

Declaration on climate change

The Alpine Conference

with reference to the decision of the 8th Alpine Conference about natural hazards;

recognises with concern that the global climate change particularly affects the Alpine Area. The average temperature increase since the pre-industrial age is clearly above the global average in this area. Already today this shows itself through the increase of the threat through natural hazards or as a visible effect in the form of the progressive melting of glaciers and the reduction of the permafrost;

notices that, according to the climate scenarios supplied by the scientific community, significant climate changes must be taken into account by 2100 in the Alpine Area;

emphatically requires the worldwide implementation of the framework convention on climate and of the Kyoto protocol as well as the definition of ambitious objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gases for the period after 2012 with a view to the necessary stabilization of greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level at which a dangerous anthropogenic disturbance of the climate system is prevented and the increase of the global surface temperature, according to the conclusions of the presidency at the meeting of the European Council of 22/23 March 2005, is limited at maximum 2 °C with respect to the pre-industrial level;

with respect to the progressive climate change for the future, indicates that it is necessary to develop appropriate strategies and activities for the Alpine area for the adaptation to the consequences that will result from the climate change, that consider the “Five-year programme of work on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change“ under the UN framework agreement about climate changes, as well as the European Climate Protection Programme (ECCP), that are also aimed at specific sectors and include regional peculiarities, needs and abilities for the adaptation;

deems efforts for the promotion of international research projects as necessary, in order to achieve better understanding about the effects of climate change on the Alpine area (among other things, on land use, land use changes, on the water balance with the envisaged more frequent occurrence of extreme rainfall events and drought periods and the consequences

for the vitality of mountain forests) and therefore create the basis for the drafting or implementation of effective adaptation strategies, that can be transposed to other mountain regions of the world with comparable issues by means of suitable and commonly supported „Capacity Programmes“;

invites the Alpine states and the EU to include within the framework of national policies and in the common Alpine policy the following recommendations for action to avoid a further progressive climate change and to its adaptation:

1. **Avoid** climate change progressing further through appropriate measures for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the support to the absorption of greenhouse gases, in particular by means of
 - the improvement of the energy efficiency and the use of existing energy saving potential,
 - an increased use of local raw materials that can be regenerated (e.g. wood) and the increased use of renewable energies in the Alpine area,
 - the promotion of energy saving constructions and the renovation of buildings with a view to energy saving,
 - environmentally sustainable traffic, dwelling and landscape planning and actions for an environmentally sustainable development of road traffic,
 - promotion of methods of agricultural use that are low in greenhouse gases, including organic farming,
 - the promotion of sustainable forestry use.

2. **Adaptation** to the effects of climate change by means of the development of concrete strategies for the inclusion of adaptation measures in segment policies, guarantee of the organisational, legal and appropriate budget framework conditions, implementation of new or intensification of current actions, raising awareness and targeted research, in particular
 - quick drafting of proposals for appropriate, additional future actions in economy sectors which are particularly affected, such as agriculture and forestry as well as tourism and traffic
 - total risk management for the prevention and reaction to the likely stronger occurrence of natural hazards

- ensure a land use adapted to the threat potential through natural hazards as well to the shift of vegetation areas and putting land planning actions in line with the reduction of the danger and damage potential
- research to assess possible effects of planned adaptation measures on the „Alps“ system and the people who live there
- early alarm systems, emergency planning and, if necessary, integrated transborder catastrophe management, adaptation to great events as well as setting up of corresponding damage compensation solutions for larger risks
- promotion of danger knowledge and danger awareness through information and participation of the population (from affected to involved)
- protection and recovery of mountain forests for the protection of the soil and the improvement of the protection from Alpine natural dangers, more intense efforts for the preservation, care and, where necessary, recovery of protection forests in the mountains
- strategies for the adaptation to the changes in the water balance with the previously said increased frequency of extreme rainfalls events and drought periods as well as for the solution of conflicts of objectives in water use
- exchange of information about adaptation strategies and actions and exchange of knowledge about the effects of climate change on the Alpine area as well as their implementation

underlines that the bodies of the Alpine Convention in collaboration with their partners will take into consideration the problem, the causes and the consequences of climate change in all their actions.

In particular, regarding this issue, the Alpine Conference takes two long-term initiatives:

- the natural hazard platform deals within the framework of its mandate with the effects of climate change on the safety of people, dwellings and infrastructures.
- within the framework of the implementation of the multi-year work programme and the research agenda drafted by ISCAR with respect to it, the issue of Global Change and the possibility of adaptations to the effects on the water balance will be given a particular priority.