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Platform “Large Carnivores and wild ungulates”

Information on the first meeting of the platform

Vaduz, 22/23 October 2009

The Kick-off meeting of the platform “Large Carnivores and wild ungulates” took place on October 22nd and 23rd 2010 in Vaduz. The platform has been installed at the Xth Alpine Conference in Evian, March 2009. At the first meeting all delegations of the parties of the Alpine Convention, each of them composed of several experts representing different sectors relevant for the theme, presented the state of affairs in their respective part of the Alps. Further members of the platform are the official observers of the Alpine Convention. Altogether more than 30 experts gathered for this first meeting in Liechtenstein which holds the presidency of the platform until the XIth Alpine Conference in spring 2011.

Several introductory speeches prepared the discussion. The introduction was dedicated to the background of the Alpine Convention and was done by Regula Imhof of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention and Felix Näscher, National Representative from Liechtenstein and President of the Platform. The objectives of the platform “Large Carnivores and wild ungulates” embedded in the Alpine Convention are to find solutions to manage large carnivores and wild ungulates harmoniously, holistically and with an integrated approach. The platform goes beyond a strictly ecological approach, what implies to take into account economic and social aspects on equal level.

The objectives of the platform are to share information, unify monitoring, harmonise management measures, facilitate mutual learning, and agree on common objectives and strategies. This shall be obtained through regular meetings. During this first meeting the platform started a fact-finding mission. The aim is to succeed in presenting a paper to the ministers in March 2011 in which the platform will agree on common targets and strategies.

The opening presentation on the theme “living with large carnivores and wild ungulates in a changing ecological, economical and socio-cultural environment” has been held by Mario Broggi. The main topics discussed in this presentation were the diverging opinions on the relevance of large carnivores and wild ungulates, the changes in the environment for carnivores and ungulates in comparison to the past century - characterised by a growing forest area, higher pressure by human population and infrastructures - and the challenges to “harmonize” the administrative units today with the expanding populations of carnivores and ungulates. Concerns mentioned were financial loss, emotional loss, attacks, and social pressures.

Summarizing the presentations and discussions the Chair noticed a general understanding, that sustainable wildlife management can not be seen as a question of purely scientific knowledge – rather the opposite: sustainable wildlife management has to be an expression of a will or a decision by society, how to deal with our wildlife species and their living space, by taking into account, balancing and harmonising ecological, economical and socio-cultural interests: An antagonism needs to be managed: wildlife – society.

The programme of this meeting, the list of participants, the presentation of introduction, and the national contributions are available on the webpage of the Alpine Convention under
http://www.alpconv.org/theconvention/conv06_WG_en.htm
http://www.alpconv.org/theconvention/conv06_WG_f_fr
http://www.alpconv.org/theconvention/conv06_WG_f_sl
http://www.alpconv.org/theconvention/conv06_WG_f_de.htm
http://www.alpconv.org/theconvention/conv06_WG_f_it

Synthesis of the meeting and outlook

The Alps are heterogeneous in many respects, e.g. different cultures, landownership, hunting rights, different ungulate management (e.g. winter feeding of ungulates or not...). However, many problems are common throughout the Alps.

A meeting with different stakeholders in the beginning of February 2010 and collection of data and information with the help of a questionnaire are the following steps. On this base a report on the state of the art shall be drafted until autumn 2010.