

I-Liv Alps Workshop II

Sustainable winter tourism in the Alps

Lecco, Italy, 2nd to 4th September 2016

About the project

I-LivAlps brings young people and experts together with representatives of national CIPRAs and CIPRA International in order to work on important and urgent alpine topics. They develop opinions, share thoughts, learn from each other and by doing this, develop and support the positions and potential role of the different CIPRAs in relation to the topics. The four topics are, according to the [alpMonitor project](#): 1) Spatial Planning and Quality of Life, 2) Tourism, 3) Housing and Working, 4) Social Innovation. We started with a workshop in Schaan followed by the workshop in Lecco. The next two workshops will take place in spring 2017 and autumn 2017. The process aims to develop ideas of future jobs for young people in the Alps and to experience and live the concept of participation. The output will feed into the [alpMonitor project](#) and will be spread via various CIPRA communication channels as well as to local and regional media.

Results of the workshop in Lecco

The workshop on sustainable winter tourism in Lecco started on **Friday, 2nd September 2016**, with the greetings by the mayor of Lecco, *Virginio Brivio*, and after context inputs from CIPRA's project manager *Michaela Hogenboom* and *Barbara Wülser*.

Followed by thematic intro by the CIPRA president *Katharina Conradin*, who spoke about current state in winter tourism. She recognised six main challenges: climate change, increase in artificial snowmaking, social and demographic changes, fact that skiing has become very expensive sport and majority of people cannot afford it, short vacations and competition with other international ski resorts. We also heard about common strategies (artificial snowmaking, linking of ski resorts, internalization) and contradictions in winter tourism through investments and increasing comfort which bring us the need for more adventure.

Vice-president *Christian Baumgartner* spoke about trends and visions. We learned that the biggest problems when it comes to winter tourism are our expectations. When we think about winter in our mind, occurs this perfect picture of a winter landscape with snow covered mountains and skier. But unfortunately it is rarely like this nowadays. We have to except the reality that climate changes are making our winters warmer and each winter we get a big lack of snow. We have to change our mindsets, we have to stop promoting things that do not exist anymore. We need change in understanding of winter tourism and activities that comes with it and we have to work closely with politicians to apply those changes also on long-term strategies. With all this heard our heads were full of interesting thoughts and we were prepared to work hard on following day.

On **Saturday, 3rd September 2016**, we started with a warm up activity where we got an impression of how sustainable were our last holidays. After that, we listened to two

presentations by experts, *Carmen de Jong*, from University of Strasbourg, was talking about changes in the Alpine environment and trends in winter tourism. The second input was made by *Mariana Elmi* from the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention. We learned that decision-making for sustainable winter tourism is a very complex issue, because there are different types of activities, different destinations in the Alps, different levels of planning and different components of tourism service chain,.

What followed was an interactive workshop on opportunities and risks of sustainable winter tourism in the Alps. The most recognised opportunities of sustainable winter tourism were local engagement, new opportunities for different activities and better connection between summer and winter seasons. On the other hand the risks of sustainable winter tourism were connected to the financing issues, pressures from big winter destinations (lobby) and lack of understanding sustainability. In this workshop we also worked on our and CIPRA's role, which are to inform people about sustainability and also about negative consequences of existing winter tourism, help locals with new ideas and initiatives, collection of a good practices, create alternative and be role models.

After lunch break we listened to *Yvonne Schuler* from Ferienregion Engadin Scuol and *Bruno Felicetti* from APT Fiemme Fassa. They presented to us their destination and what they do to become more sustainable, the challenges they are confronting and their priorities when it comes to decision making. From their presentations, we could get a good insight into planning and the mind of the destination managers.

What followed was another interactive workshop focused on CIPRA's vision and shared position paper. We worked on mobility, accommodation, activities and new project idea Alps under pressure.

Sunday, 4th September 2016, was meant to be the day to sum up our thoughts and work into two different groups. For once the young participants and the representatives of the national CIPRAs worked separately. The young participants focused on position of the youth by answering the following questions: What does it mean for the youth, what can young people do, and what am I able/willing to do? National CIPRAs were more specifically working on a draft for a position paper about sustainable winter tourism. Different approaches were discussed towards the role of CIPRA. Is it to strengthen small villages which are not fully depended from winter tourism? What shall be done to help ski destinations change? In what fields could CIPRA get active? Is it mobility, accommodation or activities? And how? A lot of ideas came up in fruitful discussions.

After some time the groups re-joined and presented their work to each other. This laid the ground for a position paper about sustainable winter tourism and a better understanding of the contributions of CIPRA. The aim of the workshop was not only to start a position paper, though. Young participants got empowered and inspired by knowledge and exchanges with experts and other inhabitants of the Alps, no matter of what age. It's their future they can actively forge.

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