

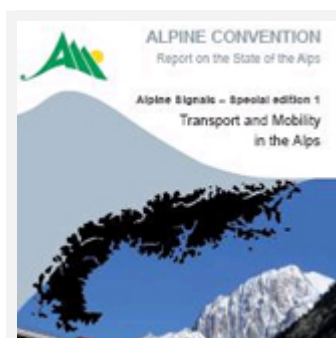
alpMedia Newsletter

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Report on the State of the Alps focuses on transport and mobility

(20.12.2007) At the end of November the Secretary General of the Alpine Convention, Marco Onida, presented the first part of the Report on the State of the Alps. The Report is now available not just in English but also in German, French, Italian and Slovenian.



The current Report on the State of the Alps is the first in a series of publications on the development of the Alpine region.

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The Report is entitled *Transport and Mobility in the Alps* and focuses on the impact of transport on ecological, social and economic areas. It is borne by all the contracting parties to the Alpine Convention, the Alpine states and the EU.

The Report analyses the way in which the demographic conditions, settlement patterns and economic outline conditions of a region or of tourism affect mobility and transport. Conversely it also examines the way in which transport and mobility impact the economy and society as well as health and the environment. Transport policy is addressed at the European, national and in part regional level, too, and related with the influencing factors mentioned above. The authors also

compiled uniform figures to serve as a data basis that has been harmonised across the Alps rather than the often differing national data used in the past, for instance for heavily frequented transit routes.

The Report, with which the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention hopes to reach a broad readership, can be downloaded in five languages from www.convenzionedellealpi.org/page9_en.htm.

The Report on the State of the Alps contains a number of concrete recommendations for action. For instance it recommends that HGV traffic be taken off the roads and on to the railways. In line with these sentiments the federal province of Tyrol/A is currently seeking a sector-related HGV driving ban under which rail-compatible bulk goods such as waste, rocks and earth should in future only be transported by rail. Despite resistance from the EU, which is threatening legal action, the ban is to be decreed at the beginning of next year and to come into force in May 2008.

Sources: <http://www.tirol.com/politik/innsbruck/73062/index.do> (de),
<http://www.tirol.com/politik/innsbruck/73376/index.do> (de), Der Standard, 29.11.2007

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More and more low-cost airlines are flying to the Alps in winter. More than twenty of these "ski destinations" are being offered to winter air travellers. With the offer of connecting flights, air passengers are now able to travel directly to the ski slopes.

Strengthening mountain forests

(08.11.2007) The Interreg IIIC project Network Mountain Forest (NMF), which was launched in 2003, has come to a close with the signing in Lindau/D on 29 October 2007 of a Memorandum aimed at strengthening mountain forests in Europe.

In the Memorandum the states participating in the Project, i.e. Germany, Italy, Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia, and the observer states Bulgaria, Greece, Slovakia and Liechtenstein, call for a common mountain forest policy in the Alpine region and in the mountain areas of Europe that are located outside the Alps. The objective aimed at by the signatory states includes setting up a European mountain forest platform and a European mountain forest campaign, and creating a European financing instrument. Within the context of forestry planting strategies greater consideration is also to be given to altered conditions resulting from climate change.

The Memorandum is based on the results of the Interreg Project, which examined the state of mountain forests and illustrated the many different functions performed by mountain forests.

Source, information and to download the final declaration: <http://www.bafu.admin.ch/wald/01256/05491/index.html?lang=de> (de)



Forest preservation is an essential contribution to sustainable development in mountain areas.

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Economic and ecological effects of artificial snow

(20.12.2007) A new study by the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL) highlights the effects of technical snow-making systems on the regional economy, the use of resources and the environment. The three Swiss winter sports resorts of Davos, Scuol and Braunwald were chosen as regions for the study. An analysis of the value added in the Davos community showed that losses of up to 10% in regional aggregate income could occur in Davos as a result of winters with poor snow cover if artificial snow-making systems were not used. Guest surveys indicated that while guaranteed snow was an important factor in the choice of destination, it was not the sole factor. According to the study reliable snow conditions are increasingly seen by guests as a basic offer that is taken for granted.

Water consumption for snow-making is considerable compared with the energy consumption involved. According to the researchers it accounts for up to 30% of the total amount of water consumed in the regions covered by the study. What's more, future possibilities for snow-making are set to diminish considerably according to the study's regional climate scenarios, which predict temperature increases.

Source, information and to download the study: http://www.wsl.ch/forschung/forschungsprojekte/klimawandel_wintertourismus (de/en)



19 % of ski slopes in Switzerland are currently covered using artificial snow – and the trend is up.

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Green Paper on urban mobility

(08.11.2007) The European Commission's new Green Paper entitled "Towards a new culture for urban mobility" looks at the mobility and ecology of European towns and cities. In Europe a good 60% of the population lives in urban areas. Just under 85% of the EU's gross domestic product is generated in those areas. Air and noise pollution, road accidents, congestion and delays are on the increase, resulting in costs of nearly 100 billion euros every year, or around 1% per cent of the EU's GDP.

With its Green Paper the EU aims to provide assistance without dictating solutions from above. Intelligent systems (financial, structural and administrative in nature) are to optimise motorised passenger and freight transport and make public transport, cycling and walking more attractive and safer. Greater use is to be made of technical measures and implemented by local authorities, for example with exemplary green public procurement plan. The Green Paper is to be followed by a consultation process lasting until 15 March 2008. An Action Plan on sustainable urban mobility is to be drawn up in early autumn 2008.

Information: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/green_paper_urban_transport/index_en.htm (de/fr/it/sl/en)

Alpweek 2008 – Innovating [in] the Alps

(22.11.2007) The second edition of the Alpweek is being held in the Pays des Ecrins/F from 11 to 14 June 2008, with players from throughout the Alpine region discussing issues of sustainable development. After the positive experiences of the 2004 Alpweek in Kranjska Gora/SI the major Alpine networks ISCAR, CIPRA, Alliance in the Alps, ALPARC and Club Arc Alpin decided to repeat the event in 2008. The aim is to promote dialogue between the different groups of players involved in sustainable development. Proposals are also to be drawn up on ways in which public administrations and the Alpine Convention in particular can orientate their activities and their measures towards sustainable innovation.

In five main topic strands, the lectures and presentations are to address the issue of "New Thinking – Thinking Anew [in the Alps]". The main subject always revolves around questions of innovation, coupled with the challenges of sustainable development in the Alps. The programme is rounded off with excursions, exhibitions and forums as well as festival and cultural events. Information: <http://www.alpweek.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en)

Onto the slopes by plane

(20.12.2007) More and more low-cost airlines are flying to the Alps in winter. More than twenty of these “ski destinations” are being offered to winter air travellers. With the offer of connecting flights, air passengers are now able to travel directly to the ski slopes from Salzburg/A, Innsbruck/A, Klagenfurt/A, Zurich/CH, Friedrichshafen/D, Munich/D and, most recently, from Grenoble/F and Memmingen/D. It is now also possible to reach the winter sports resorts of South Tyrol directly from the Italian airports at Bergamo, Brescia and Verona, or the French Alpes Maritimes from Nice. Alongside six low-cost airlines, national carriers such as Swiss, Austrian, Lufthansa and Air France are also touting for business with tickets priced at €99. From an ecological viewpoint this trend is worrying. There are also often special “fly & ski” offers for sports equipment carried as baggage. In some cases skis are transported at no extra charge, with an extra 10 kg of baggage allowance for ski boots. With new transfer services (i.e. shuttles) co-operating with the airlines, travellers can now book the connection from the airport to the ski resort along with their flight. Regions such as Carinthia/A, Salzburg/A and East Tyrol/A even organise their own transfers.

Information: http://www.welt.de/welt_print/article1463528/Schneller_auf_die_Piste.html (de)



The transfer from Friedrichshafen Airport to the Arlberg ski resort takes another 20 minutes by helicopter.

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Agricultural genetic resources of the Alps

(17.01.2008) The final report of the project “Continuous Monitoring of Agricultural Genetic Resources of the Alps: The Alpine Delphi” was published at the end of 2007. The project was conducted by the Monitoring Institute for Rare Breeds and Seeds in Europe in co-operation with the SAVE Foundation. Together they developed a monitoring system which allows the continuous monitoring of the Alpine agro-biodiversity. Surveys among experts complemented in-depth research, promoting the networking of organisations and institutions as well as the documentation and updating of related data. The organisations also established an early warning system designed to identify critically endangered livestock breeds and cultivated plants.

The project picks up from a study on the “Agricultural Genetic Resources of the Alps”, which began in 1992 at the incentive of CIPRA and was conducted by Pro Specie Rara, aimed at drawing attention to the importance of traditional cultivated plants and livestock adapted – and therefore resistant – to their environment.

Source, information and to download the final report in English or the executive summary in German and English:

<http://www.save-foundation.net> (de/fr/en).



As the Report underscores, small-structured landscapes contribute to biodiversity.

© www.save-foundation.net

New issue of the *Journal of Alpine Research*

(08.11.2007) The latest publication in the series *Journal of Alpine Research* features four specialist articles addressing different issues. However they all focus on the landscape and the way in which it is changing.

One article looks at nature parks and emphasises the fact that legal, political and economic instruments are necessary in order to manage the “landscape resource”. A second article examines structural changes in alpine farming. While the third article raises the issue of “Olympic territorialisation” based on the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin/I, the last article considers what the Romans already knew about Alpine land forms.

All the articles are published in two languages, English and French.

Bibliography: *La revue de géographie alpine/Journal of alpine research*, Vol. 95, No. 3, September 2007, Mélanges 2007/Miscellaneous articles 2007, Grenoble, ISBN 978-2-200-92330-3, 103 pages; to order: <http://iga.ujf-grenoble.fr/territoires/accueil/editions.htm> (fr)

Snow levels depend on more than just altitude

(22.12.2007) New results by the Austrian research project STRATEGE show that snow levels do not necessarily depend on altitude. In precipitation scenarios relating to climate change, researchers found that other factors such as the micro climate, relief and exposure of the locations concerned also had to be considered. Accordingly, low-lying winter resorts do not necessarily have to suffer from lack of snow if localised conditions are favourable. The factors mentioned are also of significance for artificial snow installations. For instance in the region surveyed, i.e. Schladming/A, conditions for artificial snowfall are considerably better than at sunnier altitudes in spite of – or rather because of – the low-lying location in the narrow valley area.

The study also notes that the cable-car industry must adapt to changes in conditions. It goes on to add that some locations would have more time to prepare for the new form of tourism as a result of these localised advantages.

Source and information: http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung.php?schluessel=OTS_20071114_OTS0344 (de),

<http://www.klimawandel-wintersport.at/de/veroeffentlichungen/projekt.html> (de)

Miscellaneous

EU warming to the idea of an Alpine transit exchange

(22.12.2007) For some time now Switzerland's *Bundesrat* [Federal Council] has been wanting to push ahead with relocating freight-related transit traffic from the road to the rail by creating an Alpine transit exchange. Transit quotas for freight on the road could then be auctioned from the exchange. In the past the EU has tended to be dismissive of the idea. But in October favourable signals were seen to come from Brussels for the first time. The EU announced that it did not intend to veto any decision on the part of Switzerland to limit road freight traffic. It did however stipulate that Switzerland would have to offer a functional alternative, a reference first and foremost to the completion of the New Railway Link through the Alps with the Gotthard and Lötschberg base tunnels as its core elements.

Source: http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/wissenschaft/alpentransitboerse_bruesel_wohlwollen_1.571681.html (de)

A network of sensors for climate forecasts

(06.12.2007) Environmental scientists and IT and communication engineers have got together as part of the Swiss Experiment Project to try and assess the impact of climate change in the Alps at the earliest possible stage. Swiss Experiment is aimed at yielding the most accurate environmental data possible using a network of terrestrial sensors in the Swiss Alps. It is also designed to facilitate the selection of the abundance of measurement data with which scientists are continually confronted. The scientists hope to be able to forecast avalanches, floods and landslides more accurately and as a result contribute towards the safety of the population. Environmental changes are also to be documented more efficiently.

Source: http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/schweiz/multidisziplinaer_vernetzte_umweltwissenschaft_1.589948.html (de)

Information: http://www.swiss-experiment.ch/SwissEx/index.php/Main_Page (fr/en)

Swiss Mountain Award 2008

(17.01.2008) The Swiss Mountain Award is to be presented this year for the fourth time in a row by the Government Conference of the Mountain Cantons. Since 2004 the Award has acknowledged innovative and practical water projects which contribute towards improving the net output of the Swiss mountain region. Participation in the Award is open to legal and natural persons from Switzerland and abroad, provided the project is implemented in the Swiss mountain region. The closing date is 15 April 2008. Support is provided in particular to projects which use water in an innovative and efficient way and make a sustainable contribution to net output in both the short and medium term. The Award is to be presented in August 2008 with prize money worth CHF 60,000.

Information: <http://www.mountain-water-net.ch/award> (de)

Agenda

RegioMarket Final Conference: **Strengthening Regions – Sustainable Marketing Strategies in the Sectors Food, Tourism & Gastronomy and Renewable Energies**; 13-14.2.2007, Friedrichshafen/D; languages: de, fr, it, sl, en; organisers: Hochschule Liechtenstein, Interreg III B Alpine Space Project RegioMarket.

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

International Conference: **Living Terraced Landscapes. Perspectives and strategies to revitalize abandoned regions**; 14-15.2.2008, Ljubljana/SI; languages: it, sl, en; organisers: Interreg III B Alpine Space Project ALPTER.

Information and registration: <http://predmet.fa.uni-lj.si/alpter/> (en)

International Congress: **Mountain and steep slope viticulture**; 13-15.3.2008, Ribeira Sacra/E; languages: fr, en; organisers: CERVIM (Centre de Recherches, d'Études et de Valorisation pour la Viticulture de Montagne), Xunta de Galice, Consello Regulador Ribeira Sacra.

Information: <http://www.wine-community.com/index.php?method=section&action=zoom&id=494> (en)

OECD Conference: **Innovative Service Delivery: Meeting the Challenges of Rural Regions**; 3-4.4.2008, Cologne/D; language: en; organisers: OECD.

Information: www.oecd.org/gov/regionaldevelopment/cologne (en)

International Conference: **Global Change and Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions**; 7-9.4.2008, Innsbruck/A; language: en; organisers: COST, European Science Foundation.

Information: <http://bfw.ac.at/rz/bfwcms.web?dok=6211> (en)

Strange but true!

... When it comes to selling season tickets, ski resorts have all sorts of bright ideas. The mini ski resort of Buttes/CH for instance has just signed a deal with the large ski resort of Verbier/CH: If there is no snow in Buttes, holders of combined season passes, which cost 400 Swiss francs in Buttes, can use the slopes at Verbier. A season ticket for Verbier actually costs more than 1,000 Swiss francs. So if you want to ski cheaply in Verbier, all you have to do is buy a combined season ticket for Buttes this year and hope for a mild winter – and perhaps do everything you can to accelerate climate change? Last winter the ski lifts in Buttes were in operation for a whole three days! An integrated tariff scheme comprising 18 ski resorts in Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein and Switzerland has also included a special bonus in its *Meilenweisspass* [Miles White Pass]. The purchase price of 950 Swiss francs now also includes the use of an indoor ski run in the desert state of Dubai.

Information:

[http://www.tdg.ch/pages/home/tribune_de_geneve/l_actu/suisse/detail_suisse/\(contenu\)/159439](http://www.tdg.ch/pages/home/tribune_de_geneve/l_actu/suisse/detail_suisse/(contenu)/159439) (fr),
<http://www.meilenweiss.com> (de)