to 3,821 metres in September 2018. The cabins were created by the Italian design studio of Pininfarina, known for its Ferrari and Maserati designs. The world's highest tri-cable car can also match sports cars for price: the Zermatt cable car operators have invested a cool 52 million Swiss francs in the project – surely an investment for the future, especially in these times of climate change. When the snow will long have melted elsewhere, Zermatt's crystal cabins will be soaring up to the last snow in the Alps. Because where else can you still post photos of both snow and glass crystals? #blingbling

**Sources and further information:** [www.matterhornparadise.ch/de/medien](http://www.matterhornparadise.ch/de/medien) (de, it, fr), <http://www.seilbahn.net/sn/index.php?i=60&kat=1&news=8597&titel=Leitner>(de)

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## Agenda

**The Wolf is here: An Exhibition about People**, 28.05-1.10.2018, Bern/CH. [More...](#)

**Youth at the Top**, 12.-13.07.2018, Alps & Carpathians. [More...](#)

**Fire across the alps**, 11.-12.08.2018, Alps. [More...](#)

**ClimaHost- alpine-wide competition**, 01.07-31.08.2018 Alps. [More...](#)

**20th International Rock Art Congress IFRAO 2018**, 29.08-02.09.2018  
Valcamonica/IT. [More...](#)