

Ständiger Ausschuss der Alpenkonferenz
Comité permanent de la Conférence alpine
Comitato Permanente della Conferenza delle Alpi
Stalni odbor Alpske konference

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**ÉTABLISSEMENT DE LA PLATE-FORME « LA GESTION DE L'EAU
DANS L'ESPACE ALPIN »**

**A Rapport du Secrétariat permanent et de la Présidence du
groupe d'experts ad hoc pour la rédaction du deuxième Rapport sur
l'état des Alpes « L'eau et la gestion des eaux »**

B Proposition de décision

Annexe 1: Composition de la plate-forme « La gestion de l'eau dans l'espace alpin »

Annexe 2: Mandat de la plate-forme pour la période allant de la X^e à la XI^e Conférence alpine

A Report of the Permanent Secretariat and the Presidency of the ad-hoc expert group for the elaboration of the second Report on the State of the Alps “Water and Water management issues”¹

Decision of the IXth Alpine Conference

The IXth Alpine Conference decided to produce the second Report on the state of the Alps on the topic of Water in the Alps and charged the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention with this task.

The Austrian-German Presidency of the Ad-hoc expert group together with the Permanent Secretariat and the Expert group drafted the report in coordination with the French Presidency of the Alpine Convention, involving the Focal Points of the Contracting Parties on the one hand and the most important stakeholders of science, observers, relevant NGO's.

Furthermore, the IXth Alpine Conference highlighted the need to continue the dialogue started at conference “The Water Balance of the Alps” held in Innsbruck in September, 2006, in particular by means of a second conference in Munich in 2008 involving relevant stakeholders. As regards its content, the report focuses on the significant water management issues. By analysing the existing legislative instruments in the water sector, it sets the basis for recommendations on the necessary measures in order to address those issues.

Main results of the Report on the State of the Alps “Water and Water Management Issues”

The Alps contribute a disproportional high share of water compared to the catchment's area, which is fed into large European river systems. This is the reason why water from the Alps is of vital importance for the surrounding extra Alpine regions and also for large parts of Europe. Furthermore, the Alps are still one of the largest continuous unspoilt areas on the continent with outstanding unique and diverse natural habitats. Pressures caused by man are threatening this heritage and the ecological functioning of water courses. Therefore a broad range of water management issues has to be tackled within the Alpine region in order to address those pressures. Nature and the extent of challenges for water management are

¹ Le rapport est rédigé en anglais, car il a été convenu avec le groupe d'experts ad hoc, et il se compose pour la plupart d'éléments textuels issus des documents actuels du groupe d'experts, dont la langue de travail est l'anglais.

quite diverse within the Alpine perimeter due to differences in climate, geology, topography, land use or the intensity of settlement areas. Pressures and impacts which are considered to be a major challenge at local level do not emerge to be a major issue for the alpine wide space.

According to the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) and similar instruments which are in place in Switzerland, clear ecologically oriented targets, tailor-made to the specific type of surface waters have to be met within an ambitious time-frame. Their objective of no deterioration of the status of surface- and groundwater and their broad legal frame for water management are already in place or being implemented. The hydrological basin, on which the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and instruments in Switzerland are paying attention to as a management unit, is considered as the ideal spatial reference and as a milestone for modern water management.

Complementary to this new legal frame a comprehensive set of bi- and multilateral agreements ensures transboundary as well as basin wide multilateral coordination of approaches and solutions to water management issues.

Last but not least an additional set of provisions already enshrined within the frame of the protocols to the Alpine Convention are also targeting specific water issues (e.g. hydro power production in the energy protocol; artificial snow production in the tourism protocol).

Of particular interest will be a sound and appropriate use of the existing set of provisions and instruments in place within the day to day administrative and legal practice. This is of overriding importance for the concrete implementation of provisions of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) within the process of providing licenses and permits for installations, abstractions and discharges, for the efforts to define as well as to achieve “good ecological status” and “good ecological potential” for all surface waters, respectively for the practical application of the principle of no deterioration of status and its exemptions.

Under climate change the main challenge is seen in quantifying the effects of climate change on water management issues, to adapt interregional models to the high diversity of conditions in the different regions within the scope of the Alpine Convention and in particular to translate forecasted changes of temperature and precipitation into hydrological parameters (e.g. river flows) for the entire network of surface waters. Transboundary cooperation of the scientific community on ongoing efforts and involvement of the whole water management sector should be further enhanced and already available knowledge on the effects of climate

change should be taken into account when designing new installations with a long life time such as hydro power plants or flood protection works in order to make them “climate proof”.

2nd Conference “Water Balance of the Alps”, Munich, October 2008

During the second Conference “Water Balance of the Alps” in Munich on the 30th and 31st October 2008 the opportunity of having a platform on water management in the frame of the Alpine Convention emerged. The main potential tasks formulated in the summary of the conference were:

1. Exchange of best practice examples on relevant water management issues
2. Analyze the river basin management plans on alpine relevant aspects and make appropriate recommendations
3. Develop recommendations for hydroelectricity production balancing the ecological, economic and social aspects with special focus on residual water flow
4. Identify main questions supporting the implementation of the WFD including concerning further research and transfer results to policy basics
5. Analyze the results and adequacy of monitoring networks in higher mountain regions

Decision of the 38th Permanent Committee on the installation of a platform “Water Management in the Alps”

The 38th Permanent Committee in Innsbruck decided to propose to the Xth Alpine Conference to install a Platform on “Water Management in the Alps” bringing in the adequate representatives. The Permanent Secretariat is asked to elaborate the mandate for such a platform under consultation with the Ad-hoc Expert group for the drafting of the second report on the State of the Alps “Water and Water Management Issues”.

The proposed mandate focuses on development of recommendations and exchange concerning Water management issues in the Alps for the years 2009-2011. The work of such a platform is based on the regulations of the Framework Convention and the different protocols to the Alpine Convention. As the concept of integrated water management is generally supported by the member countries, the presence of the main actors involved in water management and/or water users in the platform is a logical consequence.

On the base of the results of the Report of the State of the Alps “Water and Water Management Issues”, the conference in Munich and the discussions in the Permanent Committee meetings, the Permanent Secretariat and the Presidency of the Ad-hoc Expert group elabo-

rated the following proposal for decision for the attention of the Permanent Committee in Evian (March 2009).

B Proposition de décision

Le Comité permanent propose la décision suivante à la X^e Conférence alpine :

La Conférence alpine

1. prend note du rapport du Secrétariat permanent et de la présidence du groupe d'experts ad hoc ;
2. établit une plate-forme sur la « Gestion de l'eau dans l'espace alpin », dont la composition est indiquée dans l'Annexe 1, et le mandat précisé dans l'Annexe 2. Ledit mandat sera valable jusqu'à la XI^e Conférence alpine ;
3. attribue à [*membre(s) des pays contractants – à décider ultérieurement*] la présidence de la plate-forme « La gestion de l'eau dans l'espace alpin » jusqu'à la XI^e Conférence alpine. »