

Youth are making climate policy



At the “Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention” young people from every Alpine country each year discuss Alpine policy issues. © YPAC

The theme of this year’s “Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention” was highly topical: how to cope with climate change. A declaration of intent confirmed the long-standing partnership between the organising schools and CIPRA International.

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There was no actual system change specified in Meran, Italy, as was demanded by the recent worldwide school strikes on behalf of the climate. But here and there the clear dissatisfaction with politics of participants in the “Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention” came to the fore. Young people want to have their voices heard, yet too often feel excluded. The “Youth Parliament to the Alpine Convention” – YPAC – provides an opportunity and the preparation to do so. YPAC is held each year by ten schools from every Alpine country.

The 14th edition in Meran addressed the complex and explosive issue of climate change. During the week of 25-29 March 2019, the matter was debated by some 80 high school students between the ages of 16 and 19 years. Georg Kaser of the University of Innsbruck, Austria, co-author of several reports by the IPCC’s World Climate Council, was adamant: “We are at a crossroads”. He explained the mechanisms of global climate policy to the young people present – and why the political system is so sluggish. His message quoted from the young Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg: “Start with what needs to be done, not what is politically possible!”

From traffic to human rights

The young people produced nine demands regarding the subtopics of ecology, health, human rights and youth participation and presented them on Friday to representatives from the fields of politics, science and civil society, including Barbara Wülser, joint executive director of CIPRA International. She praised the diversity of their proposals: “The youth know that the requirement is both for a forward-looking and effective climate policy from above – such as for transit traffic or water management – but also for initiatives by civil society, from below.” The proper political conditions are needed for these to thrive, she continued – just as is the case for youth participation.

At the closing YPAC plenary session Leonardo Fior, a delegate from Bassano del Grappa, Italy, pointed out the serious impact on human rights, ranging from climate refugees and changing lines of work through to drinking water: “What our postulations do is to make the distance between the ideal and the reality more narrow. To give substance to a shadow. To take some words written years ago and to give them a new voice. Our voice.”

CIPRA International has been co-operating for many years now with the YPAC. This partnership was reaffirmed in Meran and renewed with a “Memorandum of Understanding”. This in particular concerns the preparation of content, public relations work and the involvement of young people in Alpine policy and the environmental scene.

Sources and further information: www.ypac.eu

Point of view: Europe and its Alps



Erwin Rothgang, Vice-President CIPRA International (c) Martin Walser

The fundamental question facing the direct elections to the European Parliament in May 2019 is: what is the outlook – in Europe and in the Alps – for democracy and “good governance”? Erwin Rothgang, Vice-President of CIPRA International, argues for new forms of co-operation.

The future of Europe depends upon the cohesion between countries and peoples remaining stronger than the tendencies towards fragmentation and discrimination. The upcoming European elections offer the opportunity to turn the Parliament into a true legislature and to practise good governance at all levels. Regionalism and a nation-based sense of homeland do not contradict this, but can rather be fostered. However the trend towards exploiting alienation and thus excluding others clouds our view of the whole: flows of money and goods have long been globalised, but not human rights. Consumerism and lifestyles in rich countries endanger the future of our planet.

So what about “good governance” in the Alps? The Alpine Convention states that: “with their outstanding unique and diverse natural habitat, culture and history, [the Alps] constitute an economic, cultural, recreational and living environment in the heart of Europe, shared by numerous peoples and countries”. Preserving this diversity and organising the sustainable development of “our” Alps is a truly European task. All interests are to be represented in this common project: those of locals and visitors, long-term residents and recent arrivals, haves and have-nots, old and young. Nature, which belongs to no-one and to everyone, needs a powerful voice in the planning and design processes and has to be represented by environmental associations backed by strong arguments.

It will not be easy to institute the good governance required for this task: there are at least four old-established and countless “new” languages in the Alps; some states and regions are richer and more powerful than others; wealth and income opportunities are unequally distributed. New forms of co-operation and initiatives are needed, such as the recently signed “Aachen Treaty” between Germany and France. Its aim is to strengthen cultural diversity, with regional and cross-border cooperation better organised to facilitate people’s daily lives. Border regions should also dispose of appropriate powers, targeted resources and accelerated procedures, while multilingualism is to be fostered and cross-border mobility made easier.

The Alpine countries and regions should take up such offers and thus make “good governance” a tangible asset. A vivid case study might be the Brenner transit axis: a cross-border negotiation process, representing all interests, could ensure that the traffic and transport demands of the Brenner route are compatible with the environmental aspects and quality of life of the valley areas concerned.

Networking sustainable tourism



Sustainable tourism: only a wide network of caretakers can meet vastly differing requirements. © CIPRA International

At the suggestion of CIPRA, international specialists from every Alpine country have developed a job profile aimed at networking sustainable tourism approaches.

Bio hotels, mountaineering villages, Alpine Pearls, AlpFoodway and the like: the organisations and approaches for sustainable tourism in the Alps are just as diverse as the requirements for those who might network such approaches. At the beginning of November 2018, therefore, CIPRA organised an expert workshop in Innsbruck, Austria. Specialists from the Alpine countries have now fleshed out the profile created there. In addition to the customary experience of the tourism industry and tourism policy, expertise in issues of sustainable mobility, agriculture, energy and climate change now count as central points. A knowledge of the existing eco-labels and eco-certificates used in tourism forms another of the sixteen criteria that in total make up the “Caretaker” requirements profile for sustainable tourism in the Alpine region. “The stakeholders concerned really need a face, a head, a contact person”, states Christian Baumgartner, tourism expert and Vice-President of CIPRA International. The result can be seen as a work programme and an encouragement for those who wish to employ tourism managers whose role will be to work towards greater sustainability in tourism. There is also the

question of funding and whether the individuals concerned can be connected to organisations, NGOs or local tourist offices. CIPRA is now distributing the job profile throughout the Alps in co-operation with partner organisations such as the Alpine Convention, with the aim that institutions and authorities will take it up.

Sources and additional information: www.cipra.org/de/caretaker-tourismus (de, fr, it, sl)

For visitors and for locals



Kaspar Schuler and Barbara Wülser (Co-Directors CIPRA International), Hugo Quaderer (Treasurer CIPRA International); from left (c) CIPRA International

What is a good life in the Alps? How can tourism be reshaped? CIPRA International has dedicated its 2018 Annual Report to both local residents and visitors to the Alps and, under the motto “Visitors and residents”, has illustrated how tourism and quality of life can be compatible.

If intelligently planned and implemented, tourism can connect various areas of life as well as the numerous needs of locals, visitors and temporary residents in the Alps. Unconventional ideas and creative strategies are required to develop holistic offers for tourists and to draw value from the Alpine natural and cultural heritage in a sustainable way. As Christian Baumgartner, Vice-

President of CIPRA International, explains: “CIPRA International’s latest annual report shows that the CIPRA organisations are helping to generate the necessary ideas and strategies using creativity, charm and wit”.

The report highlights the example of the Slovenian tourist destination of Bled, currently overrun by hordes of visitors from all over the world. At the end of May 2018 the town hosted the annual conference entitled “Alpine tourism: quality of life included!”, staged by CIPRA in collaboration with the “Alliance in the Alps” network of municipalities. According to Barbara Wülser, Co-Director of CIPRA International since April 2019, this example clearly shows that excessive tourism is not necessarily of benefit to local people. “It is important to discuss and direct developments together with the local population.”

The attitude to life of young people is shown by the photos taken by youthful travellers as they make their way sustainably through the Alps using the “Youth Alpine Interrail Ticket”, an initiative of the CIPRA Youth Council (CYC). Readers can also learn how CIPRA Slovenia has pledged itself to the protection of water resources, how CIPRA France is committed to environmentally friendly mobility, or how CIPRA Germany is campaigning against the linking of ski areas. The Annual Report also recounts the often painful political battles in which CIPRA is involved in order to demand approaches that will result in long-term sustainable projects, rather than simply a short-term profit. As Christian Baumgartner, Vice-President of CIPRA International, explains: “CIPRA International’s latest annual report shows that the CIPRA organisations are helping to generate the necessary ideas and strategies using creativity, charm and wit”.

The Annual Report is available in printed form or as a PDF from CIPRA International, +423 237 53 53, international@cipra.org or www.cipra.org/annual-reports.

Creative use of vacancies

In order to revive vacant areas and buildings, four Alpine towns have joined forces in the “Tour des Villes” project. Mutual and cross-border exchange of knowledge and ideas were in the foreground during the duration of the project.



Cross-border exchange:
Representatives of several
Alpine towns talking at a
workshop in Idrija/SI. © Idrija

Unused military areas, houses in need of renovation, abandoned industrial zones – there are many transition areas, especially in the Alps, due to historical settlement development. In study trips the representatives of the four participating Alpine towns Idrija/SI, Sonthofen/D, Tolmezzo/I and Tolmin/SI visited each other and gained insights into the respective urban development. In workshops, they jointly worked out goals for dealing with unused historical areas and buildings. For example, the study trip to Tolmezzo/IT led to empty barracks. "Tour des Villes helped us to reflect on our ideas for the Caserma Cantore and to think ahead," sums up Francesco Brollo, Mayor of the city. The impressions of the project and the study trips are available as a multilingual photo box with 21 cards and online as a photo book.

The four Alpine towns, the "Alpine Town of the Year" association and CIPRA were partners in the project, which started in October 2016 and ended at the "AlpWeek Intermezzo" in Innsbruck at the beginning of April 2019. Financial support was provided by the Swiss Federal Office for Spatial Development ARE, the "Alpine Town of the Year" association and the four partner towns.

The project "TrAILS - Alpine Industrial Landscapes Transformation" pursues similar goals with the revitalisation of former industrial sites. CIPRA is active there as an observer.

Sources and further information:

<http://www.alpinetowns.org/en/projects/tour-des-villes/>

Photo book: www.alpenstaedte.org/tourdesvilles (de, fr, it, sl, en)

Link TRAILS Project: <https://simlab.tuwien.ac.at/trails>

The future of the Alps begins now



AlpWeek Intermezzo 2019 (c)
Anton Vorauer, WWF

What will the Alps of tomorrow look like? This question and political demands for the XV Alpine Conference lay at the heart of the "AlpWeek Intermezzo" held at the beginning of April in Innsbruck, Austria.

AlpWeek is jointly organised every four years by the Alpine organisations that are committed to sustainable regional development. As an intermediate first step, on 3 and 4 April an "AlpWeek Intermezzo" was held in Innsbruck, simultaneously with the XV Alpine Conference and the end of the Austrian presidency of the Alpine Convention. The first day saw around 60 participants formulating demands that were presented to the environment ministers of the Alpine countries. They addressed the three issues of land-use and landscape, climate change and mobility.

In his speech to the Alpine ministers, Kaspar Schuler, Co-director of CIPRA International, emphasised the responsibility of policymakers: "Those of us who work to protect the Alps are duty-bound to support the 100,000 young people who, in the past weeks, have taken to the streets to demonstrate in favour of climate protection in the towns and cities of the Alps."

On the second day of the "AlpWeek Intermezzo", which was open to the public, the presentation by Tyrolean photographer Lois Hechenblaikner cast a critical eye over current developments in Alpine tourism. Natael Fautrat from Chambéry sketched a vision for the future of the Alps from the perspective of youth. The rest of the day was devoted to good ideas, with presentations and market stalls inviting participants to discuss initiatives that had already been implemented in the Alpine region.

Sources and further information: www.alpweek.org, www.cipra.org/en/media-releases

From archives to houses of the present



Two visitors working on a huge “paint by numbers” mountain landscape in the Swiss Alpine Museum. © Herbert Schweizer

Alpine museums are about more than just wooden skis, farmhouse trunks and old photos. They preserve, exhort or inspire us – and thus have a vital role in society.

There are over 50 museums in the Alps that are dedicated to stories, peculiarities and matters that regard the Alps: from small local museums and museums run by Alpine clubs, to national institutions such as the Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne. The latter has experienced turbulent times of late: after the Federal Office for Culture announced drastic budget cuts in summer 2017, the museum was threatened with closure. Thanks to the efforts of over 16,000 supporters, the Swiss Parliament approved a budget increase at the end of 2018.

Difficult times also mean opportunities. Director of the Alpine Museum Beat Hächler and his team have recognised this. “We are a house of the present”, he notes. “We are interested in the topics that concern people today.” These include the fascination of mountain landscapes as well as climate change, second homes and seasonal jobs in ski resorts.

Interactive exhibitions

The Slovenian Alpine Museum was opened in Mojstrana in 2010. It is a young establishment and it wants to stay that way, as museum director Irena Lačen Benedičič explains: “Visitors should not just pass through, but also join in.” A trip to the museum is combined with a game: those who manage to solve five tasks to do with mountain sports will receive a small prize. There is also an old bivouac to add to the entertainment: after many years up in the Slovenian Alps, it can today be found in the museum’s garden and is used for the “Escape Room” game.

Sources and further information:

www.alpinesmuseum.ch/en, <http://rettungsaktion.alpinesmuseum.ch/#rettungsaktion.alpinesmuseum.ch> (de, fr, it),

www.bernerzeitung.ch/region/bern/das-alpine-museum-ist-vorerst-gerettet/story/28584058 (de),

www.planinskimuzej.si/en/, www.alpenverein.de/Kultur/Museum (de),

www.alpenverein.at/portal/museum-archiv/index.php (de),

www.chamonix.com/musee-alpin,49-187321,de.html (fr),

www.messner-mountain-museum.it/en/ (en),

With the Alps at our backs



Grenoble's application focuses on the Alps and climate change. (c) Laurent Espitallier, flickr.com

The French city of Grenoble aims to become the 2022 “European Green Capital”. It can play its biggest trump card in the build-up to this coveted award: the Alps.

Most of the previous “green capitals” are in northern Europe: examples are cities such as Stockholm, Copenhagen or Oslo that have managed to harmonise environmental protection, economic success and quality of life. With the city’s candidacy, Mayor of Grenoble Eric Piolle and local partners now wish to draw attention to the Alps. Climate change is occurring here twice as fast as in other parts of Europe. “We are however

twice as creative when it comes to finding solutions”, states Piolle.

The energy revolution, sustainable mobility, the fight against environmental pollution and social justice are the cornerstones of their visionary programme. No less important, according to Piolle, is the establishing of contacts and partnerships throughout the Alpine region: “We are not only doing this for Grenoble: we hope to create partnerships with other cities and regions in the Alps”. In 2016 the Slovenian city of Ljubljana, with its impressive innovations in public transport and revitalisation of the city centre, was crowned “European Green Capital”. Today the big challenge is to ensure that these new features and benefits are extended to the areas surrounding Ljubljana.

The “European Green Capital” award has been presented annually by the European Commission since 2010. The respective winners spend a year as the focus of excursions, discussions and reports and aim to inspire other cities throughout Europe to move towards sustainable urban development.

Sources and further information:

www.grenoble.fr/1336-capitale-verte-europeenne-grenoble-candidate-pour-2022.htm (fr), www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NLHWVIEAmU (fr), http://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/index_en.htm, www.ljubljana.si/en/ljubljana-for-you/european-green-capital-2016

Oh...



While the youth are organising school strikes in favour of climate protection, the president of the International Ski Federation (FIS) has expressed doubts about global warming. In an interview with the Zurich Tages-Anzeiger newspaper, 75-year old Gian Franco Kasper from Switzerland tells us: “There is no proof of it. We have snow, lots of it in some places.” Olympic champion Michelle Gisin, 25, has responded on Instagram with a series of images from

her ski training in the Swiss resort of Saas-Fe that clearly shows how the glaciers are shrinking: “If persons in such a powerful position with so much influence deny what is happening we will not live a future where our children will be able to go skiing and fall in love with winter and the wonderful nature we have.” Other top skiers such as Mikaela Shiffrin, Tina Weirather and Daniel Yule have added approving comments to Gisin’s posting. Presumably Peter Schröcksnadel, 77-year-old president of the Austrian Ski Federation, remains unimpressed. At a panel discussion in Kitzbühel, Austria, he said of climate change: “I don’t like anyone trying to make a fool of me, and that includes the climate world.” The lack of snow in ski areas under 1,000 metres is nonsense, he claimed: “These are simply natural fluctuations.” It’s down to the coming generation to step up to the plate!

Links and further information:

<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/sport/ski-wm/In-Diktaturen-ist-es-fuer-uns-einfacher/story/26126306> (de),

<https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/sport/ski-wm/Was-hat-Kasper-wirklich-gesagt-Die-Audiofiles-seiner-Aussagen/story/27765789> (de),

<https://www.sportnews.bz/artikel/weitere-sportarten/events/ski-wm-2019/olympiasiegerin-gisin-reagiert-auf-kasper> (de),

<https://www.tt.com/sport/sportintiroil/15245330/hochkaraetig-und-hitzig-diskussion-zur-ski-zukunft-in-kitzbuehel> (de),

<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/sport/fis-praesident-nicht-woertlich-gemeint-1.4323542> (de)

Agenda

EUSALP - Smart Villages, 24.04.-23.05.2019, Courmayeur/It. [More...](#)

Alpine Soil Partnership & Project partner meeting: Caring For Soils – in practice, 14.-16.05.2019, Aosta/It. [More...](#)

Learning and networking for sustainable development in the Alps. The Alpine School & OurAlps network, 14.-15.5.2019, Morbegno/It. [More...](#)

European Day of Parks: Our Natural Treasures, 24.05.2019, Several actions in Europe. [More...](#)

Links4Soils summer school, 10.-14.6.2019, Triglav National Park/Sl. [More...](#)