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**ANLAGE/ANNEXE/ALLEGATO/PRILOGA**

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ALPINE CONVENTION

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# ACTIVITY REPORT 2009/2010

## PLATFORM ON NATURAL HAZARDS OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION PLANALP



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**Picture:**

Cover: Measures against floods, Schladming

(Source: Styrian Government, Austria)

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# 1. What is Platform on Natural Hazards of the Alpine Convention?

**The Platform on Natural Hazards of the Alpine Convention (called hereafter PLANALP) was set up to develop common strategies designed to prevent natural hazards in alpine space as well as to deliberate on adaptation strategies. The extent of the damage caused by such hazards is constantly increasing. The reasons are varied: concentration and increase in value, more vulnerable infrastructure, increasing requirements with regard to mobility and communications, major uncertainties due to climate change, etc. Measures agreed across the whole Alpine arch region therefore make sense and in some fields are urgently needed.**

After the devastating avalanches and floods of 1999, the Alpine Conference appointed a working group to develop common strategies and activity fields on the level of the parties to the Alpine Convention. Based on the recommendations of this working group, PLANALP was appointed by the Ministers at the 8th Alpine Conference in 2004. The basis of PLANALP is the mandate approved by the 10th session of the Alpine Convention. The mandate of PLANALP covers both the formulation of strategic concepts on integrated risk management against natural hazards and the coordinated implementation of subsequent measures.

The contracting parties to the Alpine Convention delegated high-level experts to PLANALP in order to ensure effective networking and coordination of activities in the Alpine region and exert influence on national strategies.

Andreas Götz, vice director of Switzerland's Federal Office for the Environment FOEN and the president of the Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards PLANAT, has held the chair of PLANALP since 2005. PLANALP works closely with the relevant professional international and national institutions in this field. The platform consists of between 16 and 20 members with no more than two representatives (national and/or regional) per contracting party. Observers to the Convention may put forward two representatives selected by the observers themselves. PLANALP meets at least once a year in the country that holds the chair. During the reporting period the members of PLANALP met four times trying to implement PLANALP's mandate. An administrative secretariat assists the platform. In 2009 and 2010, the administrative secretariat was affiliated to the secretariat of PLANAT Switzerland. Other contracts can be concluded if needed.

## **Main objectives of PLANALP:**

- ◆ Discuss concepts for an integrated reduction of natural hazards
- ◆ Identify "best practices"
- ◆ Implement the subsequent measures
- ◆ Intensify the cross-border exchange of experiences

Activities emanate from these focal points.

## **Principal topics of PLANALP:**

- ◆ integrated risk management
- ◆ early-warning systems
- ◆ sustainable protection concepts and protective measures
- ◆ event documentation
- ◆ strategies of reconstruction after a disaster
- ◆ risk dialogue



Upper row from left to right: A. Zischg, J.-M. Bernard, W. Burhenne, F. Gillet, E. Eichenseer, H. Siegel (guest), J. Papez, R. Hornich  
 Lower row from left to right: E. Vittori, A. Goetz, S. Wohlwend, A. Leutwiler, C. Guggisberg, M. Patek, A. Bianchini, P. Quillacq, I. Roblek

### Chair

Andreas **Götz** Vice-Director, Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Bern/Switzerland

### Members

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 Jean-Marc **Bernard** Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Territorial Development, Paris/France  
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Stephan **Wohlwend** Amt für Wald, Natur und Landschaft, Vaduz/Principality of  
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Daniel **Bieri** Club Arc Alpin CAA

### **Guests**

Andrea **Bianchini** European Academy of Research, Bolzano/Bozen / Italy  
Martin **Grambow** Bavarian State Ministry of the Environment, Public Health and  
Consumer Protection, Munich/Germany  
Murièle **Millot** Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and Territorial  
Development, Paris/France  
Andreas **Zischg** European Academy of Research, Bolzano/Bozen / Italy  
Hubert **Siegel** Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water  
Management (BMLFUW), Vienna/Austria  
Pamela **Köllner-Heck** Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Bern/Switzerland

### **PLANALP is assisted by**

Peter **Greminger** Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Bern/Switzerland  
Silvia **Jost** Federal Office for Spatial Development, Bern/Switzerland

### **Secretariat**

Wanda **Wicki** Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Bern/Switzerland

### **Members, guests, and secretaries who left PLANALP in 2009/2010**

Andreas **Götz** Assistant Managing Director CIPRA International, Schaan/Principality  
of Liechtenstein  
Peter **Frei** Bayer. Staatsministerium für Umwelt, Gesundheit und  
Verbraucherschutz, München/Germany  
Astrid **Leutwiler** Federal Office for the Environment FOEN, Bern/Switzerland

## 2. Activities 2009/2010

### ***Exchange of information***

One of the main objectives of PLANALP is/was to intensify the cross-border exchange of experiences. During the last period the members of PLANALP have cultivated and intensified an intensive exchange of information at the meetings. They have offered their experience and knowledge in the field of **Alpine risk management**, risk analysis and integrated risk management in their country/region. The members have also presented examples of particular projects and shown successful protection strategies and preventive security concepts, databases for natural processes and hazards of their country/region.

Between meetings members communicate via e-mail and internet. Important information between meetings was forwarded by the PLANALP secretariat to all members. Furthermore, the website [www.planat.ch](http://www.planat.ch) has a restricted area containing all current documents and information of the Platform on Natural Hazards.

In addition to the restricted area on the website, there is also an area accessible to the public containing media releases, activity reports, working programmes and PLANALP publications.

### ***Position paper “Integral natural hazard risk management: recommendations”***

PLANALP first identified four priority fields of actions for the protection from natural hazards – the so called “hotspots”. On these four issues, individual member states defined the key aspects of the problem and formulated recommendations to submit to the attention of decision makers. The main issues identified are the following:

- Residual risk due to natural hazards (Austria)
- Adaptation to climate change (Germany)
- Dialogue on risk (France)
- Spatial planning (Italy)

The individual position papers were commented by all other delegations and then brought together in a consistent format by the PLANALP Secretariat and conclusions were drawn. The position papers were approved by the Standing Committee and by the Alpine Conference and finally formally finalised. In 2009, the position papers were transmitted to the UN as a contribution of the Alpine Convention to the “International Mountain Day”.

### ***Recommendations for authorities of local level: leporello***

To implement the final conclusions drawn from the above mentioned position papers, a leporello has been developed. The document is targeted at the local authorities in the Alpine countries, as they play an important role in the context of environmental issues and there is a great need for action.

In all countries, the leporello is based on a common core part. At the same time, care has been taken to make sure that each leporello also contains country specific information. This means that each country which deems it reasonable, can develop its own document. A first version was published in German, French and Italian in

Switzerland. Two further versions have also been developed in Austria (in German) and Slovenia (in Slovenian).

### ***Documentation of climate change***

The works of the Alpine Convention on the Action Plan on Climate Change give PLANALP the task of documenting the consequences of climate change on the Alpine Space, in relation to natural hazards. As the representatives of individual Alpine countries know good examples about their own country - taken from publications devoted to this topic - the decision was made to gather these examples and make them available to a wider public through the Internet. The result is a collection of publications which can be accessed by the public from the Climate portal of the Alpine Convention.



## **Projects**

Essential work as regards the activities contents of PLANALP is made in the framework of a comprehensive focal point project financed by the INTERREG IIIB programme on "Alpine Space" and which is coordinated overall by Bavaria. More precisely PLANALP is involved in INTERREG IIIB Work Package 8 "Flexible Response Network" (WP8) on "Adaptation to climate change in the Alpine Space AdaptAlp".

## **3. Subjects of the Platform meetings 2009/2010**

**May 13, 2009**

### **8<sup>th</sup> PLANALP meeting, Zurich/Switzerland**

At the 8<sup>th</sup> PLANALP meeting, the position paper "Integral natural hazard risk management: recommendations" was finalised and formally further revised. Also, the draft of the Swiss version of the Leporello "Verantwortung der Gemeinden beim Schutz vor Naturgefahren" (Responsibility of municipalities in the protection from natural hazards) was integrated and corrected.

An important part of the meeting was also the review of the decisions and discussions of the 10<sup>th</sup> Alpine Conference held in Evian. The PLANALP meeting focussed in particular on the work which shall follow the decision made on the "Climate Action Plan" of the Alpine Conference.

During the meeting, P. Greminger (Switzerland) presented to the members of PLANALP the progress made on the tool "RiskPlan", which calculates risks caused by natural hazards.

**November 10/11, 2009**

### **9<sup>th</sup> PLANALP meeting, Schladming/Austria**

The meeting took place in Schladming, Austria, at the invitation of the Austrian PLANALP member.

During the meeting, the Swiss PLANALP members presented their national version of the leporello. Also, discussions heavily focussed on how PLANALP can fulfil the tasks given to it by the Alpine Conference through the Climate Action Plan.

H. Siegel (Austria) made a presentation on the international project "ParaMount", aimed at improving risk management for the protection of transport infrastructures from natural hazards.

At the end of the meeting, the Austrian PLANALP members presented their work on the management of natural hazards during an excursion.

**May 5, 2010**

### **10<sup>th</sup> PLANALP meeting, Zurich/Switzerland**

The 10<sup>th</sup> meeting focussed mainly on the analysis of the mandates given to PLANALP by the 10<sup>th</sup> Alpine Conference in relation to the Climate Action Plan. The collection of documents coming from individual member countries on the issue "Impacts of climate change on natural hazards in the Alpine Space" was presented and given to the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Conference for publication on the Internet.

As an input for further work on the topic of climate change, P. Köllner-Heck presented the work done by Switzerland to develop a strategy to adapt to climate change. Also, the software "MobiGIS" developed by the Swiss private insurance company "Mobilier" was presented to the PLANALP members. The software contains GIS-based maps of hazards, crossed with the insured damage potential.

The meeting also included the visit of the Swiss national alarm unit NAZ, which among other things intervenes in case of events caused by natural hazards.

## **November 11/12, 2010**

### **11<sup>th</sup> PLANALP meeting, Cerklno/Slovenia**

An important part of the 11<sup>th</sup> PLANALP meeting was to intensify the cross-border exchange of experiences. The members of PLANALP have offered their experience and knowledge in the field of Alpine risk management, risk analysis and integrated risk management in their country/region.

One of the main objectives of the meeting was a discussion of the further work on the topic of climate change on natural hazards. A. Götz presented further working steps in the "Natural hazards prevention" strategy. It is based on the work done by Switzerland to develop a strategy to adapt to climate change.

The meeting also included the visit to the town of Idrija, which will be next year "Alpine city of the year" and an excursion to the surroundings of Cerklno and Idrija.

## **4. Projects**

### **4.1 Collaboration with the INTERREG IIIB "Adaptation to climate change in the Alpine Space AdaptAlp"**

AdaptAlp is the follow-up project of ClimChalp "Climate change, impacts and adaptation strategies in the Alpine Space", where PLANALP was involved in Workpackage 8 "Flexible response network". The AdaptAlp proposal was submitted at the beginning of 2008. The kickoff-meeting of the project took place on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

PLANALP intensively follows the works of the AdaptAlp project.

### **4.2 Cooperation with other international projects**

In the framework of the PLANALP meetings examples of good national or international projects are presented. This allows PLANALP to be up to date on cooperation and recent events and to participate in projects to which PLANALP can contribute with concrete inputs.

## **5. Outlook**

The Platform on Natural Hazards of the Alpine Convention plays an important part in the Alpine Convention as a whole. On the one hand, this is due to specialist know-how in the field of risk prevention, cross-border exchanges and any necessary joint measures on the part of the contracting parties. On the other, the contracting parties see the platform as a vehicle through which to raise the profile of the Alpine Convention and its protocols. PLANALP has a direct influence on various protocols, e.g. mountain forests, spatial planning, natural protection and landscape conservation, tourism and energy. The platform has the opportunity to demonstrate concrete possibilities for action that go beyond legal requirements alone.

Given climate change and its particular impact on mountain areas, the topic is likely to remain an important one regardless of who chairs the Alpine Conference. PLANALP wishes to devote more attention to the issue "Adaptation to Climate Change" and develop recommendations to integrate climate change in the strategy for the management of natural hazards in the Alpine Space.

In order to continue the projects already under way and due to the reasons outlined above, the members of PLANALP submit a request to the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention to extend the platform's mandate. The new mandate bases on the mandate of this reporting period and the details for the new mandate were worked out during PLANALP's November 2010 meeting. It is proposed that Switzerland chairs the Platform on Natural Hazards of the Alpine Convention.

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