

New alpMedia dossier – “Ecological Corridors”

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Alpine Convention shows solidarity with other mountain regions

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Workshops of the Alps-Carpathian co-operation project

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(06.04.2006) On 7 and 8 November 2005 representatives of the eight member states of the Alpine Convention attended a seminar on the creation of an ecological network of protected areas to debate the possibilities for establishing an ecological network spanning the Alps. The alpMedia dossier entitled “Ecological Corridors” drawn up on that occasion provides an overview of the instruments that play an important role in the establishment of ecological corridors at the global, pan-European, European and national levels. The contributions submitted by experts were compiled into a background report and complemented by news items, links and information on related publications and events.

Ecological corridors are of great importance for the Alps since the landscape in all its diversity is often highly fragmented, with key ecological areas scattered about the landscape like unconnected mosaic stones. The 800 large protected areas (over 100 hectares) recorded by the Alpine Network of Protected Areas provide a suitable retreat for a large number of alpine animal species and plant varieties, yet they cannot guarantee the preservation of alpine biodiversity. Creating an ecological network that spans the Alps, with corridors to link existing protected areas, is therefore of great significance.

The background report looks at the Johannesburg Action Plan, the Alpine Convention, the Flora-Fauna-Habitat Directive and many other (also national) initiatives and their role as important instruments for the ecological networking of the Alps. The closing chapter features a number of project examples illustrating how the network might be implemented in practice.

The dossier was created thanks on the one hand to the Alpine Network of Protected Areas and CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, and, on the other, to the support of the German Environment Ministry, which funded the translation into German, French, Italian, Slovenian and English.

Dossier: [http://www.alpmedia.net/d/dossier_detail.asp?DossierID=13&Sprache=1\(de/fr/it/sl/en\)](http://www.alpmedia.net/d/dossier_detail.asp?DossierID=13&Sprache=1(de/fr/it/sl/en))

Contents

New alpMedia dossier – “Ecological Corridors”	1
Alpine Convention shows solidarity with other mountain regions	2
International events on “Water in the Mountains” ..	2
Slovenia: plans for a series of hydraulic power plants ..	2
Workshops of the Alps-Carpathian co-operation project	3
CIPRA to attend Green Week 2006 in Brussels ...	3
US ski resort to tackle climate change	3
Co-operation in the mountains of Europe	3
Miscellaneous	4
Agenda	4
Oh!... ..	4

Alpine Convention shows solidarity with other mountain regions

(21.04.2006) The keynote event of the 32nd Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Alpine Conference focused on international mountain partnerships. In future the Alpine Convention is aiming to co-operate first and foremost with players from the mountain regions of Central Asia, the Caucasus, the Carpathians and the Balkans. Key aspects are to include setting up and supporting networks of communities and networks of protected areas.

A wide range of other issues was also addressed at the meeting held in Bolzano/I on 4 to 6 April. Work on the area of Population and Culture is currently in abeyance, with only the elaboration of a non-binding political declaration planned at present. As things stand at present, this elaboration still requires a certain degree of attention to ensure that the declaration by the alpine population provides genuine benefits once accepted by the ministerial conference. The many reservations tabled by France regarding the ratification of the Transport Protocol were also a delicate issue. It appears that a number of states will lodge a protest against these reservations so that the twelve-month deadline is not exceeded.

The fact that Italy is several years in arrears with the payment of its contributions to the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention remains a major problem for the operations of the Alpine Convention. As a result the Permanent Secretariat is forced to make do with a reduced budget and a minimum of human resources. The post of Secretary General of the Alpine Convention is to be advertised in June (closing date: 30 June 2006), with the election to be held at the 9th Alpine Conference in November 2006.

Information: <http://www.alpenkonvention.org> (de/fr/it/sl)

Water in the mountains (Mastrils/CH)



© <http://www.lebendigerhein.org>

International events on “Water in the Mountains”

(21.04.2006) The 2nd “Water in Mountains” International Congress on “Integrated Management of High Watersheds – Implementing the European Water-Framework Directive” is to be held in Megève/F from 20 to 22 September 2006. Participants from mountain regions are to be supported by the Congress organised by the *Société d'Economie Alpestre de la Haute-Savoie* in implementing sustainable water management strategies using an integrative approach.

The following week sees the staging of the conference entitled “The Water Balance of the Alps – Why Do We Need to Protect the Water Resources of the Alps?” in Innsbruck/A from 28 to 29 September. It is being organised by the Austrian Presidency of the Alpine Convention and Innsbruck University in co-operation with the International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps (ISCAR). The organisers will be asking whether existing instruments (such as the EU Directive on the protection of groundwater) are sufficiently well adapted to the Alpine region and whether they also cover the new challenges at the European and global level (e.g. the deregulation of energy markets, climate change) or whether other specific instruments such as an Alpine Convention Implementing might be required.

Information: <http://echoalp.com/eau> (fr/en), http://www.sedhs.com/h2o/site/fichier_actu/brochure_congres.pdf (fr/en)

Slovenia: plans for a series of hydraulic power plants

(04.05.2006) Slovenia has granted concessions for the planning of a series of power plants along the Mura, Drava and Sava rivers. The International Committee for the Protection of the Mura River *Unsere Mur – Nasa Mura*, founded in spring 2006, is opposing this threat to precious river landscapes of the Alps and pre-Alps. The Committee for the Protection of the Mura is comprised of over 90 NGOs from the five neighbouring states concerned, namely Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia. Its main concern is preserving 1,000 km of free-flowing waterways in the Danube-Drava-Mura river network, their wetland forests and the surrounding cultural landscapes and, consequently, the connection between the Alps and the Balkans, the Pannonian plain and the area around the Black Sea.

Approval for the granting of the concessions is not solely incumbent on the Slovenian state, however, but also on other member states of the Mura Committee. Six power plants are also planned along the Austro-Slovenian border constituted by the Mura River; the Mura border region is one of the most precious river courses in Austria and also a Natura 2000 region.

Sources and information: <http://www.mur.at.tt> (de/en), http://www.naturschutzbund.at/bilder/Downloads/pa_murverbau.doc (de)

Flooded wetland areas along the Mura



© Josef Limberger

Workshops of the Alps-Carpathian co-operation project

(06.04.2006) The Alpine Network of Protected Areas is organising two international workshops as part of the co-operation project between the Alps and the Carpathians. The first workshop entitled Integrated Management of Protected Areas is to be held at the Mala Fatra National Park in Slovakia from 1 to 3 June. The second workshop, to be held in the Piatra Craiului National Park in Romania from 10 – 13 July, is entitled Sustainable Tourist Management in Protected Areas.

These events, to be organised in English, are aimed at the managers and staff of protected areas, scientists and other interested organisations and individuals involved with protected areas. The exchange of practical experience is to be a key element of the presentations, discussions and excursions. In Romania for instance a joint work programme is to be drawn up in the tourism sector between the protected areas of the Alps and those of the Carpathians.

Information and registration: <http://www.alparc.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en)

An international network of protected areas is planned in the Carpathians – pictured here is the Mala Fatra National Park.



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CIPRA to attend Green Week 2006 in Brussels

(21.04.2006) CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, has just received confirmation from the EU Commission that it has been allocated a stand at Green Week 2006, one of the world's largest annual discussion forums on environmental policy. "Biodiversity life!" is the motto of this year's Green Week, to be held in Brussels from 30 May to 2 June 2006. The steady loss of biodiversity is to be discussed in four main strands entitled "Biodiversity: a global issue", "Managing natural resources", "Space for nature", and "Biodiversity and society".

The EU Commission is organising Green Week against the backdrop of the discussions initiated at the world summit for sustainable development in Johannesburg. Conference sessions, meetings with politicians and youth workshops are also planned. Target groups include decision makers at local, regional and national level, businesses, associations and NGOs.

Information: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/home.html> (en)

US ski resort to tackle climate change

(04.05.2006) The well-known winter sports resort of Aspen in the Rocky Mountains plans intends to cover its entire energy requirements from renewable sources by 2015, a move prompted first and foremost by the realisation that climate change poses a genuine threat to winter tourism in Aspen. Analyses of local weather data have shown that the skiing season is now around one month shorter than it was some fifty years ago.

To achieve its goal, Aspen plans to join the Chicago Climate Exchange (a system similar to Europe's Emission Trading Scheme), to impose strict regulations for energy savings in residential housing and public buildings, to stipulate targets for reducing greenhouse gases, and to involve the population in the initiative. The resort also plans to use a recently compiled detailed inventory of the provenances and quantities of greenhouse gas emissions produced in Aspen to make its citizens more aware of the problems and show what each and every inhabitant can do to help. In future residents will even be able to calculate online the emission levels produced by their respective households.

Source: <http://www.merkur.de/12104.0.html> (de)

Co-operation in the mountains of Europe

(18.05.2006) The Pro Monte final conference to be held in Chambéry/F on 8 and 9 June is entitled "Mountain Massifs and Territorial Co-operation in Europe". The Pro Monte Project launched as part of the EU Interact Initiative assists and networks players from European mountain regions looking for answers to urgent issues relating to environmental policy, regional planning and social matters.

The Conference is scheduled to begin with a presentation of the objectives of Pro Monte, the core issues of territorial co-operation and the political contexts in which the mountain regions of the European Union are set. This will be followed by rounds of discussions and debate on subjects such as "Opportunities and Challenges of Territorial Co-operation in European Mountain Regions" and "Mountain Regions in 21st Century Europe, Institutional Driving Forces of Co-operation". The conference will be rounded off by national contributions, concrete proposals and conclusions on the subject matter. Simultaneous interpreting in French, English, German and Spanish is to be provided throughout the event.

Sources, information and registration: <http://www.interact.promonte.net> (en)

Miscellaneous

Caucasus Conference documentation available online

(21.04.2006) The three-day conference "Nature Protection in the Caucasus" was held in Berlin/D from 9 to 11 March 2006. The Conference organised by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development, *KfW Entwicklungsbank* and WWF Germany was attended not only by the Ministers of the Environment from the Caucasus countries but also by representatives of international conservation and donor organisations. The key theme of the conference was the conservation of biological diversity in the Caucasus region through increased dialogue and co-operation between government organisations and NGOs of the different countries.

The conference documents can be viewed at: <http://www.caucasus-conference.org> (en/ru)

New CIPRA resolution for climate protection

(18.05.2006) CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, adopted a resolution on "Climate Protection and Climate Change Adaptation Strategies" at its Assembly of Delegates in Bad Hindelang/D on 18th May. In it, CIPRA called upon the European Union, the bodies of the Alpine Convention, the Alpine states and all governmental and non-governmental authorities to intensify their climate protection efforts and to draw up sustainable strategies for dealing with the growing repercussions of climate change.

To download the resolution as a PDF: <http://www.cipra.org> (de/fr/it/sl)

ALPRO – an analysis tool for projects in the Alpine region

(18.05.2006) ALPRO is a planning tool to be used by local authorities, organisations, promoters and investors to evaluate comprehensively the impact of landscape-altering projects in the Alpine region. The tool was developed by the IC Infraconsult Planning Office as part of the Swiss National Research Programme NFP 48 "Landscapes and Habitats of the Alps" and tested on three concrete case studies. ALPRO helps to highlight the impact of projects on the economy, society and the environment and simplifies the quick analysis of different project variants.

Sources and information: http://www.nfp48.ch/projekte/projects_detail.php?nfprojnum=22 (de/en/fr),
http://www.infraconsult.ch/Galerie/PDF/News/ALPRO_Prospekt.pdf (de)

Agenda

International Conference: **Tourism and Climate Change Mitigation**; 11-14.06.2006, De Spreeuwel/NL; conference language: English; organisers: E-Clat Research Network,
Information: http://www.ihdp.uni-bonn.de/Pdf_files/e-clat-Flyer.pdf (en)

International Seminar: **Landscape Change: Learning from the Past – Visions for the Future**; 14-16.06.2006, Tromsø/Norway; language: English; organisers: Nordic Association of Agricultural Scientists;
Information: <http://www.njf.nu> (en)

Summer School 2006: **Interactions of the Abiotic and Biotic Environment: The Alpine and Arctic View**; 31.07-04.08.2006, Davos/CH; language: English; organisers: Swiss Committee on Polar Research;
Information: <http://www.polar-research.ch> (en), info@polar-research.ch

NCCR Climate Summer School; 27.08.-01.09.2006, Grindelwald/CH; conference language: English; organisers: NCCR Climate;
Information: http://www.nccr-climate.unibe.ch/events_summer_school.html (en)

3rd International Conference on **Monitoring and Management of Visitor Flows in Recreational and Protected Areas**; 13-17.09.2006, Rapperswil/CH; conference language: English; organisers: Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL
Information: <http://www.wsl.ch/mmv-3> (en)

3rd International Conference on **Alpine Ibex**; 12-14.10.2006, Pontresina/CH; conference languages: English, German, Italian; organisers: GSE-European Alpine Ibex Specialist Group Parco Nazionale Grand Paradiso
Information: <http://www.gse-online.org/newsA.htm> (en)

Oh!...

... Alpine summits are still getting higher at a rate of around 1.5 mm a year. For the Swiss municipality of Zermatt this "geological" pace is clearly too slow. Within eight years starting in summer 2007, the 3883 m Klein Matterhorn summit is surge by around 120 m from its low-lying 3000 m levels to the prestigious giddy heights of 4000 m summits. Indeed there are plans to build a pyramid with restaurant and overnight accommodation at the very top of the mountain summit, which is accessed by railway. It means that during the construction period the Klein Matterhorn will grow around 10,000 times more quickly than its neighbouring summits. Presumably Zermatt's unique selling proposition, i.e. its Matterhorn Glacier Paradise, could be given a further boost if the municipality were prepared to upgrade the Matterhorn to a genuine 5000 m peak.

Source:

<http://www.spiegel.de/reise/kurztrip/0,1518,412964,00.html> (de)