



MAP

THE MULTI-ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME OF THE ALPINE CONFERENCE

2005-2010



Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention

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FOREWORD

Not long ago Austria took over the Presidency of the Alpine Convention from Germany, and already an opportunity presents itself to make available to the interested public yet another stone in the mosaic of the Alpine Convention's implementation, and to take it one step further.

The discussion surrounding the multi-annual plan dates back to Switzerland's Presidency; it was then that the idea of using guiding principles to give initial impetus to the then slowly emergent implementation of the Alpine Convention was first floated. Those initial ideas have now given rise to an extensive work programme that is to serve as a guideline for activities over the next few years.

This highlights a key aspect of the implementation of the Alpine Convention, particularly in Austria, namely the marshalling of evidence on the development potential that lies within the Alpine Convention and more specifically its Implementing Protocols. The Alpine Convention and its Proto-

cols are not about finding a standard solution for sustainable development in the alpine region; after all, there is no such thing as a standard mountain region. Instead it is about highlighting the existing diversity of conditions and parameters, and preserving a sustainable environment.

These efforts are reflected in the choice of areas of emphasis for the next six years, which focus on pressing and topical issues. Thereafter it will be entirely up to us to ensure that we address and tackle these issues, and that we make sure they do not lose their focus or their significance.

The multi-annual plan provides the framework as well as the necessary support for all these activities so that a fragile ecosystem can not only be preserved but also developed further, measurably, sustainably and across all disciplines, as provided for by the Alpine Convention and its integrative approach.

Josef Pröll
Minister of the Environment

DECLARATION BY THE ALPINE CONFERENCE ON THE MULTI-ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

1. The drafting and enactment of the comprehensive set of agreements of the Alpine Convention is now largely completed. Since the coming into force of the protocols at the end of 2002 the Alpine Conference focuses on the implementation.
2. The implementation of the Alpine Convention and its Protocols is first and foremost a duty of the Contracting Parties in their respective sovereign territories. The objectives and obligations set out in the Convention and the protocols are designed to ensure a balanced and sustainable development throughout the alpine space. Therefore, it is important that all Contracting Parties sign, ratify and enact all protocols as soon as possible. The Alpine Conference therefore calls upon those Contracting Parties who have not yet done so to proceed as soon as possible with the outstanding signing and ratification.
3. The bodies of the Alpine Convention will support the individual Contracting Parties with the implementation of the Convention and its protocols, and will, moreover, develop joint projects. The joint implementation activities require a perennial perspective that goes beyond the two-year-cycle of the Presidency. For this reason, the Alpine Conference has adopted a Multi-Annual Work Programme attached to the present Declaration.
4. The Alpine Conference has set six priorities for its joint work in order to ensure a strengthened implementation over the next six years with a particular view to sustainability:
 - Report on State of the Alps, monitoring and interpretation of developments
 - Joint projects on four key issues
 - Fulfilment of tasks in accordance with Article 2 of the Alpine Convention (population and culture, prevention of air pollution, water management, waste management)
 - Public relations
 - Exchange of experience and co-operation
 - Co-operation with other mountain areas and conventions
5. The Multi-Annual Work Programme has pooled a number of joint projects and measures into four key issues which in a cross-sectional way refer not only to all Protocols but also to the various aspects of sustainable development:
 - Mobility, accessibility, transit traffic
 - Society, culture, identity
 - Tourism, leisure, sports
 - Nature, agriculture and forestry, cultural landscape
6. The Report on the State of the Alps, which in 2006 is to be published for the first time, is to play a particularly important role among the instruments for the joint implementation of the Convention. The first review report on the implementation in the contracting states, which in 2006 is also due for the first time, will provide important suggestions for the implementation. The Alpine Conference asks the Permanent Committee to carry forward the Multi-Annual Work Programme in the light of the Report on the State of the Alps and the first review reports, and to effect, in this connection, the necessary updates, and additions and to set, where appropriate, the right priorities with specific objectives whenever possible.
7. The Alpine Conference invites all interested actors to take an active part in implementing this Multi-Annual Work Programme. The objectives set out in the Alpine Convention and its Protocols are the expression of a broad consensus which includes not only the Contracting Parties but also the observers and, beyond that, a broad spectrum of organisations and networks. The Alpine Conference anticipates that a bundling of the forces in the alpine region can generate considerable synergetic effects and achieve remarkable progresses in keeping with the purpose of the Alpine Convention.

Decided at the VIIIth session of the Alpine Conference in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on the 16th November 2004.

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Decided at the VIIIth session of the Alpine Conference in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on the 16th November 2004.

1 ACCELERATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

1.1 The Alpine Convention today

Framework convention and protocols

The Alpine Convention is a treaty under international law between Austria, Switzerland, Germany, France, the Principality of Liechtenstein, Italy, the Principality of Monaco, Slovenia and the European Community. The scope of the Alpine Convention covers the entire alpine region, with some 190,000 square kilometres and 13.6 million people living in that region.

Table 1:
Surface area and population of the scope of the Alpine Convention, shares of the contracting states

	Surface area	Population
Alpine region	190,600 km ²	13.6 m
Italy	27.3%	30.1%
Austria	28.7%	23.9%
France	21.4%	18.0%
Switzerland	13.2%	12.8%
Germany	5.8%	10.1%
Slovenia	3.5%	4.7%
Monaco	0.001%	0.2%
Liechtenstein	0.08%	0.2%

(Calculation: Ruffini et al. EURAC 2005)

The framework convention was signed by the Contracting Parties between 1991 and 1994, and became effective in 1995. By 2002 the various protocols had been subsequently signed by all member states (to date the EC has signed only three protocols). They became effective on the 18th Decem-

ber 2002. However, not all protocols have yet been ratified by all Contracting Parties (see Table in the Appendix).

The decision-making body of the Alpine Convention is the Alpine Conference, which generally convenes every two years at ministerial level. The executive body is the Permanent Committee, which meets from two to three times a year. The Alpine Conference and the Permanent Committee are presided by one country for a term of two years.

The Convention for sustainable development of the Alps

The Alpine Convention strives for an integrated, sustainable development of the alpine region, a fundamental concept that runs through the framework convention and all Protocols. Since the signing of the framework convention in 1991, the concept of sustainable development gained significantly in importance in all countries and in international politics.

With its integrative approach, embracing ecological, economic and social aspects, the Alpine Convention has acted as a precursor for other mountain areas and conventions. The mutual dependence of the various development aspects is particularly apparent in cultural landscapes such as the Alps.

The Alpine Convention promotes constructive new approaches in order to guarantee attractive living conditions and development opportunities which preserve that which is worth preserving in a changing environment.

A new development phase

The enactment of the protocols in 2002 signals a new development phase for the Alpine Convention, with the emphasis now on implementation. At the VIIth session of the Alpine Conference in Merano in 2002 it was decided to set up a Permanent Secretariat in Innsbruck, with an office in Bolzano. The Secretariat took up its duties in 2003. At the same time the Alpine Conference and the Contracting Parties launched a number of implementation activities (see also Chapter 2). The present work programme aims at providing a medium-term orientation for this new phase.

The three networks which specifically refer to the Alpine Convention (namely the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, the "Alliance in the Alps" network of local authorities, and the International Scientific Committee for Alpine Research (ISCAR)) have already made an important contribution towards implementing the Alpine Convention throughout the Alps. The Permanent Secretariat is to work closely with these and other networks that pursue objectives identical to those of the Alpine Convention.

1.2

The new context

The framework convention and the protocols were formulated in the course of the 1990s. Their implementation has to keep pace with the current challenges, taking the following points into particular account:

The terms of reference of the Alpine Convention are more important than ever before

Today the Alpine Convention is the only binding framework within which comprehensive answers to the considerable challenges existing throughout the Alps can be drawn up, challenges 13.6 million people who live in this unique landscape find themselves confronted with.

As a result of an increasing globalisation the Alps are marked by deep structural, cultural and ecological changes. The guiding principle of sustainable development and the observance of the spatial dimension are of increasing importance in drawing up political strategies capable of overcoming these massive changes.

Transnational co-operation is necessary in order to find innovative and sustainable solutions in the face of international markets right across the Alps (e.g. in tourism, transport or agriculture). What's more, given its specific circumstances, the alpine region as a whole can assert itself in a Europe that is growing together only if it aims for closer co-operation.

Indeed, the Alps have become the European mega-region with arguably the most intense intercultural contacts, a forum of encounter for Latin, Germanic and Slavic cultures as well as a multitude of visitors: a chance to be seized.

The implementation of the Convention is now eagerly awaited

The long phase of elaboration has led to expectations which must now be fulfilled with resolute efforts by intensifying implementation. One key concern remains hereby the process of confirming the Alpine Convention and its completed protocols as binding throughout the entire region of the Alps as soon as possible. Likewise, intensifying the communication with the institutions of the European Community is necessary. In this connection special attention is to be devoted in asserting the issues of the Alpine Convention and its protocols within European policies. The Alpine Convention is still regarded by many merely as an instrument of environmental policy, without realising the potential for development that lies within the Alpine Convention and its protocols.

As a matter of fact, the general public knows far too little about the Alpine Convention and its objectives. Considerable joint efforts are needed here. Similarly, the Alpine Convention with its bodies will be able to fulfil the high expectations that exist with regard to the international co-ordination of policies and strategies for the structural development of

the alpine region and to the alpine-wide exchange of experience between the many local initiatives more effectively only through the coherent implementation strategy presented here. An important task during the next few years will be the formulation and support of concrete projects, a task which will animate the Alpine Convention for the people who live in the Alps. The Alpine Convention can achieve considerable synergetic effects by bundling the forces through the use of all levels – the national, regional and local ones.

The Alpine Convention has already achieved a great deal

The signing of the Alpine Convention was a signal. Due to its existence alone and some specific proposals the Alpine Convention has helped to strengthen the feeling of solidarity in the Alps and raised the issue of co-operation across the alpine region as a whole. The networks mentioned earlier (network of local authorities, network of protected areas, and the network of alpine researchers) refer specifically to the Alpine Convention and have contributed significantly to co-operation throughout the Alps. The EU's INTERREG Programme "Alpine Space" has provided and still provides an opportunity to gather incentives and to finance groundbreaking projects. Within the context of the implementation of the Convention it is important to ensure that these initiatives and their links to the Alpine Convention are better perceived and strengthened further.

1.3

The role of the Multi-Annual Work Programme

A new work method for implementation


Since the framework convention was signed in 1991 each Presidency has set its own priorities and assumed the function of a secretariat for the Convention.

While the individual Contracting Parties are responsible for implementing the texts of the treaty on their sovereign territories, the bodies of the Alpine Convention have the following other terms of reference:

- Informing the public
- Monitoring the implementation
- Monitoring trends in the Alps including alpine-specific research
- Drawing up joint international initiatives
- Supporting co-operation and the exchange of experience

A six-year framework programme

Following the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat the Multi-Annual Work Programme represents a medium-term framework over a period of six years that defines the main tasks. The two-year-programmes of the individual



presidencies are to complement and to concretise the targets. The multi-annual programme shall be reviewed after half of its term, and the subsequent Alpine Conference then has the possibility of adopting any changes deemed necessary.

1.4 Implementation priorities over the next six years

Against the backdrop of the challenges outlined above, the Alpine Conference has resolved that the joint implementation activities would revolve around the following priorities over the next six years. This of course implies that all the Contracting Parties ratify and enact all protocols they have signed as soon as possible.

- *Public relations* – The Alpine Conference is to address the general public, politics and the scientific community more directly, draw up an active communication policy, and establish a platform for strategic discussions on the future of the alpine region. The objectives of an integrated sustainable development are to be clarified.
- *Exchange of experience and co-operation* – The Alpine Conference is to launch more activities aiming at strengthening co-operation and contributing to the

development of a shared identity and the ability to take concerted action in the alpine region. Local authorities and regions are to assume a key role.

- *Trend monitoring and interpretation; Report on the State of the Alps* – The status and trend of the Alps are to be observed and interpreted in co-operation with the relevant experts to provide a basis for political decisions and contribute to an overall perception of the trends in the Alps. A Report on the State of the Alps will the outcome make accessible to the general public interested in these issues.
- *Joint projects on four key issues* – Priority issues out of all protocols are to be addressed in four topics through close co-operation with the regions and local authorities (mobility, accessibility, transit traffic / society, culture, identity / tourism, leisure, sports / nature, agriculture and forestry, cultural landscape).
- *Completion of the set of agreements* – Protocols have been drawn up on most of the topics listed in Article 2 of the framework convention. The Alpine Conference is to intensify its activities to process the four areas still outstanding, i.e. “Population and Culture”, “Protection of the air quality”, “Water management” and “Waste management”.
- *Co-operation with other mountain areas and conventions* – The Alpine Conference is to pursue co-operation with other mountain areas and conventions.

2 KEY ISSUES

The protocols of the Alpine Convention cover a broad spectrum of issues. Each Contracting Party is bound to implement the protocols it ratifies. It is the duty of the Compliance Committee of the Alpine Conference to accompany this implementation process. Active implementation in the single contracting states and the review report due in 2006 for the first time will provide important impetus for closer co-operation.

In addition, the bodies of the Alpine Convention are to support the implementation in the single states in an appropriate form, encourage further-reaching co-operation ventures, capitalise on synergetic effects and develop their own initiatives. Given the limited resources available they are compelled to set key issues.

Conscious of the fact that the Alpine Convention and its protocols provide a comprehensive strategy of sustainable development for the alpine region as a whole, the bodies of the Alpine Convention have initially selected the following key issues for the next six years out of the multitude and variety of topics available:

- Mobility, accessibility, transit traffic
- Society, culture, identity
- Tourism, leisure, sports
- Nature, agriculture and forestry, cultural landscape

Each of these topics addresses issues from several protocols, and though all the protocols are represented, certain priorities have been set intentionally. Priority was given to issues which firstly have a particular need for joint action, secondly highlight the interaction of different aspects of sustainable development, thirdly are specific to the Alps, and fourthly are likely to strengthen the sense of community within the Alps.

In all the main themes pop up issues of international importance the Contracting Parties can directly deal with as well as issues that lie within the jurisdiction of municipalities and regions and which focus essentially on encouraging the exchange of experience and co-operation ventures.

The following description of key issues repeatedly refers to the same instruments and cross-sectional tasks. They are described in more detail in the third Chapter of the programme. The Alpine Conference regards the Report on the State of the Alps as a special instrument designed to inform a broader public at regular intervals about developments in the Alps. The three cross-sectional tasks are: informing and communicating, monitoring and understanding, and exchanging experiences.

Germany's Presidency has drawn up a ten-point-programme for 2003 and 2004. The activities jointly started in this connection by the Contracting Parties, networks and observers are to be pursued. The key issues therefore always include all joint activities that may already be up and running.

2.1

Mobility, accessibility, transit traffic



This key issue combines the issues of Transport and Spatial Planning¹. Transport problems have been a key issue of the Alpine Convention from the very outset. The people who live in the Alps are directly affected by them. In particular the heavy burden caused by transit traffic on individual corridor routes has given rise to fierce discussions. Another issue that deserves greater attention is the extent and scope of traffic within the Alps. Relief can be provided not just by displacing traffic but also by preventing traffic in the first place (by separating the development of road traffic from economic growth). The type of housing development and the quality of the basic services provided locally have a considerable influence on the individual attitude towards traffic and on logistics.

Key issues

- Encouraging the relocation of traffic from roads to railways and strengthening combined transport
- Adopting action programmes that influence mobility patterns aiming at separating the development of road traffic from economic growth
- Infrastructures and logistics concepts for easing the burden of transit traffic
- Developing strategies aiming at reducing the burden caused by freight and passenger traffic within the Alps
- Strengthening public passenger transport (link-up of tourist centres, connections within the Alps, intelligent mobility concepts, etc.)
- Ensuring the accessibility of goods and services (local provision)
- Low-traffic housing development and land use ensuring a balanced development in rural areas, too
- Implementing the true cost of transport

Joint activities already in place

- Study to improve cross-alpine rail corridors and to transfer the method of the Brenner plan of action and the measures in the Gotthard area to other transit corridors (Transport Working Group)
- Drawing up indicators to assess the burden and measures (Transport Working Group and Working Group on Environmental Objectives and Indicators)
- Study of the costs of alpine transport (Transport Working Group)

¹ The protocols addressed here are essentially "Transport" and "Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development" and to a lesser degree also "Tourism", "Energy", and "Conservation of Nature and Landscape".

Priorities for the next six years

- Pursue the studies already under way
- Set up a monitoring system as part of SOIA in co-operation with the Transport Working Group and inform the general public about transport trends in the Alps and the burden imposed by different types of transport (transit/within the Alps, freight/passenger traffic, road/rail, etc.)
- Continue the discussion on the desired accessibility of remote mountain areas (provision with goods and services, personal mobility, public transport, etc.)
- Support the development of transport-specific calculation systems that reflect the reality of costs, and favour the use of the most environment-friendly means of transport
- Intensify co-operation with a view to improving connections in public transport within the Alps and beyond, and the public transport offers for tourists
- Exchange experience on housing development and land use plans aiming at avoiding traffic, and on improving provision and accessibility while guaranteeing a balanced development in rural areas



2.2 Society, culture, identity

This key issue refers to a particularly important field of action, which in the text of the Alpine Convention is given priority with the objective of effective implementation². This cross-sectional topic covers three fundamental discussion issues: quality of life, cultural identity and co-operation between the population living within and outside the Alps.

Key issues

- Intensifying communications and the exchange of information within the Alps and beyond (media, multilingualism, exchange programmes, alpine-wide organisations, social work with young people, etc.)
- Tradition and innovation – continued development of alpine cultures of life (architecture and art, fashion and design, food and drink, etc.)
- Living conditions in the Alps (provision for elementary requirements, basis of subsistence, population trend, new lifestyles, etc.)

Joint activities already in place

- Population and Culture Working Group: drawing up potential contents for a legal instrument on the subject of "Population and Culture"
- Initiatives by the Permanent Secretariat for co-operation ventures with interregional working groups and the EU INTERREG Programme "Alpine Space" on these subjects

² This addresses in particular Article 2, Para. (2) a) of the framework convention and the protocols "Spatial Planning and Sustainable Development", "Tourism" and "Mountain Farming".

³ This concerns in particular the "Tourism" protocol as well as the protocols on "Transport", "Mountain Farming", "Conservation of Nature and Landscape", and the issue of "Population and Culture" in Article 2, Para. (2) a) of the framework convention.

Priorities for the next six years

- Draw up a political declaration on "Population and Culture" by the time of the IXth Session of the Alpine Conference 2006, whose implementation is assessed by the Compliance Committee
- Encourage exhibitions, events, competitions and publications on issues relating to the Alps as a whole
- Stimulate a debate on the future of settlement forms in the alpine space
- Promote the exchange of experience and the setting-up of theme-related networks (e.g. architecture, local initiatives, provision for elementary requirements)
- Identify cultural issues likely to encourage a sense of community in the Alps (projects and workshops, social work with young people)
- Set up a dedicated internet-based information service for improving communications throughout the Alps

2.3

Tourism, leisure, sports



Tourism is not just a branch of industry; it also has cultural and social dimensions that are of great significance for the development opportunities of the Alps. It has shaped nature and society in the Alps as well as the perception of the Alps far beyond its direct contribution to the economic output; conversely it also depends on intact nature. Like no other sector tourism is interlinked with all the different development dimensions and with life in the Alps. Moreover, in the recreation and culture sector tourists and locals alike tend to use the same range of offers. In both cases sports play a very important role. New trends in sports mean that planners, nature conservationists, investors and tour operators are now confronted with new questions. The "Tourism, Leisure & Sports" topic is therefore well suited to illustrate the many different forms of interaction involved in sustainable development³.

Key issues

- The Alps as a destination within global and inner-alpine competition (changes in the global tourism market, concentration, repercussions of climate change, co-operation, etc.)
- Tourism and sports (new types of sport and their repercussions, transnational codes of conduct for sportsmen and women, etc.)
- Tourism and culture in the Alps (What is alpine culture? Cities, rural tradition, intercultural encounters, etc.)
- Nature as a resource for tourism and the leisure industry, limits of its use
- Tourism, leisure industry and regional development

Joint activities already in place

- Co-operation between the Permanent Secretariat and the Via Alpina Project (network of hiking routes throughout the Alps, sustainable local development through sustainable tourism)
- Italy's initiative for agreements relating to the sports sector in the Alps
- Tourism activities organised by the Alpine Network of Protected Areas
- Trialling of "Ski resort auditing – Guiding principles for ecological revaluation"

Priorities for the next six years

- Study the repercussions of different tourist concepts in international and inner-alpine competition as it undergoes change; develop common rules and regulations to prevent negative ecological, social and economic consequences of stiffer inner-alpine competition
- Strengthen the competitiveness of close-to-nature tourism in the alpine region
- Strive towards an international agreement on staggering holiday periods
- Promote concepts aiming at co-operation between the tourist industry, agriculture, forestry and handicrafts
- Public relations work on the subject of sustainable tourism in co-operation with the different networks. Presentation of the Alps as an active, future-orientated region. Introduction of a development award
- Trialling of "ski resort auditing" in other contracting states (Germany, Italy, France ...), further development of the methodology, formulation of a set of requirements for the environmentally compatible operation of ski resorts as part of an extended voluntary auditing
- Highlight the role of the alpine region as a historical and contemporary forum of encounter between major European cultures. Suggestions for relevant conferences, events and tourist offers.

quality of life and economic activities. Nature-related hazards have also increased as a result of human influence (for instance structural change in agriculture or climate change). One of the core tasks of the Alpine Convention is to draw up new prospects for the sustainable management of the cultural landscape, for the further development of rural existence and for the protection of sensitive areas from destructive influences⁴.

Key issues

- Agriculture and forestry (cultural landscape, high-quality foods, protective forests, biomass energy, rural existence, diminishing appeal, new sources of income, multifunctional role, agricultural policy, etc.)
- Maintaining landscapes, habitats and species (keeping the landscape open, cultivation, biodiversity, protected areas, biotope networks, soil protection, etc.)
- Climate change and natural risks (forecast, prevention, consequences of housing development, agriculture and forestry)
- Water as a resource (drinking water and hydraulic power for the surrounding regions, climate change and water management, glacier protection, artificial snowfall, floods)
- Spatial planning and regional policy (changes in land use, natural/cultural landscape, public infrastructure, area-saving housing development, rural development)

Joint activities already in place

- Intensive co-operation and effective PR work within the Alpine Network of Protected Areas since 1995
- Study on cross-border protected areas (2004)
- Setting-up of the Natural Hazards Platform by the VIIIth Session of the Alpine Conference (2004)

Priorities for the next six years

- Formulate expectations vis-à-vis the EU agricultural policy from the point of view of the alpine region
- Exchange experience on integrated sustainable rural development in the Alps
- Activities of the Natural Hazards Platform
- Further steps towards the cross-border networking of protected areas and cross-linking with other ecologically significant facilities
- Develop alpine-wide concepts for the management of drinking water resources and hydraulic power
- Develop alpine-wide concepts on glacier protection, flood protection and artificial snowfall installations
- Exchange experience on concepts and measures to prevent land fragmentation and to reduce land utilisation

⁴ As a result this key issue quite obviously concerns topics from all protocols.



2.4 Nature, agriculture and forestry, cultural landscape

Nature and the cultural landscape are probably the most important resources of the alpine region. From time immemorial they have been shaped by human activities, particularly agriculture and forestry, and over the past few decades their current form and diversity have increasingly come under threat. Any impact on these resources threatens the



3 INSTRUMENTS AND TASKS

1.1 Report on the State of the Alps

Among the instruments at its disposal for implementing the Alpine Convention the Alpine Conference attaches special importance to the Report on the State of the Alps.

The Report on the State of the Alps is designed to provide a broader public with information and appraisals on the main developments taking place in the Alps, at regular intervals. It is also to serve as a basis for strategy development for politics and administration. It is an ambitious task that can only be realised step by step as it requires setting up extensive co-operation networks with both the institutions that collate data in the member states, and the researchers and experts that analyse and interpret data and trends in order to identify the challenges that lie ahead. The Report on the State of the Alps must elucidate the objective of sustainable development of the Alps and therefore report on ecological, economic and social developments.

In the tradition of environmental reporting, the Working Group on Environmental Objectives and Indicators has already drawn up a comprehensive system of indicators which will represent an important starting point for the compilation of the Report on the State of the Alps.

3.2 Cross-sectional tasks

In the practical implementation of the Multi-Annual Work Programme always the same cross-sectional tasks play a key role. Not only do they structure internal work, they also determine the actual form, the products and services with which the institutions of the Alpine Convention communicate with the outside.

Informing and communicating

After the setup phase, informing and communicating will be a key task to be performed by the institutions of the Alpine Convention. After many years, during which the public heard little about the Alpine Convention, expectations are now running high. Politics, professional circles and the general public within and beyond the Alps must be addressed in an appropriate way. The communication strategy provides for a

differentiated range of products and interaction opportunities. Implementing the key elements of the communication strategy (internet portal with a wide range of information links and tools, Alpine Signals series of publications, PR work) is a high priority as it is important for the political role of the Alpine Convention and many other activities of the work programme depend on it.

Monitoring and understanding

The newly established Permanent Secretariat will set up an observation and information system for the Alps (SOIA) based on close, network-like co-operation with institutions in the contracting states and with professional circles. The SOIA is to provide the technical input for the Report on the State of the Alps. In addition, it will provide anyone involved with the development in the Alps with reliable information and competent evaluations, mainly through the common internet portal, and aim to offer a integrated portrayal of the alpine space.

Exchanging experiences

Local and regional activities are extremely important for sustainable development in the alpine space. The common institutions of the Alpine Conference will support these activities mainly by promoting the exchange of experience, encouraging cross-border and interregional co-operation ventures, and setting up alpine-wide networks. The Permanent Secretariat has already concluded partnership agreements with networks and projects. The implementation networks across the Alps (local authorities, protected areas, researchers and others, too, in future), the EU INTERREG Programme "Alpine Space", the three working groups of the alpine regions (Arge ALP, Arge Alpen-Adria, COTRAO) and the regions themselves will have an important role to play as mediators. Joint tools for a systematic exchange of experience (project database, evaluation methods, internet forums, etc.), joint resources (maps, funding database) and joint events will be the main facilities which the Permanent Secretariat will make available to the growing circle of its partners. In turn, this is to enable not only professional networks but also an interdisciplinary exchange.

The cross-sectional task that focuses on the exchange of experience also includes partnerships with other mountain areas. In this area the Alpine Conference and the single Contracting Parties have already achieved a great deal. This support is to be continued and intensified.

APPENDIX: OVERVIEW OF THE STATUS OF THE PROTOCOLS

Situation as at: 1 st November 2004										
Protocol	Country									
		AT	CH	DE	FR	FL	IT	MC	SL	EG
Spatial planning and sustainable development	U	31.10.00	16.10.98	20.12.94	20.12.94	16.10.98	20.12.94	20.12.94	20.12.94	20.12.94
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02		27.01.03	28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02		27.04.03	28.04.04	
Mountain farming	U	31.10.00	16.10.98	20.12.94	20.12.94	16.10.98	20.12.94	20.12.94	20.12.94	20.12.94
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02	15.11.02	18.04.02			28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02	15.02.03	18.12.02			28.04.04	
Conservation of nature and landscape	U	31.10.00	16.10.98	20.12.94	20.12.94	16.10.98	20.12.94	20.12.94	20.12.94	20.12.94
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02		25.10.04	28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02		08.02.05	28.04.04	
Mountain forests	U	31.10.00	16.10.98	27.02.96	27.02.96	16.10.98	27.02.96	27.02.96	27.02.96	
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02			28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02			28.04.04	
Tourism	U	31.10.00	16.10.98	16.10.98	02.12.98	16.10.98	08.02.01	16.10.98	16.10.98	
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02		27.01.03	28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02		27.04.03	28.04.04	
Soil protection	U	31.10.00	16.10.98	16.10.98	02.12.98	16.10.98	31.10.00	16.10.98	16.10.98	
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02		27.01.03	28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02		27.04.03	28.04.04	
Energy	U	31.10.00	31.10.00	16.10.98	02.12.98	08.04.02	08.02.01		16.10.98	
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02			28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02			28.04.04	
Transport	U	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.98	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	06.08.02	
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02		18.04.02			28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02		18.12.02			28.04.04	
Dispute settlement	U	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	31.10.00	06.08.02	
	R	14.08.02		12.07.02	15.11.02	18.04.02		27.01.03	28.01.04	
	K	18.12.02		18.12.02	15.02.03	18.12.02		27.04.03	28.04.04	

U = Signed	AT = Austria	IT = Italy
R = Ratified (or approved in FR)	CH = Switzerland	MC = Monaco
K = Enacted	DE = Germany	SL = Slovenia
	FR = France	EG = European Community
	FL = Liechtenstein	



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