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Long term working programme (2007 – 2010)
Platform on Natural Hazards
of the Alpine Convention
PLANALP

The aim of the present document is to outline the long term working programme of the Platform on Natural Hazards of the Alpine Convention (particularly with regard to the working methodology). Therefore, this document also contains some notes concerning the organization of its work.



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1. Basics

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. The platform 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.

1.1. Frame

The working programme must be based on the mandate and the formalities drafted at the 8th Session of the Alpine Conference on 16 November 2004. The platform on Natural Hazards is a network of responsible administrative posts. Provision is made for an active and cross-border exchange of know-how of risk mitigation. For the implementation it is essential to define a „best practice“. First step of realisation to this concern is Work Package 8 (WP8) “Flexible response network” of the Interreg IIIB-Project “Climate change, impacts and adaptation strategies in the Alpine Space”. In WP8 a “best practice” will be developed in close collaboration with the Platform on Natural Hazards and other project partners. As result of WP8 should be on display, what exists in the regions, how it is transferred and where gaps are.

1.2. Working method

The Platform on Natural Hazards:

- ♦ develops a long-term working programme for the attention of the 9th session of the Alpine Conference;
- ♦ works on a strategically level (networking) and initiates projects and working programmes;
- ♦ Identifies “best practices” of selected examples by the members of the platform. The platform discusses them and will diffuse the “best practice” for alpine regions:
 - Examples Austria: Projects ILUP, SUMAD, River Basin Agenda, EGAR;
 - Examples France: Indemnity of natural hazards CAT-NAT, prevention plans for natural risks PPR, preventive information for population: www.prim.net
 - Examples Germany/Bavaria: SUMAD and River Basin Agenda (EU Projects), flood-protection program "2020"
 - Examples Italy (*will be still completed*): Portale Cartografico Nazionale, Inventario dei Fenomeni Franosi in Italia (IFFI-Project)
 - Examples Switzerland: Federal Law on Flood Control (WBG, 1991), Ordinance on Flood Control (WBV, 1999), Directives of the FOWG “flood control“;

- Other examples: various Interreg IIIB-Projects, particularly with regard to the Interreg IIIB-Project “Climate change, impacts and adaptation strategies in the Alpine Space”
- ♦ develops and promotes cross-border exchanges of experiences;
- ♦ is dealing with international strategies as a forum for comments to international strategy approaches like the process around the flood-prevention-program of the EU.
- ♦ compares risk management methods on different levels. To do that, it seems relevant to use the results obtained in various Interreg projects. It being understood that actions aimed at identifying, managing and mitigating risk have to be homogenized, the platform should operate at the following basics:
 - Good knowledge of the land characteristics;
 - Identification of basic criteria for the homogeneous categorization of the phenomena;
 - Identification of vulnerable and highly prone to hazard areas;
 - Spatial planning.
- ♦ develops strategies for a strengthened risk dialogue of all involved persons (particularly the public);
- ♦ supports synergies by projects of research and development, if necessary in consideration of the financial possibilities of the EU;
- ♦ makes possible the use of various data bases developed for mountainous risk management in alpine regions and in some cases, extension of these data bases;
- ♦ encourages cross-border systems;
- ♦ identifies transnational training courses on risk management and eventually attribution of a label;
- ♦ takes existing international committees of natural hazards as well as national institutions in the alpine area into consideration;
- ♦ strengthens the cooperation between the Alpine Convention Parties, aimed at an integrated, homogeneous and common management of the natural hazards risk.
- ♦ Cultivates an intensive exchange of information at its meetings, but also between meetings (via e-mail an internet).

1.3. Chair of the Platform on Natural Hazards

One of the contracting parties holds the chair for at least two years.

1.4. Members and cooperation with NGO's

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 are invited to put forward representatives selected by the observers themselves.

1.5. Collaboration with the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention, the chair of Alpine Conference and the Permanent Secretariat of Alpine Convention

The chair of the Platform on Natural Hazards participates in sessions of the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention. In this way he reports to the Alpine Conference.

The chair of the platform agrees in content or organisational essential tasks with the chair of Alpine Conference. The Permanent Secretariat will participate in the meetings and holds close contact to the chair of the Platform. As of now, the capacities of the Permanent Secretariat do not allow for a strong working support of the Platform.



1.6. Meetings

The Platform on Natural Hazards meets at least once a year in the country that holds the chair.

1.7. Secretariat

An administrative secretariat assists the platform. Other contracts can be concluded if needed.

1.8. Language management

The scarce assessed budget of the platform shall be optimal used. Meeting language is English. Minutes as well as important documents – if indispensable – will be translated in the four language of the Alpine Convention. Other documents have to be translated by the members themselves.

This language arrangement was approved by the Permanent Committee of the Alpine Convention in its 30th session from April 26th – 28th 2005.

2. Special steps

PLANALP already started to work. Based on the discussions, PLANALP-members decided to not elaborate the different principal topics in detail. In a next step PLANALP will evaluate the several topics and will focus only on a few actual topics. After prioritizing these topics PLANALP will delve into them and work out recommendations.

PLANALP will always take into consideration the three aspects of sustainability (economic, social and ecologic aspects).

2.1. Main objectives of the Platform on Natural Hazards – Alpine Convention:

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

Activities will emanate from these focal points.

2.2. Principal topics of the Platform on Natural Hazards of the Alpine Convention:

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



2.3. Activities

2.3.1. Administrative products

Activity report

The chairman of the Platform on Natural Hazards publishes once in a period a short activity report for the attention of the Alpine Convention. The activity report gives an account of the meetings held and the current status of projects. It contains summaries of publications to date.

2.3.2. Products of expertise

Report on “best practices”

Best practice guide for the field on Natural Hazard methods for lowering of risk potential in the alpine countries will be made. This report will be developed in the framework of the Work Package 8 (WP8) “Flexible response network” of the Interreg IIIB-Project “Climate change, impacts and adaptation strategies in the Alpine Space”. The “best practice” will be developed in close collaboration with the Platform on Natural Hazards and other project partners. The report will also identify existing gaps.

Strategies for public relation

The Platform on Natural Hazards establishes strategies for public relation.

Exchange of information

One of the main objectives of the PLANALP is to intensify the cross-border exchange of experiences. The members of PLANALP will continue the intensive exchange of information at the meetings. They offer their experience and knowledge in the field of **Alpine risk management**, risk analysis and integrated risk management in their country/region. The members will also present examples of particular projects and will show successful protection strategies and preventive security concepts, databases for natural processes and hazards of their country/region. Important information between meetings will be forwarded by the PLANALP secretariat to all members. Furthermore, the website www.planat.ch, has a restricted area containing all current documents and information of the Platform on Natural Hazards. For future projects contact persons able to provide the corresponding contents should be nominated to the respective project leaders according to the decisions of PLANALP.