

BRIDGING POTENTIALS...

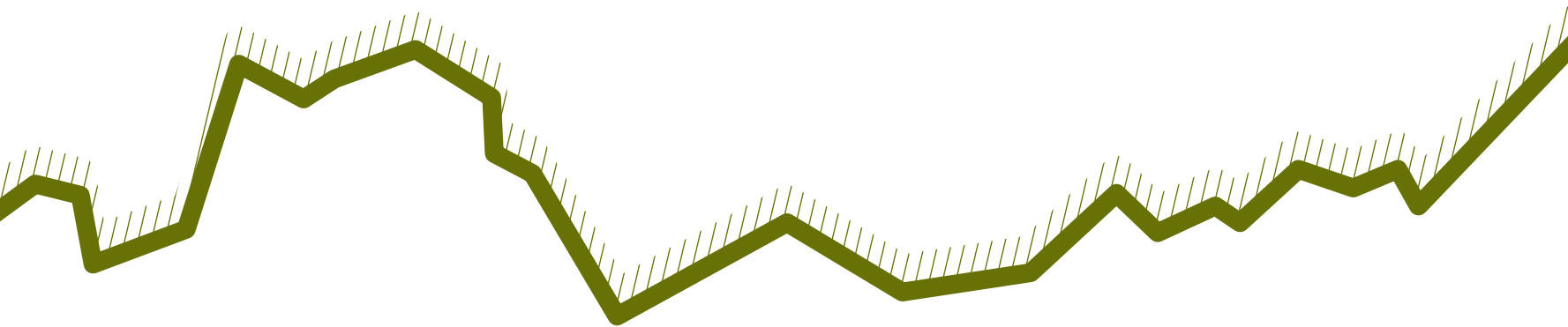
PROJECTS OF THE INTERREG III B ALPINE SPACE PROGRAMME *DIVERSE. VISIONARY. CONNECTING.*



Community Initiative
Programme funded by
the European Regional
Development Fund
(ERDF)



Interreg III B



...AND RESOLUTELY EXTENDING THEM



58 SUCCESS STORIES

AILPSHEALTHCOMP

AlpCheck

AlpCity

ALPENCOM

AlpenCorS

Alpenenergywood

AlpFRail

Alpine Awareness

Alpine Windharvest

ALPINET GHEEP

Alpinetwork

Alplakes

ALPNAP

AlpNaTour

ALPPS

ALPRESERV

ALPS GPSQUAKENET

Alps Mobility II

ALPTER

ASPECT

CARA

CatchRisk

ClimChAlp

CRAFTS

CulturAlp

DIAMONT

DIS-ALP

DYNALP

E-Motion

FORALPS

GenderAlp!

HABITALP

Iron Route

KnowForAlp

LexAlp

Living Space Network

MARS

Media.Alp

METEORISK

MOBILALP

MONARPOP

MONITRAF

NAB

NENA

NEPROVALTER

PUSEMOR

QUALIMA

RegioMarket

River Basin Agenda

SENTEDALPS

SISMOVALP

TUSEC-IP

Via Alpina

Via Claudia Augusta

VIADVENTURE

ViaNova

Walser Alps

WOMEN-ALPnet



100

networks have been established within the projects.

15.000

people took part in professional training and education courses.

600

public authorities have used the results in the field of nature and resource management.

60

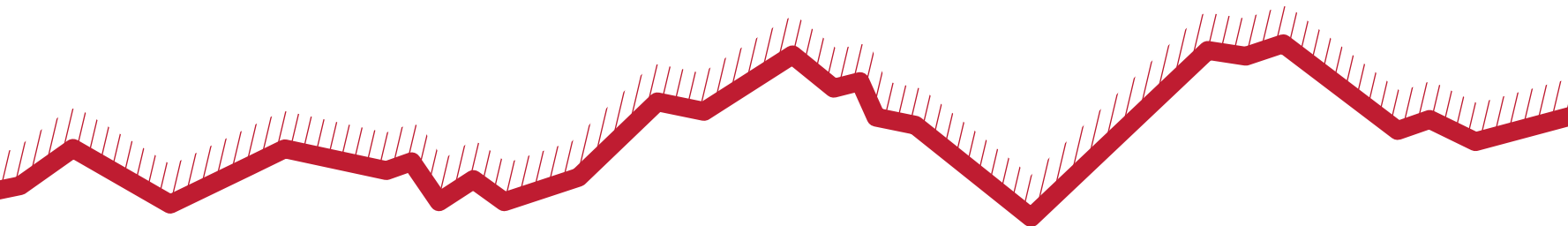
information campaigns on transport issues have been implemented.

100

innovation- und technology-centers were involved.

2.700

small and middle-sized enterprises cooperated in the projects.



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*DIVERSE. VISIONARY. **CONNECTING.***

FOREWORD

The European Territorial Cooperation objective (former INTERREG) aims to reinforce cooperation at cross-border, transnational and interregional level. Transnational cooperation focuses on wide areas of Europe with common geographical specificities. It develops cooperation between regions involving several countries such as it is the case of the Alpine Space.

This publication is dedicated to the achievements of the INTERREG III B Alpine Space Programme 2000-2006, a Community Initiative promoting transnational cooperation for activities improving integration within this area. In this space there is a common natural asset, the mountains, but with different languages and cultures. All this clearly calls for cooperation in the fields of environment, accessibility and spatial development.

Transnational cooperation in the Alpine Space area continues for the period 2007-2013 and it should contribute to the achievements of the Lisbon objectives, the Gothenburg priorities and the European cohesion policy. Increasing competitiveness and attractiveness of the cooperation area needs to develop joint actions for sustainable solutions and this can be achieved building from the experience of the previous programme.

The transfer of regional development good practices into other programmes will contribute to the capitalisation of results obtained in the previous period. The aim of cooperation has always been to build on previous good experiences and practices. Potential partnerships interested in capitalisation projects should demonstrate that they have good results and transferable tools and approaches, as well as good management skills and knowledge of the theme in question. This knowledge and experience could for instance be the result of a previous INTERREG project.

In the previous programme, there are good examples for stimulating economic growth and innovation, as well as projects dealing with accessibility, transport and mobility. Operations on environmental management and risk prevention were another main target of interest. Many of the projects developed led to promising results on the common management of nature, landscape and cultural heritage.

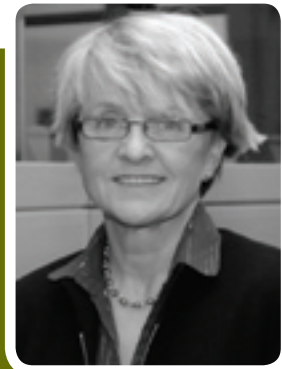
Nevertheless, the Alpine Space could be significantly affected, as other areas of Europe, by the impact of climate change and of the side effects of traffic and settlement expansions. Therefore there is a clear need for joint activities in these fields in the upcoming years.

The Alpine Space area comprises not only the mountainous area in the strict geographical sense but also the surrounding foothills and lowlands. The mountainous core area is naturally linked with the surrounding alpine belt, where some of the most attractive European metropolitan areas are located. The foothills and the lowlands around the Alps are an inseparable part of the Alpine Space.

Projects in the new programme should address subjects considering the specific territorial setting of the Alpine Space with its highly frequented transit routes connecting North and South Europe as well as densely populated metropolitan areas around the fringes of the Alpine core.

Cooperation during the INTERREG III B programming period can however be seen as a starting point for further joint actions to overcome new problems and territorial imbalances.

Prof. Dr. Danuta Hübner



Danuta Hübner
*European Commissioner
for Regional Policy*



DEAR READER,

This publication outlines the key aspects of 58 projects.

Approximately 700 partners have been responsible for pioneering work on these 58 projects and given substance to the new Alpine Space Programme. Between 2000 and 2008 they have contributed towards increased understanding of this cooperation area, which extends beyond the actual mountainous area of the Alps. It has been a task of Herculean proportions, and there have been many hurdles to jump, but the results prove that all the hard work has paid off.

The transnational cooperation area and cross-disciplinary collaboration have resulted in the opening up of lots of new perspectives. Coming from different starting points, cultures and disciplines, joint ideas have helped us to find new solutions and to achieve the aims of the programme. Knowing the challenges present in each and every project, this accomplishment should not be underestimated. Not only the 120 million Euro funds have been crucial to the success of the programme, but the outstanding results can also be attributed to the great commitment of the partners.

The Alpine Space is changing permanently – through climate, demography, economy, technology and the people themselves. Thanks to these projects it is also our perception of the Alpine Space as an area of living and working that is changing. We constantly apprehend the Alpine region as a system that requires us to think and act in unison.

Where the brochure lays particular emphasis on specific core themes, this should be seen against the background of the new aims of the European Cooperation Programmes, which anchor innovation and competitiveness, linked to sustainable development, more significantly than previously.

The contributions made by all of the project partners have breathed new life into the transnational collaboration across the Alpine region. The projects that we approved between 2000 and 2006 have been carried out to date. They form a firm foundation on which we can build new bridges. Please allow yourself to be inspired with new ideas by the achievements presented in this brochure.

I hope you will enjoy reading this brochure!



Dr. Christian Salletmaier



Christian Salletmaier
*Head of Managing Authority of
the Alpine Space Programme
Land of Salzburg*

STEFFENBACH BRIDGE

LOCATION Switzerland, between the cantons
Wallis and Uri

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION Combination of beam and
bascule bridge

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL Steel

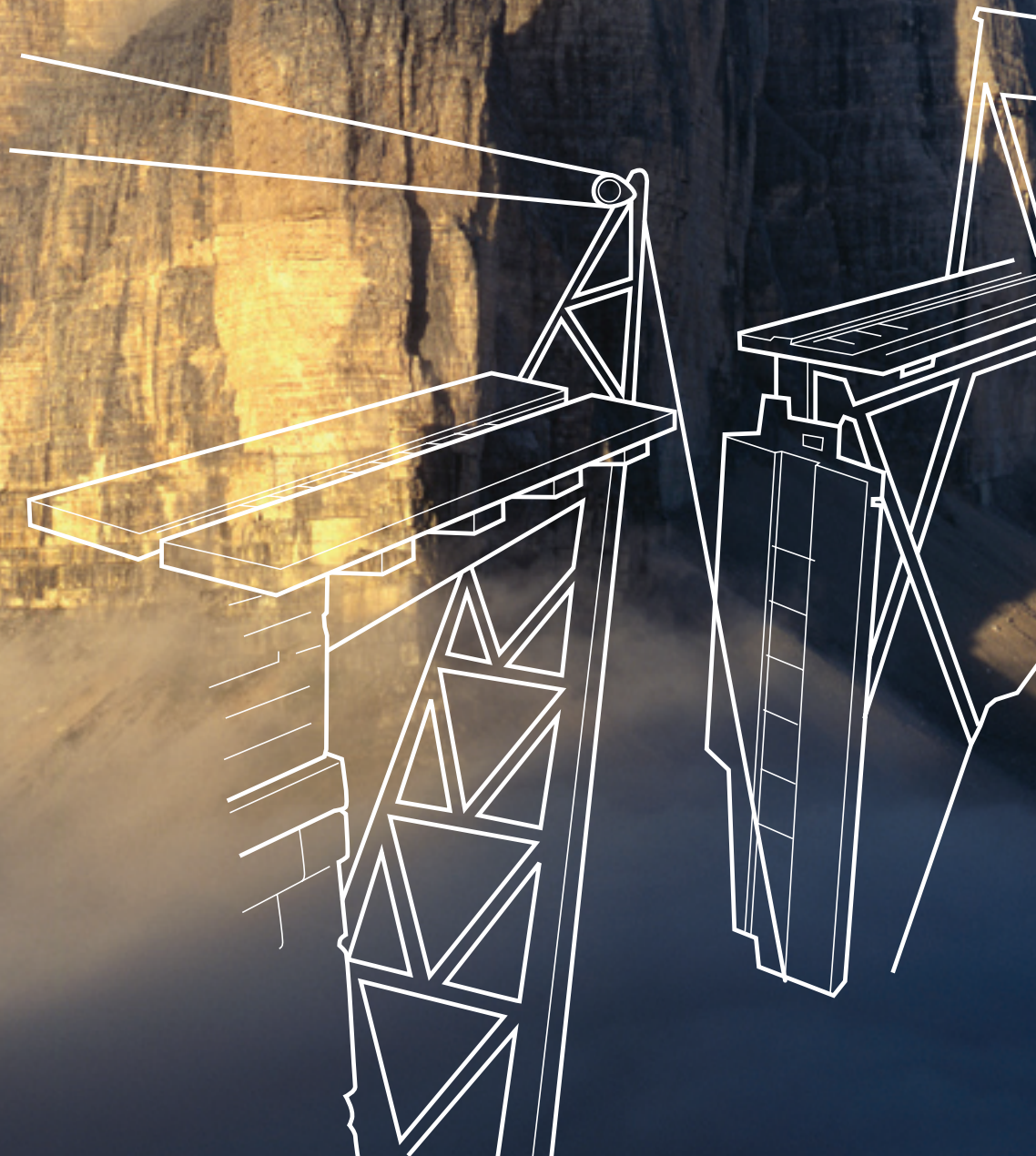
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION 1926

TYPE OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE Railway

TOTAL LENGTH 36 m

HEIGHT ABOVE GROUND 17 m

Connects the cities Realp and Oberwald below the
Rhône glacier which is the source of the second
longest French river.



NATURE: RISK AND CAPITAL

WHY EFFICIENT PREVENTION COMBINED WITH LOW-IMPACT UTILIZATION

OF NATURE IS A BETTER RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Switzerland, in the spring of 1915: the new railway viaduct at the foot of the Rhône glacier, on the way from the canton of Uri to the Valais, is finished. But before even a single train has crossed it, a huge ground avalanche completely sweeps the structure away, carrying its remains far down into the valley. Eleven years later, a unique construction without any precedent in the world stands at this spot: the Steffenbach Bridge. It can be retracted and in autumn it is dismantled, before the avalanches thunder down into the valley, to be reassembled the following spring. A remarkable technical feat achieved by Lucerne engineers, which shows their respect for the natural elements.

Creative solutions and technology are one way of facing up to natural disasters. Another is carefully thought-out adaptation strategies and committed analysis and understanding based on reliable pan-Alpine data. In Alpine Space Programme projects dealing with nature, its threats and potentials, European partners are showing the way in numerous steps towards successful risk prevention. They have analyzed across the Alps exactly how climate change works and what it affects. These analyses have then been carefully used both to make predictions and to practically develop and test the models for barrier woodlands, mountain torrents and river catchments – all with the shared vision of making the Alps safer as a living space and economic area.

But nature is not only a threat for us. The majestic 1,100-kilometre-long Alpine ridge is Europe's water reservoir – but also at the same time one of this continent's most vulnerable regions. According to CIPRA's 3rd Alpine Report, "2,000 to 3,000 different plant species per hundred square kilometres are to be found here – twice as many as in the Central European lowland." Climate change is being felt more strongly here than elsewhere, with nature having to cope with industry and commerce, housing pressure, and our desire for mobility. Here too, the partners' answers are signposts to the future. They have shown how we can astutely manage the "capital" represented by nature, use energy efficiently, and manage conservation areas and nature reserves hand in hand with population and economic activities.

Above all, the real magic formula of the Alpine Space Programme projects is overcoming borders through cooperation. After all, more than ever extreme weather events show that nature is quite indifferent to state borders. Like the Steffenbach Bridge, the project partners from all the Alpine countries stand for reliable links, across national, hierarchical and technical levels – and not just in summer.

"Society needs to avoid the unmanageable – through the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions – and manage the unavoidable – through adaptation measures."

*Scientific Expert Group on Climate Change,
UN Foundation and Sigma Xi*



MOVING MOUNTAINS: CLIMATE CHANGE AND DISASTER PREVENTION

If the human cost of disasters can scarcely be quantified, the economic cost certainly can be. According to data supplied by the European Environment Agency (EEA), the economic damage caused by such disasters has risen from an average of 7.2 billion euro per year between 1980 and 1989 to an average of 13.7 billion euro per year between 1998 and 2007. No wonder that the clamour for "Prevention!" is getting ever more insistent. An impending disaster is always a race against time. Yet risk prevention in mountainous areas is not so easily organised. The ways in which climate change manifests itself in the Alpine space are as varied as the region itself.

If you want to prevent disasters, you must know past natural events inside out. For this, you require standardized data that can be accessed by the players from all the Alpine countries and disciplines. Precisely this was the starting point of the *DIS-ALP* project. As a highlight, the partners developed an Internet portal, which now makes it easier to document, manage and communicate natural disasters.

To gain protection against extreme weather situations, 14 partner regions between the Vienna Woods, the Po plain, the Zugspitze and the Swiss mountains are for the first time coordinating weather forecasts throughout the entire Alpine region. As part of the *METEORISK* project, they work together online, with a radar network making stormy fronts visible straight across national borders. The "weathermen" can access more than 1,500 stations online. Michael Staudinger, the lead partner of the Central Institute for Meteorology and Geodynamics in Salzburg, explains the principle thus: "Two Indians see more than one, and two meteorologists from different areas together arrive at a better forecast than one alone." Every day, several hundred xml files come in from the whole Alpine region, are checked and analyzed for potential risk. On the website www.meteorisk.info, you notice nothing of this digital

and logistical complexity in the background. At a glance, you can see whether the warning level is green (low risk) or whether an extreme weather situation is on the way." The website generated 540,000 visits in 2007, with the number rising", says Michael Staudinger happily, adding: "Now we are continuing with the idea across Europe." Today, the website's five danger levels for extreme weather events are referred to by mountain climbers, farmers, mountain rescue services, traffic services and radio stations.

Informing people in the Alpine region has also been an important objective, while involving the Austrian Press Agency (APA) as a media partner was a smart move. As a result, *METEORISK* not only spans regional boundaries but has also bridged the gap between meteorological scientists and lay people.

The members of the *ClimChAlp* project team have likewise broken new ground. For the first time, experts from seven Alpine countries sat around a table to jointly build a bridge between climate change and efficient prevention. The geologists, hydrologists, climatologists, tourism specialists, spatial planners, glaciologists and other experts from the regions succeeded in coming up with a comprehensive mixture of results. They consolidated knowledge about the effects of climate change and formulated the most important homework, such as harmonized monitoring networks through adaptation strategies, as well as concrete recommendations for business and regional development. Thanks to *ClimChAlp*, politicians and administrative staff can now find answers to questions such as: What do we need to take into account in our local authority's housing policy? When and how do we inform our fellow citizens about an impending natural disaster? Particularly small local authorities need affordable instruments, so that in case of emergency they can provide help fast. However, "merely installing an early warning system and then leaning back





and relaxing is dangerous”, warns Andreas von Poschinger, a geologist at the Bavarian Environment Agency in Munich. “Local authorities must be constantly on their guard and measuring – just as a doctor checks a patient’s pulse before therapy.” As an expert on landslides, he recommends hazard maps and close dialogue with regional planners in communities and regions. “Then they will be able to recognize danger zones and avoid risks in advance.” So that everybody is pulling in the same direction, the *ClimChAlp* partners suggest a regional “risk dialogue”. In the end, state and private responsibility should be balanced.

At the technical level, the flexible response network (FRN) efficiently bundles expert knowledge, and numerous things can be called up in the PLANALP database. In the future, it is hoped that threads from many Alpine regions will converge in the FRN, involving scientists as well as regional planners, technicians, the fire service, civil defence, political actors and the armed forces. For this to happen, there will also need to be in future a common language for assessing risk, an “Esperanto” as it were for hazard maps based on uniform quality standards, such as the Alpine Convention also calls for. The prospects are good because three spin-off projects are meticulously

building on the valuable foundations already laid by *ClimChAlp*.

“Move mountains” we say when something looks well-nigh impossible. In our heads, we think of the Alps as being stable, immovable and robust. But in reality, they are constantly moving, a couple of millimetres a year, because Africa is unrelentingly striving northwards. The terrible earthquake in the Friuli region in 1976, when a thousand people died and tens of thousands lost their house and home, but also weaker tremors in Slovenia in 2004, reminded us again of this. “Reliable predictions are the be-all and end-all for successful prevention. In the case of the quake in Slovenia in 2004, for instance, we were already able to give advance warning,” stresses Abdelkrim Aoudia, a seismologist at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste. Mr. Aoudia sums up: “Within the framework of the *ALPS GPSQUAKENET* project, we have shown for the first time that it is possible to predict earthquakes using physical models.”

Committed researchers from Italy, France, Slovenia and Germany set up new measuring stations. In this way, the *ALPS GPSQUAKENET* project team managed for the first time to realize with

“We know how to bring regional authorities together.”

Abdelkrim Aoudia, International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy

“GAIN” a pan-Alpine network that can detect the seismic pulse of the Alpine region by means of GPS data. Now they collect harmonized data and work closely together with regional authorities and up-and-coming researchers at the universities. In doing so, Mr. Aoudia and his colleagues capitalized on their advantage as “prophets” from outside. They motivated the regions to share data collected by their measuring stations: “Please make others happy with your work. Only by multi-purpose stations we can efficiently use public funds.” It is hoped that as many people as possible will profit: geologists, forestry experts, glaciologists and, last but not least, seismologists themselves. The regions that set up a measuring station feed data pools around the world, and in return they profit from better predictions.

The project has also brought new insights into the consequences of glacier retreat. Mr. Aoudia explains: “More earthquakes might occur in the Alps if the glaciers disappear.” The increased melting

of the icy giants causes the earth’s crust to rebound because – to put it simply – less weight means less pressure. “This could awaken dormant seismic focuses or accelerate active ones.” A useful insight for gaining precious time for saving lives and curbing economic damage.

That nature herself is an important partner in risk prevention is shown by experience gained in the Alpine Space project **NAB** (Natural Space Analysis for Alpine Mountain Areas). The creed is: make the woods and forests, the green protective shield of the Alps, strong. While the recipe of the partners from Slovenia, Italy, Austria, Germany and Switzerland for this is called location-adapted barrier woodland management.



TOMORROW'S PROTECTIVE SHIELD

3 QUESTIONS FOR KURT ZIEGNER, FORESTRY ENGINEER AT THE OFFICE OF THE TYROLEAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT (A), NAB PROJECT MANAGER

So what was your personal highlight from NAB?

I'm proud of the introduction of forest typification in Tyrol and South Tyrol, which has meant that it has been possible to implement a long-standing requirement of the Mountain Forest Protocol of the Alpine Convention. Another real highlight for me was jointly developing and implementing the forest and woodland type maps of South Tyrol, Tyrol and Bavaria.

Where will the benefit from the project be particularly clearly apparent?

For example, in the hazard map for the Lombardy region, in which all the potential landslide areas can be called up. Now this is also feeding into the work of civil defence. Here we have worked closely together with colleagues of the CatchRisk Alpine Space project.

What in your opinion will be the future challenges in disaster prevention?

According to the predictions, we can expect more and increasingly torrential heavy rainfall, aggravating the danger of mudflows, rockfalls and avalanches. On the other hand, the mountain woodlands established today are the protective shield of tomorrow. We need, on the one hand, regional planning measures and, on the other, the most stable structure possible in our barrier woodlands. And we should not forget to involve the people affected, so that they gradually turn aside from the illusion of complete security in the Alpine region and are strengthened in their own personal responsibility.

WATER – MOST PRECIOUS ASSET AND GREAT DANGER

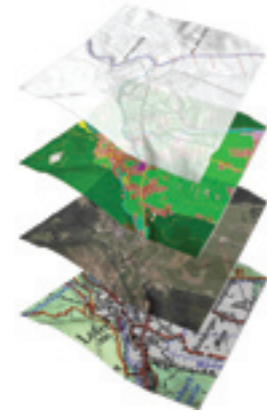
The south side of the Alps is particularly familiar with weather extremes. In 2003, temperatures above 40°C, very high humidity and, on top of that, an absolute lack of wind made the summer a misery for days on end for the people of Bolzano. Between 1 June and 30 September, it was hotter than 30°C on 75 days. During that summer, more than 30,000 people died across Europe due to the heat. In 1994, peak values of no fewer than 700 litres/m² bucketed down within 60 hours in Piedmont during the “flood of the century”. In Bolzano, the same volume falls from the sky in a whole year.

Since 1990, the European Environment Agency (EEA) has been counting major river floodings, of which there have been 165 since the year 2000. This trend is expected to continue in the next few decades. Meanwhile, extreme precipitation can certainly be better forecasted, allowing emergency plans to be ready and giving more time to the population, the emergency services and power station operators to prepare themselves. Nevertheless, it would be best if flood damage did not arise in the first place or was significantly reduced.

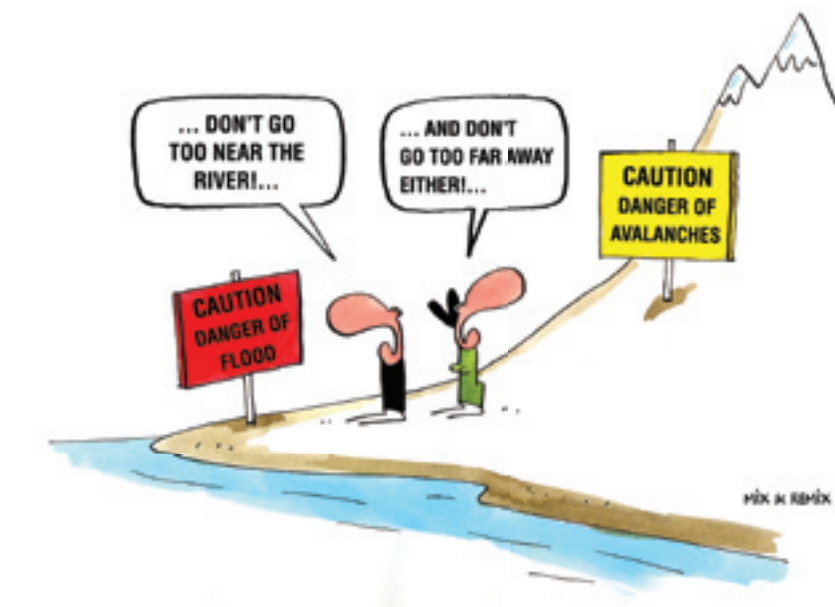
The partners of the **FORALPS** project proverbially got to the bottom of the resource water. Topography and microclimate change from one valley to another, while weather phenomena can take on a completely different complexion. This means that current models generated with data deriving from 200 x 200 km grids are doomed to failure. With eight regional weather services on board, the researchers around project manager Dino Zardi of the University of Trento have managed to build a bridge between the suppliers of new technology and its users. For the first time, hydrologists and meteorologists have been collaborating across the disciplines, enabling the weather services to significantly improve their forecasts and precipitation models. Also new has been the use of micro radar systems that cover

a radius of 30 to 40 kilometres, instead of the 150 kilometres that was previously the case. This makes work much more accurately targeted. “We must use the entire array of expertise,” explains Dino Zardi. The models generated by **FORALPS** will also help water reservoir operators or regions which in the future will be threatened by a shortage of water, especially on the south side of the Alps. To this end, tests have been carried out on selected river catchments and dams. “With the aid of hydrological and meteorological data, and through using suitable simulation models, we can now more accurately measure and predict the availability of water.”

Developing a practical instrument for reconciling a wide variety of interests in rivers was the ambitious aim of the **River Basin Agenda** project. For



The application of modern analytical and planning tools allows river basin management to react flexibly to changes and new general conditions.



The project partners of River Basin Agenda from the Swiss canton of Valais show how awareness raising works – preferably with good sense of humour.

the first time, partners from eleven Alpine valleys and different fields of study have managed to achieve such a balancing act. They have not only developed the “river catchment management plan” as a model for the entire Alpine space but have also shown how you put together the puzzle

made up of analysis, planning, participation and information. Under the motto “turn those affected into stakeholders”, they clearly demonstrated the synergies deriving from an ecologically intact fluvial topography, quality of life and flood protection. “The international flood prediction model for the River Mur already passed its practical test during a number of deployments, in particular during the August 2005 floods,” confirms Rudolf Hornich, Head of water resources management in the Province of Styria (A). The team’s management plan also raised great interest. The autonomous Province of Bolzano-South Tyrol, for example, incorporated the plan one-to-one into its legislation. It seems to have clicked with the population just as much as with the experts. In Switzerland, the pilot project was accompanied by humorous comic strips, while in Italy children and young people enthusiastically followed the

river’s upper reaches. It was one of seven typical Alpine pilot areas within the scope of the **ALPRE-SERV** project. 17 partners from Germany, Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland developed new strategies for reducing, preventing or even partly reversing the silting up of Alpine reservoir lakes through sediments. The idea behind all this was a concept from the Swiss canton of Valais. The valuable experience gained during the project fed into a guide for local and regional authorities as well as private power station companies. Sediment management in the Alpine region is an extremely tricky task, where the most diverse interests clash. Accordingly, the composition of the team was also new, which project manager Sven Hartmann of the University of Stuttgart considers to be a key factor in the project’s success: “Ecologists, hydrologists, power station operators and fishermen sitting around a table, that was



Extreme weather events – from drought to floodings – are quite indifferent to frontiers. They require reliable forecasting and transnational cooperation.

River Artugna from its source in the Cavallo massif to where it flows into the Adriatic Sea near Caorle. In addition, new life was breathed into the “Water Parliament” – a dialogue platform – in the French Drôme region.

Munich 2005: the devastating August floods spared the Bavarian state capital. Why? On the one hand, the River Isar had already (since 2003) acquired more capacity for discharge through re-naturation. And on the other, the Sylvenstein reservoir was able to hold back a lot of water in the

very instructive and also – despite some heated discussions – productive.” Everybody agreed with one thing: “A healthy river requires end-to-end sediment transport.”

“In the Alpine water reservoirs, long-term sediment management is essential for several reasons,” as Sven Hartmann knows. “On the one hand, protecting towns in the foothills of the Alps from flooding already starts in the mountainous regions and can help prevent major damage. On the other, hydro-electric power plants generate

CO2-neutral electricity and are indispensable as a normal and downtime reserve for forced electricity generation from wind power.” While sediments mostly accumulate before dams, causing valuable storage capacity to be lost, rivers deepen downstream of barriers. This, in turn, can cause contiguous water tables to sink, thus threatening the foundations of buildings. Dams also disturb sensitive Alpine ecosystems. As a result, not just suspended matter should pass by dams but also “rolling stones”.

Project partner Helmut Knoblauch from Graz Technical University talks enthusiastically of the new rinsing programme that **ALPRESERV** has developed and tested in one of the selected water reservoirs in Bodendorf (A). What sounds like some household appliance is, in fact, a new programme – the first of its kind in the world – for sediment management at the run-of-river hydroelectric power plant operated by Austrian Hydro Power. Flood waves are used to rinse out the sediments in the reservoir without resorting to dredging or excavating. At the same time, the programme takes account of fish and their young, and, following rinsing of the sediments, the fish populations can rapidly recover, while the spawning season is taboo.

Building a bridge between the natural heritage of the Alpine lakes and the tourist trade was a goal that the project partners of **Alplakes** had set themselves. Two handbooks show many success-



ful examples of how environmentally conscious tourism can function in practice regarding every aspect of the tourist magnet of the Alpine lake. Graziano Venturini, chairman of the “Consorzio forestale della Valvestino”, a development agency between Lakes Garda and Ledro, sums it up: “A range of new low-impact things for tourists to do and see has brought us new guests and at the same time raised awareness in the region.” The French, Italians, Austrians and Slovenes have also jointly published a lake atlas, a well-researched cartographic work that shows important characteristic features. With all these results, it is no wonder that the project partners continue to collaborate in this network.



BUSINESS AND WILDERNESS

Climate change will particularly affect the sensitive ecosystems of the mountains. It will favour some species and disadvantage others. Animals and plants on the “Red List” – the catalogue of endangered species – breathe and flourish in Alpine conservation areas. Hunters, entrepreneurs, farmers and forestry engineers, local authority politicians eager to build, power station operators, tourism managers see things differently. When they think of nature reserves, na-

tional parks, flora-fauna-habitat (FFH) areas or biosphere reserves, they initially see red, fearing that a stop will be put to any kind of development in their region.

The project team from **AlpNaTour** can confirm this. Its six partners from four Alpine countries are doing everything in their power to bridge the gap between protecting and utilizing. Headed by Ulrike Pröbstl of the University of Natural Re-



With their ideas, project partners of NENA and Alpengywood not only reduce the greenhouse effect but also contribute to greater self-sufficiency in energy and to raising people's eco-awareness.

sources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU) in Vienna, the project team has concentrated on "participative management", namely in Natura 2000 areas where tourist and leisure activities play a

big part. Many FFH areas were set up by governments over the heads of owners, local authorities and companies, resulting in an antipathy that ranges from a lack of acceptance to rebellion by the landowners. Balancing the most diverse interests, taking reservations or objections seriously from the outset, persuading rather than foisting projects upon people, and communicating proactively, all this can be summed up in the magic words "bottom-up" and "win-win". The *AlpNa-Tour* team has gathered experience in model areas, enriched with strengths-weaknesses analyses and tips on monitoring methods, and condensed into management plans. Now players are profiting from these practical recommendations in FFH areas throughout the whole Alpine region.

A successful balance between utilizing and protecting is reflected in the results of the *Alpengywood* and *NENA* projects. They have filled with life the rather indigestible recipes of "sustainable management" and "wise management". Whether with pellet utilization, passive energy houses or the wood energy road – the partners show very graphically how an industry can live from the raw material wood while at the same



"ViViAlp" is a virtual flight over the Alps. In 14 visitor centres located in Alpine protected areas, you can fly over hill and dale, stopping as the mood takes you to get more detailed information.

time conserving it. With their ideas, they not only reduce the greenhouse effect but also contribute to greater self-sufficiency in energy and to raising people's eco-awareness.

In nature conservation, sensitizing is likewise a central issue. Some 900 extensive protected areas of over 100 ha – including 14 national parks and 70 nature reserves – cover approximately a quarter of the Alpine Convention area. Since 1995, they have been working together in the pan-Alpine network Alparc with a view to utilizing synergies in conservation, research and public relations work. Their project *Alpencom* has been a triad, with which the Alparc members have been able to strengthen their Alpine identity, get the local population on board, and reach even more people. Project manager Marie Stoeckel of Alparc in Chambéry (F) admits self-critically that pan-Alpine ecological thinking is still in its infancy. “We

will need a lot of stamina.” But the first steps give the biologist heart: “*Alpencom* has allowed us to lay the foundations for a joint communication, enabling us to reach the general public so that we can inspire many to protect our natural and cultural heritage as well as biodiversity.” Modern protected area tourism and models from the USA determined the direction, giving rise to a common outward appearance, a communication strategy, and an interactive instrument enabling to catch a true bird's eye view of the Alps: “ViViAlp” is a virtual flight over the Alps. In 14 visitor centres located in Alpine protected areas, you can fly over hill and dale, stopping as the mood takes you to get more detailed information. You can experience a similar bird's-eye view of the Alpine region – albeit in a somewhat simplified form – by using Google Earth on your PC at home. As Marie Stoeckel puts it: “Flying creates unusual perspectives and arouses emotions.”



FROM MONT BLANC TO THE TRIGLAV

MARIE STOECKEL, FROM ALPARC IN CHAMBÉRY (F), DESCRIBES HER FLIGHT OVER THE ALPS:

“With ViViAlp, I can fly over the Alpine landscape like a lammergeier (bearded vulture). 750 points of interest illustrate and explain to me in five languages where I have landed.

Thus, I can discover what the protected areas in the Alps have in common and also what distinguishes them. The chamois, for example, I can find everywhere, while some endemic plants are only to be found in particular valleys. Besides the flora and fauna, I can find out a whole lot about the culture, society or current challenges in the Alpine region.

Finally, this almost magical tool takes me in a few seconds over the most famous peaks, from Mont Blanc to the Triglav (Slovenia's highest mountain), from Austrian pastures to Italian vineyards, from slopes full of copper beeches to the grottoes of the Slovene Škocjan. A trip with ViViAlp is a journey for dreaming and marvelling, but also for discovering, learning and understanding.”

MORE INFORMATION

Alplakes

Network for a better management of Alpine lakes and lakesides

» www.alpinespace.org/alplakes.html

ALPENCOM

Joint communication and development strategies for strengthening the network of Alpine conservation areas

» www.alparc.org

Alpenenergywood

Bundling, integrating and communicating knowledge and practical experience to promote wood fuel as a sustainable energy resource

» www.itebe.org/portail/affiche.asp?arbo=11&num=406

AlpNaTour

Integration of tourism and recreation into the Natura 2000 management plan

» www.alpna-tour.info

ALPRESERV

Long-term sediment management of Alpine lake reservoirs for flood protection, water storage and energy production from hydro-electric power

» www.alpreserv.eu

ALPS GPSQUAKENET

Setting up of the first pan-Alpine regional geodetic network for better predicting natural disasters, particularly earthquakes

» www.alps-gps.units.it

CatchRisk

Hydro-geological analysis of small-sized catchment areas in the Alpine region for risk assessment and regional planning

» www.alpinespace.org/catchrisk.html

ClimChAlp

Assessment of climate change in the Alps and its effects on natural hazards, spatial development and economy as well as development of a transnational flexible response network

» www.climchalp.org

DIS-ALP

Pan-Alpine harmonized documentation of natural disasters

» <http://portal.dis-alp.org>

FORALPS

Smart management of environmental resources, particularly water, and new technologies for meteorology and climatology

» www.unitn.it/foralps/index.htm

METEORISK

Pan-Alpine coordination of storm warnings with improved methods of data acquisition

» www.meteorisk.info

NAB

Innovative area management and protection strategies, focusing on barrier woodlands in the Alpine Space

» www.nab-project.org

NENA

Cooperations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as clusters for promoting sustainable development, competitiveness and innovation

» www.nena-network.net

River Basin Agenda

River catchment management, flood protection and sustainable development of river catchments in the Alpine region

» www.flussraumagenda.de





PONT DU GARD

LOCATION France, Nîmes, Languedoc-Roussillon region

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION Arch bridge

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL Stone

YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION ca 19 B.C.

TYPE OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE Aqueduct,
afterwards used as road

TOTAL LENGTH 275 m

HEIGHT ABOVE GROUND 49 m

*Spans the Gardon river. In 1747, the lower archway
was broadened to suit a road.*

ALLIANCES FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

HOW SMES ARE GENTLY DRIVING THE
ALPINE ECONOMY FORWARD

Nearly every day, the illustration on the five-euro note reminds us of the Pont du Gard. In the year 19 BC the Roman Commander Agrippa had this bridge built as part of an aqueduct for carrying water from the Southern Alps to the town now known by the name of Nîmes in France. This triumph of Roman architecture succeeded in spanning the 50-metre-deep Gardon Valley: it features a total of 52 arches, which provide one another with mutual support and invest the structure with exceptional stability.

Like the numerous, sturdy arches of the Pont du Gard, there are countless SMEs lending stability to the Alpine economy and providing basic life resources for 70 million people throughout the Alpine region. Supporting these companies, preserving their role as the most important providers of employment and thus supporting growth and employment in the economy are amongst the most important objectives of the INTERREG Initiative and the programmes it runs. Equally important is environment protection. Two goals which are often regarded and portrayed as pulling in opposite directions.

The **ASPECT** project has succeeded in combining these two objectives by explicitly supporting companies that work in harmony with the environment, in other words SMEs dealing with issues such as air, soil, waste, noise, water or energy: "Eco-companies are often very small and oriented towards local markets. **ASPECT** has been striving to give such companies access to more effective marketing, cooperative opportunities and innovations", explains Yves Guyon the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) in Lyon, lead partner in the ASPECT project.



A survey of 341 businesses was carried out, and its results formed an important foundation for achieving these objectives since they provided an insight into the situation of small and medium-sized eco enterprises in the Alpine region. The survey also illustrated ways in which decision makers in public authorities can provide effective support to environment-friendly companies operating in their locality. Based on a strengths / weaknesses analysis, the **ASPECT** team has developed a number of tools for supporting eco-companies: the project partners' guidelines present recommendations on how to support eco-companies, examples of best practice, and advice on how to choose suitable policy instruments and to attract external investors in the environmental sector. It has set up a database in which it collects business ideas, live projects and experience. This body of information is rounded off by a catalogue of service providers as well as a database of contacts for collaborative partnerships that SMEs can use to identify potential technological or industrial partners in other regions.

"There is no point in being competitive unless quality of life is enhanced and the planet is preserved for future generations."

Danuta Hübner, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Aspect-Newsletter 2/2007



WORKING TOGETHER – MANAGING BETTER – ACHIEVING MORE

There are many sound reasons for entering into a cooperative arrangement: sharpening one's competitive edge, increasing one's flexibility, improving one's capacity for innovation, opportunities for intensive exchange of knowledge and experience, and – last but not least – access to new markets. Despite all these potential advantages, most craftsmen, traders and local communities regard themselves primarily as competitors. Moving from competition to cooperation can often be something of a quantum leap, requiring a bit of outside help.

NENA's project partners, umbrella organisations, research institutes, authorities and NGOs have made it their business to provide exactly this kind of extra assistance. They have brought together SMEs from all the Alpine partner states to form a single network. Claire Simon, project coordinator at CIPRA International, explains NENA's role as follows: "We wanted to reach beyond basic networking and initiate some concrete cooperative projects in the fields of renewable energy, energy efficiency and wood". And the network has been very successful, as evidenced by the many new initiatives that are taking shape.

Thus project partners in the Vorarlberg region of Austria have implemented a model for involving

citizens and employees in eco power plants, and have designed a prototype for measuring key indices that provide unambiguous information on the overall ecological performance of public buildings. A string of workshops, conferences and local events looking at the opportunities for and potential ways of financing renewable energies have brought together more than 1,000 representatives of SMEs and umbrella organisations: a huge stride forward for solar energy.

It was of particular importance to the Italian partners in this project to raise awareness of the positive features of wood as a building material since in the past no more than 1% of office and residential buildings in Italy have been constructed from wood. Amongst other initiatives, they have produced a DVD that provides architects, planners and property developers with all manner of information on the benefits, systems and technical aspects of timber construction. Other project partners also pitched in for greater efficiency and innovation in the added value chain of wood. One example is the "timber construction prize" that is awarded for unusual buildings. Then there are the feasibility studies on the remote supply of heating produced in a biomass plant. Or, again, the foundation of a new postgraduate course for architects, the masters course in timber con-

struction at the University of Applied Sciences in Rosenheim (D).

Supporting innovation, optimising value-added processes, developing further education programmes: the **NENA** project partners have set milestones in their fields. The **NENA** network, which extends throughout the entire Alpine region, has been fully self-supporting since the beginning of 2008, and its doors are now open to new members.

The partners in these two cooperative ventures have learned that companies can work together in a profitable manner in transnational networks. A lot of companies simply don't know how attractive it is for companies to respond to public tender invitations from neighbouring states. On the other hand, 18% of all public commissions in Europe are placed in the Alpine region. In order to unlock this enormous potential for SMEs, eight partners from Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Switzerland have come together to form the project **ALPPS**. They have drawn up a standard guide entitled "Your key to public contracts in the Alpine space", which provides information in four languages on how to go about tendering for public contracts in the Alpine states.

THREE SEMESTERS TO BECOME SPECIALIST FOR TIMBER CONSTRUCTION

A REPORT ON EXPERIENCE

Become an expert in timber construction in just three semesters: the masters course in timber construction techniques at the University of Applied Sciences in Rosenheim, one result of the NENA project, teaches architects all manner of skills for modern, diverse and ecologically valuable timber construction, and allows them to continue working at the same time. The first students to follow this course, which is the first of its kind anywhere in Europe, completed it in autumn 2008. One of these is Stefan Gamper, an architect practising in Klausen (I).

"You learn really practical things on the course. Plenty of what I learned in Rosenheim on a Friday and Saturday I was able to put to use straight away when I returned to my office the following Monday. Energy efficiency, ecology, ... here too in South Tyrol, timber construction is on the up. I heard about this course at the time in a newsletter from IG Passivhaus Südtirol (a local group interested in energy-efficient buildings). It grabbed my attention straight away, because there hasn't yet been anything comparable on offer in Italy. After 14 years of professional experience I was able to freshen up my knowledge in a very short space of time, learn about new standards and gain a deeper understanding of timber construction."

In fact I could recommend a course of this type to any architect. The university has a real family atmosphere, as a result of which staff and students work in a very effective and practical way."

SHARING KNOWLEDGE MEANS GREATER KNOWLEDGE

Multilingualism is, on the one hand, one of the fundamental aspects of being European. On the other hand, it does sometimes get in the way of successful international cooperation. Especially when dealing with sensitive political topics such as the protocols of the Alpine Convention, and when each country has a different understanding of legal terms based on their own legal system, misunderstandings can easily arise. Elena Chiocchetti from the European Academy of Bolzano, lead partner in the **LexALP** project, uses a straightforward example to illustrate how misunderstandings arise: "The German term 'Berggebiete' is used widely in printed material from the Alpine Convention. This is not actually

difficult to translate – in Italian, for instance, it is rendered neatly by 'zone montane' (or perhaps 'mountainous areas' in English). However, the term 'Berggebiete' is not defined precisely in the Alpine Convention, and is thus open to interpretation."

Organisations involved with the development of the Alpine region have long been calling for a common specialist language containing less ambiguity. The **LexALP** team includes both legal experts and translators, and has now taken this need on board. They consciously chose not to go for standardisation, in other words not to opt for an "equalizing" solution, but instead preferred a

“waldwissen.net gives me access to different experts and new areas of interest – without it, it wouldn’t be easy to keep a handle on what’s going on elsewhere.”

Walter Wuggenig of the Provincial Forest Directorate in Carinthia, Austria

true step-by-step harmonisation, explains Elena Chiocchetti. She is convinced that this is the right approach: “The quality of our work will shine through.”

The *LexALP* database is available free of charge, and now contains altogether more than 10,000 entries. 700 of the terms have been harmonised in the four working languages of the Alpine Convention and include explanations, references and comparisons. This database enables translators, interpreters, project managers, planning officers and representatives of municipal authorities to compare the terminologies of six different national legal systems (German, French, Italian, Austrian, Swiss and Slovenian) and three international legal systems (EU law, international law and the specific legal framework of the Alpine Convention).

In other specialist fields, too, pooling knowledge pays dividends – as shown by an example from the field of forestry management. Here, each regional research organisation has differing interests, focuses and degrees of experience. Until now there hasn’t been a single central source of reliable information on all aspects of forestry management. In the context of *KnowForAlp*, nineteen institutions from seven countries in the

Alpine region have taken it upon themselves to rectify this undesirable situation. As a result we now have the internet portal www.waldwissen.net. “We have created a network linking the hands-on forestry people with scientists, making them part of a wider community. This is, in my view, the precise *raison d’être* for this kind of project in the Alpine region, to take advantage of transnational communication”, says the project manager, Roderich von Detten, who is a forestry scientist at the University of Freiburg.

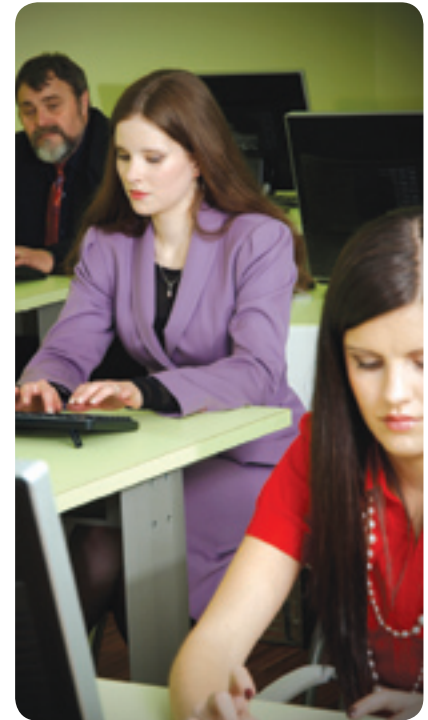
Whether your interest lies in areas such as wood-based energy, tree pests and ancient beech forests, or in the consequences of climate change for forestry, in newly-imported species of animals or plants or in the management of Christmas tree plantations, waldwissen.net has answers, check-lists and contacts at the ready. It is important that information is of high quality and of practical relevance. “The website mustn’t be allowed to turn into a data graveyard, it should be a living system that is always up-to-date and of top quality”, explains Roderich von Detten.

The idea has really taken off: every month some 80,000 people visit the site to find specialist information. Visitors to the site include forestry workers and forestry owners as well as professionals from the fields of administration, education, conservation and tourism. The four forestry research institutes in Vienna, Freiburg im Breisgau, Freising near Munich and Birmensdorf near Zurich are meanwhile developing the website further using their own funds. Other *KnowForAlp* partners from Slovenia, Italy, France and Switzerland are constantly contributing content and translations. The site is right on the button in terms of its wide-ranging information, its multilingualism and its practical approach. These qualities led to the site receiving the most prestigious award from the European forestry industry, the Schweighofer Prize for innovation. The prize money is being put towards further development, because the next goal is to increase even more the degree of interactivity between the scientists and those involved with practical day-to-day work.



The **E-MOTION** project partners have proved that the medium of the Internet is also suitable for the purpose of university courses and further education. In remote electronic study, usually called “e-learning”, these partners have recognised a “lever” for the regional development of the Alpine area. 23 partners from administration, universities, foundations, associations and private companies got together to provide momentum for the dissemination of innovation and knowledge and to facilitate better access to education and learning for people living in remote corners of the Alps. Once suitable technical platforms for learning had been selected and developed, pilot contents corresponding to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) were produced for fields of study like European social law, commercial law, public procurement, administrative law and industrial heritage. Some of the study modules have meanwhile been included in national degree courses, such as the multimedia masters course at the Robert Schuman University in Strasbourg or the course entitled “Master of Conservation, Management and Enhancement of the Industrial Heritage” at Padua University.

ALPINETWORK project manager Johanna Bernhardt from the Tiroler Zukunftsstiftung (Tyrolean Future Foundation) also sees in the information and communication technologies an opportunity to even out the natural competitive disadvantages experienced by rural areas in relation to centres of population. “There are opportunities for new jobs and more flexible corporate structures. In the course of this project we have developed, investigated and exchanged ideas on concepts like e-work, ‘blended learning’ and tele centres or micro call centres”. The ALPINETWORK project team has demonstrated with a variety of different model projects how the rigid structures of hours and places of work can be broken down, how processes can be optimised and both administration and businesses can be made more productive. “Transnational cooperation is extremely important. We have managed to transnationally develop trainings for innovation managers, so-called ‘innovactors’ and offer it in a variety of different locations” says Johanna Bernhardt in conclusion.



MODERN MARKETING BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS

Anyone who wishes to flex their muscles throughout a region or even globally must first develop an awareness of what strength they have in those muscles. It’s a case of defining “unique selling propositions” and using them to one’s advantage. What makes a region unique? What products and services can be developed from that uniqueness? Tradition, trust, nature, mountain idyll: these are assets that the Alps can use to their advantage and that can be used as a firm basis for products and services that are full of character and of a high quality.

What potential might be tucked away, for instance, in the local speciality of a remote mountain village? In the course of the **NEPROVALTER** project, which was flagging up new perspectives for traditional agriculture, a traditional local form

of coffee in Southern Tyrol known as “Altreier Kaffee” was revitalised. The cultivation of a local variety of lupin, its processing into coffee and its marketing were now modernised, its constituent materials studied and local knowledge documented. “Although it is still too soon to know whether we will manage to produce a marketable product from ‘Altreier Kaffee’, it has already got plenty of things moving in our place and helped us to get ourselves more firmly on the map”, says Hartwig Lochmann, Altrei’s mayor, happily.

The **Alpinet Gheep** project also revolves around future perspectives for a traditional industry. The importance of sheep and goats has been on the wane for some five decades now. Yet this is precisely the type of economic activity that forms an ideal link between ecological and economic

viewpoints. If it weren't for sheep and goats, man would be unable to exploit the highest pasture land. These animals maintain the Alpine cultural landscape and thus help to conserve rare species of animals and plants. Not to mention the high-quality products such as cheese, wool and meat that are so typical of the region.

Cultural heritage is all well and good, and nature conservation is of paramount importance: however, for the 16 partners involved with **Alpinet Gheep**, including growers' associations, regional administrations and research institutes from northern Italy, Austria, Germany and Slovenia, the point of their project was not to conserve the blissful 'Heidi image' of a dying industry, but rather to maintain its competitiveness and with it the foundation on which shepherds and goat-herds can base their living in the long term. With

tion model. They studied the breeds of goats and sheep that have emerged over a period of centuries in the Alpine region, applied calculations relating to genetic relationships and saved the results of their research in a database of breeding information. The manual "Sheep and Goat Farming in the Alps" provides breeders as well as officials with detailed practical examples, methods, studies and reports.

The internet, too, is being exploited as a medium: a number of interlinked web portals have been developed, including an e-commerce platform that lists almost 400 sheep and goat products with their typical characteristics, and gives contact details for traders anywhere in the Alpine region who market their products directly.

Traditional methods of healing and old plants with healing properties, combined with modern marketing methods produce an engine to drive modern health tourism: in this formula the project partners of **Alpshealthcomp** have discovered an opportunity to secure the long-term competitiveness of Alpine tourist destinations and to create a "climate-proof" alternative to "hard" (winter) sports tourism. They have researched the effectiveness of Alpine natural and healing remedies as well as customer requirements, market trends and economic potentials. They have developed new products and services and have drawn up a quality strategy. Training programmes and re-



Adapted from "Guideline for cooperative regional marketing" – project RegioMarket

this aim in mind, together they pulled out all the stops in terms of science, technology and marketing.

Research institutes collected data on the vegetation and the feeding habits of the animals, and from this data by way of an example they developed a software-based mountain pasture evalua-



"Alpine Wellness" for raising competitiveness – Traditional healing methods pushed by modern marketing can set a "climate-proof" antipole to the classical winter sports tourism

quirement profiles for courses relating specifically to “wellness” and health round off a pretty comprehensive marketing package. “Alpine wellness” has thus made considerable progress towards establishing itself as a really strong brand.

Under the leadership of Baden Württemberg’s regional authority for the environment, measurement and conservation, the **RegioMarket** project has been pursuing a cross-industry initiative. The most important result of this project has been its guide on establishing a regional marketing system including “do’s and don’ts” for regional marketing systems. “What do I need to do in order to achieve my objective as quickly and successfully

addition, our set of criteria offers help to successfully develop regional brands.”

The way in which this type of initiative can develop a momentum of its own is well illustrated with an example from Slovenia: all they actually wanted to do was to market a regional speciality, namely sausages. In the course of the project, the “Jarina” brand came into being, and this is now used to promote characteristic products of the entire region. **RegioMarket** bore fruit in Italy too: “Sapori di gente unica” (which roughly translates as “flavours of unique people”) is an association of restaurants from the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region, which sets great store by top-quality local cuisine, outstanding service and fair pricing. Restaurants have to satisfy strict criteria in order to be accepted into the association and to benefit from joint marketing. One of the marketing tools is a brochure in form of a culinary travel guide for showing Italian and foreign gourmets around the region. The guide covers not only the restaurants but also cultural and natural treasures such as the nature reserve “Julian Prealps Park”. Incidentally, the branding of this nature reserve was also further developed as part of the **RegioMarket** project.

According to Norbert Höll, the next step leads from regional branding strategies to “Alps branding”. “There are already plenty of successful regional brands in the Alpine region. What’s new is the idea of bringing all these brands together under a single umbrella”, says Mr. Höll when asked to explain what provided the impetus. The bonus with this type of Alpine umbrella brand would be the high degree of cross-industry recognition. The Alps label would emphasise the strong regional connection and would guarantee that the products and services on offer preserve the character of the region. “This is an ambitious objective”, admits Norbert Höll. Nonetheless, the foundations have been laid.



as possible? – that was the starting point”, explains project manager Norbert Höll. The “knitting instructions”, as Mr. Höll calls the guide, contain all the information required for successfully launching a regional marketing initiative on a multi-sector basis in the areas of food, tourism and renewable energies: “From the regional analysis, financing, brand development and quality assurance to communication, anyone who is interested can find all the information and tips they could possibly need here. We also explain strategies for avoiding the common pitfalls. In

“There is a real wealth of experience in the Alps when it comes to regional development and marketing, and plenty of people are working with huge commitment in this area.”

Norbert Höll, project manager
at RegioMarket

MORE INFORMATION

ALPINET GHEEP

Alpine network for sheep and goat promotion for a sustainable territory development
» www.alpinetgheep.org

Alpinetwork (ANT)

Better conditions for creating and obtaining jobs – especially in peripheral regions of the Alps – by using the possibilities of ICT
» www.alpinetwork.com

ALPPS

Alpine Public Procurement Services
» www.alpps-online.com

ALPSHEALTHCOMP

Strengthening the competitiveness of the Alps as a sustainable tourism destination with health and wellness competence
» www.alpshealthcomp.org

ASPECT

Alpine Space Promotion of Eco-Companies Transboundary
» www.aspect-project.eu

E-Motion

E-learning for population mobility
» www.emotion-project.net

KnowForAlp

Knowledge Network Forestry in the Alpine Space
» www.knowforalp.net
» www.waldwissen.net

LexAlp

Legal Language Harmonisation System for Environment and Spatial Planning within the Multilingual Alps
» www.alpinespace.org/lexalp.html

NENA

Cooperations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as well as clusters for promoting sustainable development, competitiveness and innovation
» www.nena-network.net

NEPROVALTER

Network of the local agricultural production for the valorisation and the knowledge of the Alpine area
» www.neprovalter.org

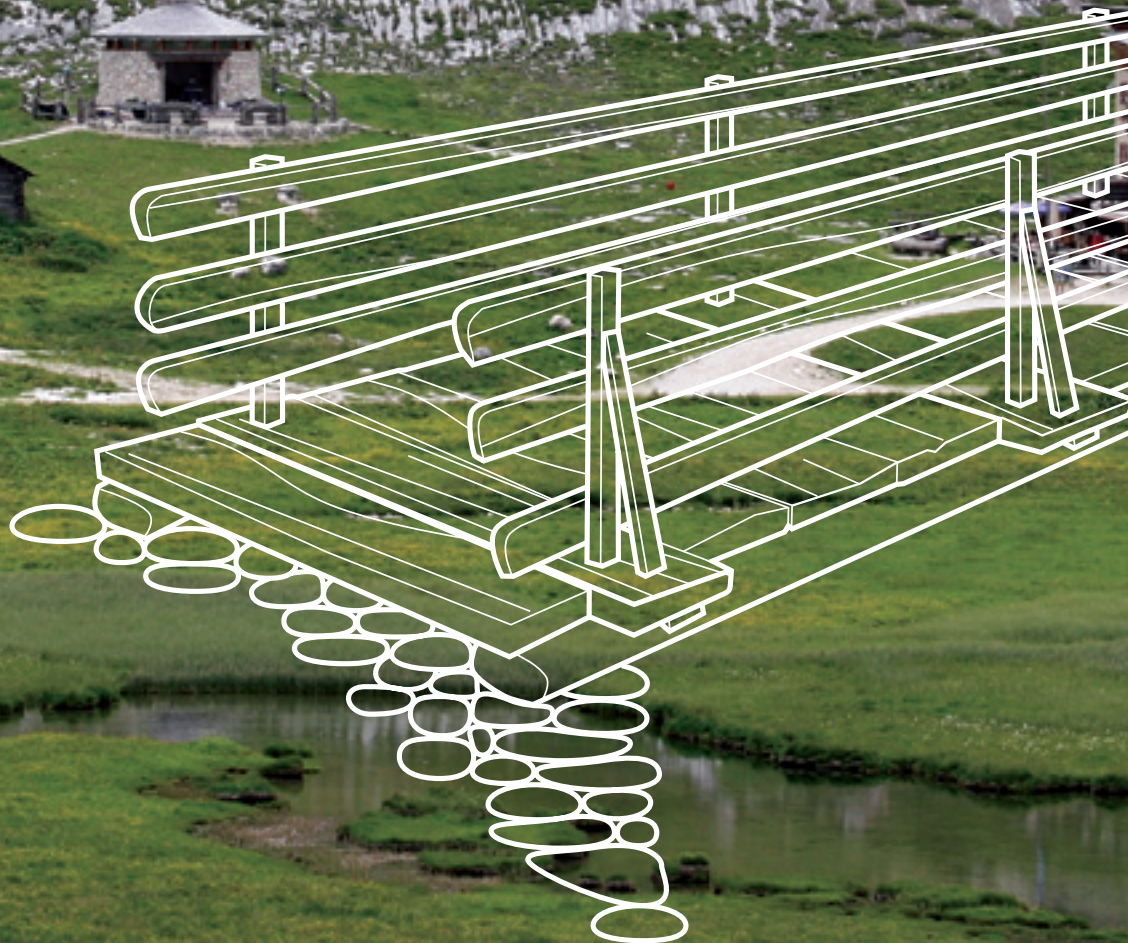
RegioMarket

Optimising Regional Marketing and networking for development of a corporate marketing and branding strategy for the entire Alpine Space
» www.regiomarket.org



**BRIDGE CLOSE TO
THE VILLAGE MASSELLO**
LOCATION Piemonte, Italy
TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION Slab bridge
CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL Wood
YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION Unknown
TYPE OF TRANSPORT
INFRASTRUCTURE Pedestrian bridge

*Built in an altitude of 1,195 m
Spans a branch of the Germanasca river*



TAKING HEART TO STAY AT HOME

HOW TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN PERIPHERAL ALPINE REGIONS

CAN BE SAVED BY INNOVATIVE IDEAS.

In 1871 Massello had 759 inhabitants. Now there are 63 people and of these perhaps only 22 live here all year long. Agriculture has always only been sufficient for the subsistence of the village community. There is mass tourism in the neighbouring valleys but in Massello there is not even a ski-lift. Pinerolo, the nearest town, is 35 km away and can only be reached via narrow, steep, winding mountain roads. The young people went away, taking the path that led them across the little wooden bridge to their new life. Only the old people stayed behind.



This Piedmontese village in the furthest corner of the Germanasca Valley is one of around 1,100 Alpine communities threatened with extinction. In their search for a better life the mountain dwellers turned their backs on their villages and towns

in droves. The exodus continues even now and leads to so-called regional disparities.

Here: peripheral rural areas with small towns and villages which are suffering from acute outward migration; there: the areas on the edge of the Alps and the main valleys with their expanding areas of high population density in which around 60% of the Alpine population live and work. The imbalance between “here” and “there”, between country and town, continues to intensify. Many remote Alpine communities are descending into a maelstrom of depopulation. Soon they will not have the “critical mass” of inhabitants necessary to maintain public life – the start of a vicious circle.

Where there is a lack of suitable jobs and training positions young and highly qualified people in particular will migrate, taking their economic power with them. There is a decline in the need for shops, pubs, health, cultural and social facilities. If it is unprofitable it closes down; jobs are lost. But in the opinion of Thomas Egger, Director of the “Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft für die Berggebiete-SAB” (Swiss working group for mountain regions) and project manager of *PUSE-MOR*, the social factor should not be forgotten either: “Public services in thinly populated areas do not just affect the economy, they are also indispensable for the attractiveness of the villages, for social cohesion, regional identity, equality and for a mutually supportive community.”

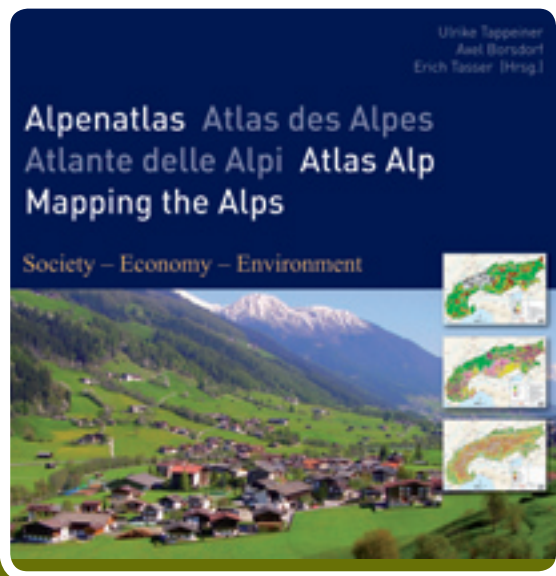
“It is crucial to realize that sustainable innovations are not only technical innovations. Cultural, conceptual and social innovations are all of the same importance. Often these ideas are developed not from the centers of power but from the margins.”

Dominik Siegrist, President CIPRA International

Solutions are urgently needed, or indeed long overdue, to enhance permanently the status of these thinly populated Alpine regions as places to live and as economic areas. In this way, at least in part, the distorted balance between densely populated areas and peripheral regions can be restored. This does not mean that these villages and small towns should be given a big-city ambience, or that standard solutions should be imposed on them. The researchers involved in the **DIAMONT** project confirm this: “We need concepts adapted to the individual regions in order to set a process of sustainable development in motion,” explains Ulrike Tappeiner, **DIAMONT** project

leader and professor at Innsbruck University. “It is a question of looking for the right answers to meet specific needs, whilst also giving consideration to regional strengths.”

So what needs to be improved in order to make life in remoter Alpine areas more worth living and more worthwhile? With their well thought-out ideas and a variety of local initiatives, Alpine Space projects such as **PUSEMOR**, **DYNALP**, **ALP-TER** and **QUALIMA** give a “push” in the right direction and therefore foster the “courage to stay at home”.



A CLOSER LOOK AT ALPINE COMMUNITIES

*What does our community have in common with other Alpine communities? How are we different? Where do we stand with regard to our economy, demographics, environmental protection, etc.? In the past it was extremely difficult to answer questions such as these as there was a lack of reliable comparative data covering the entire Alpine region. Around 30 researchers in the **DIAMONT** project worked together to fill this gap and were able to build on the valuable preliminary work carried out in the **MARS** Alpine project. They collected and cross-linked data and worked out meaningful variables for describing the communities, such as the distance from the heart of the village to the nearest hospital, the structure of the labour force or the extent of the effect that people have on the environment. In addition to the analysis of existing data sources, for example from censuses and GIS data sets, representatives of the communities were also given the opportunity to have their say: around 5,888 mayors from all over the Alpine region were questioned.*

With their work the project partners assisted the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention in the task of promoting a sustainable regional development process, as well as in the setting up of an Alpine observation and information system ABIS/SOIA. Moreover, the unique online database is now available not only to economists, geographers, local, regional and national stakeholders, but also to the public. In addition to statistical information the English-language website provides access to over 100 area development agencies as well as links to examples of best practice. A further outcome is the Atlas “Mapping the Alps”. This atlas presents over 100 maps covering the entire Alpine region and showing social, economic and ecological aspects, plus interpretations in the four Alpine languages, German, French, Italian and Slovenian plus English.

Link to database: <http://www.diamont-database.eu>

Link to final reports: <http://www.uibk.ac.at/diamont/results/reports.htm>

Mapping the Alps: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, ISBN 3-8274-2004-0

IF THE CUSTOMER DOESN'T COME TO THE SHOP THEN THE SHOP MUST COME TO THE CUSTOMER



QUALITY OF LIFE

The provision of basic goods and services for everyday needs is an indispensable location factor. But in those places where no one lives any more the village shop is no longer profitable. Even in more remote areas people are tempted by the large supermarkets with their “one-stop shopping”. So we have to ask the question: How can we keep the shop – and therefore also the economic power – in the village?

We bring the shop to our customers, is what they said to one another in Ollon, a community in the Swiss region of Chablais Vaudois. As part of a **PUSEMOR** initiative five local shops, the butcher's, the chemist's, two grocer's and the bakery, started up a joint delivery system for villages that did not have their own shops. Customers place their orders by telephone and the goods are delivered to their homes the following day. “Our population is getting older and older and these people are often not very mobile. For these people in particular the delivery service is of real practical help,” thinks Jean-Michel Clerc, who is responsible for community social matters in Ollon.

The partners involved in **QUALIMA** also developed creative ideas to guarantee the local supply of goods and services: in remote areas of Slovenia, Austria and Switzerland around 20 “multi-functional service centres” were created which in addition to selling foodstuffs also offer services such as Internet access, postal and pharmacy services. Particular importance was attached to the quality of service and so an important aspect of the pilot enterprise was the initial and further training of managers and employees.

The **ALPTER** project tackled a different problem posed by depopulation: when people leave, the land is no longer cultivated. Areas become overgrown. The typical appeal of the Alpine cultural landscapes vanishes. Knowledge about ecological interrelations, and about crafts and traditions that create a sense of identity threaten to disappear. The project partners involved in **ALPTER**, including also UNESCO as an observer, investigated how it is possible to preserve the special terraced landscapes of the Alps as local resources and thereby give the rural regions a more secure

“I believe very strongly in the positive effect of the exchange of experiences and in international cooperative ventures. The exchange of experiences was also the most important aspect of the DYNALP project.”

Francesco Pastorelli, Director CIPRA Italy

footing. In addition to in-depth pure research, analysis of best practices and practical “revitalisation measures” were on the project schedule. In the Aosta Valley, in Goriška Brda in Slovenia and in the Austrian Wachau wine-growing ter-



Skillfully terraced landscapes in the Alps are worth being preserved as local resources.

aces are once again being used for the cultivation of vintage wines. It is also worth revitalising these old landscapes for the cultivation of olives: since 1984 olive growers in Arnasco (Liguria) have been working together on “counteracting agricultural decline and depopulation”. Out of 50 hectares of terraced land that was still lying fallow in the 1950s they have already made 35 hectares usable again. And new initiatives have been added that support this work: the “Cooperativa Olivicola” has set up its own distribution

system and shows land-owners how to revitalise terraced landscapes.

The findings of the pure research carried out by **ALPTER** with its detailed geographical, geological and socio-economical analyses, plus experiences gathered from the pilot projects, are now available in a reference book and an extensively illustrated book.

Back to Massello, a model community in the **DYNALP** Alpine project. Here they turn to their advantage the fact that the Germanasca Valley has remained unspoilt by the effects of mass tourism. The environment is intact, there is a great diversity of flora, fauna and scenery. Massello is an intermediate stop on the **Via Alpina**, the long distance hiking trail created as part of the Alpine Space Programme, which takes you all the way from Monaco to Trieste through the entire Alpine mountain range. Thanks to the hard work of committed Massello inhabitants and an EU grant, hikers have since 2005 been able to stay in the “Foresteria” guest house, where they are treated to local specialities such as cep mushrooms, fish and game dishes. A local history and mining museum (in the past talc was mined in the Germanasca Valley), a library specialising in mountain topics and a great variety of “soft” natural products and services have also recently been added to what is on offer. All this should bring economic impetus to the village and with this also a return of young people to the village.

FORESTERIA ADVENTURE

MARIO AND ISABELLA ARE AMONGST THOSE WHO CAME TO MASSELLO. IN 2005 THEY TOOK OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEW GUESTHOUSE, THE FORESTERIA.

“We dreamt of taking a different turn in our lives, of working in a place where nature is still intact. Here there is a great variety of flora and fauna. There are chamois, ibex, eagles, bearded vultures and even wolves. Life is carefree, you can go for walks, go fishing or mountain-biking. Yet, everyday life can be very inconvenient here, every time you want to buy something it is a huge undertaking. And life here is expensive, you only have to think of the heating costs. The typical “mountain-dweller character” can be difficult: some people are not very open-minded about new impulses from outside.

We were impressed by the commitment of the community of Massello, in particular the initiatives for the environment and sustainable tourism and so we started our “Foresteria adventure”. At first the guesthouse was just a restaurant and an inn, but then eight double bedrooms were added. We are now working jointly with the community on increasing our guest numbers still further and in also positioning the Foresteria as a training centre for managers. We have committed ourselves to eco-tourism and use local products from local suppliers out of preference in order to support the economy here.”

WHAT ABOUT VILLAGE COHESION?

Towns and villages are attractive when they are busy and provide space for the inhabitants to get together. The inhabitants of Langenegg, for example, also found this to be the case. Their village on the lower slopes of the Bregenzer Wald originally came into being when two communities were merged, so it did not have a centre that had developed over the course of history. With support from *DYNALP*, amongst others, they succeeded in planning a new village centre and filled it with life. Architecture and leisure facilities played an important role, but new jobs, infrastructure and being able to obtain local supplies were also important objectives. The new centre of Langenegg now comprises historic and modern buildings. And what about life in the new focal point of the village? From the graffiti workshop for young people, to the search of a name for the village shop and to campaigns on the topic of energy efficiency, a great variety of events enliven the new heart of the village and strengthen cohesion in the village.

When communities suffer depopulation, or a large proportion of its inhabitants are commuters, it is not only social cohesion that suffers but also traditional neighbourliness. That was what it was like in the Drau Valley in Carinthia, a highly typical peripheral rural region. The idea for the “village service” was born and, thanks to *PUSEMOR*, was put into practice. Since May 2007 the volunteers and administrative staff of the “village service” have been stepping in at short notice when families, single parents, old people or their relatives looking after them need help. They have already made 1,154 visits to people’s houses, where they have looked after children, the sick or the elderly. At the same time the “village service” coordinates and promotes the work of volunteers in the communities and ensures that what is on offer in the field of social and health services is publicised to those who need them.

Two other *PUSEMOR* initiatives have made social services especially for the smallest inhabitants their goal:

Starting in 2009 the mobile kindergarten in “Clockmaker land”, the French region of Pays Horloger, will be doing their rounds. In small communities where there are only a few children it is not worth having separate kindergartens. The idea is a kindergarten bus that travels from village to village. This new service should afford parents some time for dealing with official business or for going shopping, and gives the children the opportunity to meet other children and get used to life in a group.

In Sorica, too, they wanted to do something for children: since the start of the 1990s this village in Slovenia has, thanks to the commitment of several teachers, had a cultural centre with a diverse range of facilities on offer. However, what was lacking in the village was amongst other things suitable educational and play facilities for children. The community and local clubs created a themed playground for school groups, local children and those on holiday. This was rounded off with cultural and educational programmes for children and young people, who can now, for example, learn to paint in the cultural centre. A plus point for children from the village and surrounding area. And one more reason for families to visit this picturesque village with its rich cultural tradition.



Joint activities can strengthen village cohesion: in Langenegg a great variety of events created acceptance of the new village shop.



VIRTUAL MOBILITY: HELLO WORLD!

In the remote areas of the Alps, technologies which are merely convenient and are taken for granted in densely populated areas can be a real bridge to the world: with the assistance of a fast Internet connection mountains can be conquered and the outside world can come to even the remotest of valleys. Official business, shopping and even work can easily be dealt with on the computer, saving many a long journey on winding roads into the valley. Plus: in the competition against depopulation and for more jobs, this virtual connection to the outside world is a must since the Internet has become the most important medium both in people's work and their leisure.

However, in practice it often turns out that providing Internet technologies is one thing, and actually getting people to use them another. Inhibitions often have to be overcome, especially with older people. This was confirmed by a survey of country dwellers carried out as part of the **PUSEMOR** project: "We received some alarming results from the older generation. Many people have never used a PC and are afraid of attempting it,"

sums up Manfred Riedl from the Tyrolean state government office and explains: "Here we need 'ambassadors', or people who are well-known in the village and who can manage to arouse people's interest." In five Tyrolean communities, so-called motivators received training and then explained the concept of the Internet to the people in the villages and were able to dissipate their inhibitions and fears. The interplay between motivation, training courses and free public Internet PCs in each community was so successful that the concept will now be adopted throughout the entire state.

With clever ideas and thanks to **PUSEMOR** they were able in Podblica to kill two birds with one stone. Although this small town in the Skofja Loka mountains in Slovenia lies only 17 km from Kranj, the regional centre, poor road conditions, an inadequate bus service and the lack of a technical infrastructure are keeping the mountain village apart from modern life. Children, school pupils and adults without their own car are particularly disadvantaged. "In Podblica we do not



A real bridge to the world: internet technologies can bring the outside world to even the remotest areas of the Alps. They can enhance professional chances and support health care by the use of telemedicine.

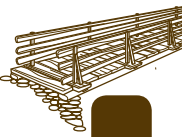
have a general problem with depopulation or with an increase in the percentage of old people. But a large proportion of the active population commutes daily because the farms no longer provide an adequate livelihood. We wanted to strengthen social cooperation in the community, but also to stimulate professional independence, freelance occupations and teleworking,” explains Filip Bertoncelj, leader of the community council of Podblica. The idea: a room in the local school, which was under threat of closure due to low pupil numbers, was turned into an IT centre. Here village residents both big and small now have access to PCs together with a broadband connection. Courses on the use of computer, internet and e-banking, plus cultural events bring various groups of inhabitants together.

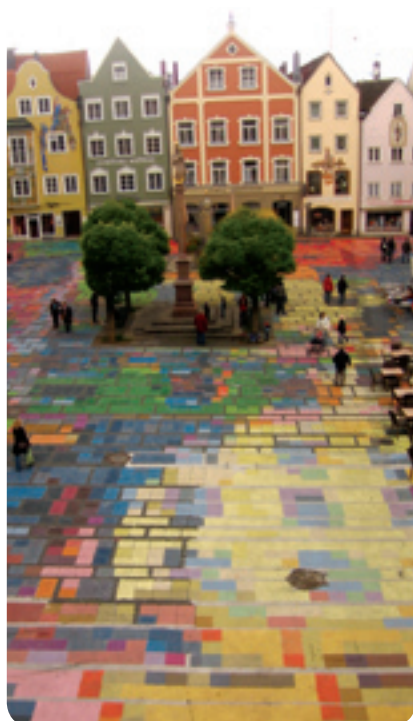
The school was saved, a connection to the outside world created and social life invigorated: that is efficiency. The inhabitants of Podblica have accepted the new world with enthusiasm. The community now even presents itself through its own website, which is maintained by the children and young people of the village.

Attending to official business is also more laborious in remote regions of the Alps than elsewhere. The inhabitants of the Scrivia Valley in Liguria used to have to travel to Genoa. Those times are now over because the communities in the area have got together and set up a physical as well as EDP-supported network plus a central drop-in centre for local citizens: the “Sportello del Cittadino” bundles the services of all official departments. The offers and information services of local government offices, the land registry office, the consumer advice centre, the employment service and the tourist information office can be accessed quickly and conveniently, either on the Internet or in the “real world” in the centrally situated office.

“One outcome of the PUSEMOR project was a set of recommendations to politicians on how to deal with public services in peripheral regions. The transnational approach, in which other countries become involved, gives significantly greater weight to recommendations of this nature.”

Manfred Riedl, Tyrolean Provincial Government, Austria





THE TOWNS HAVE BECOME SELF-CONFIDENT

INTERVIEW WITH HUBERT TRAUNER, TOWN PLANNER FOR THE FEDERAL STATE OF LOWER AUSTRIA. AN EXPERT IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND URBAN REGENERATION, HE REPRESENTED LOWER AUSTRIA IN THE ALPCITY PROJECT.

Mr Trauner, the aim of AlpCity is to revitalise small and medium-sized towns in rural areas. Why is this so important?

The small towns in the region are a significant link connecting rural and densely populated areas. If we do not support them then the regions will die. If there is no infrastructure – like, for example, health services – in the town then the surrounding villages are also no longer viable.

Where do you see the future for the small towns?

They must in future reflect more on their strengths. Many small towns close to the border are also in competition with towns in the foreign country and have to take into consideration the neighbouring town on the other side of the border. Why should we make plans for a university if there is already a good one in the neighbouring town on the other side of the border?

Have the towns already taken that in?

Yes, the mayors and the business world are now showing a very great interest in inter-regional and even transnational exchange. The focus is more on complementing one another's actions rather than being in competition with each other. People are jointly considering what we can do together and what we can do on our own.

Does that mean that regional and even transnational networks are being created? That, too, was, of course, one of the aims of AlpCity ...

Yes, a veritable run of networks of that type has come into being. For example, we invite people to attend conferences and bring in experts. No town can afford this on its own. Shared themes are, for instance, tourism, town centre revival, youth and cultural aspects. One outcome of AlpCity is, for example, the formation of a media library network. Libraries have been able to increase their attractiveness as the first contact point for information and further education in the town and surrounding countryside and, after some initial reservations, have taken heart again.

Talking of taking heart. Can you see any progress?

Yes. In the past the small towns were afraid of falling by the wayside. Now they have become more self-confident and have realised: more can be done by working together.

COMMENDABLE USE OF THE IMAGINATION

Whether we are talking about **ALPTER**, **DIAMONT**, **DYNALP**, **PUSEMOR** or **QUALIMA**, and about a mountain village or a town: the Alpine Space Programme can give the initial impetus; but it needs people who are committed to standing behind their home community to implement the ideas. The converse is also true: good initiatives frequently need funding at the start, that is, they need to be given the chance to be able to become independent later on. In such matters transnational contact, which goes beyond linguistic and cultural barriers, has the effect of switching to turbo-mode. Admittedly it is a question of finding one's own individual solutions, but the separate communities benefit from the exchange of ideas and learn from the mistakes, particularly from the successes of others.

In any case, Antonio Chiadò, member of the Massello local council, draws hope because the number of inhabitants is increasing again. With personal dedication, interregional networking and the support of projects such as **DYNALP** it has in the meantime been possible to create a few sustainable jobs. "Life in the mountains is experiencing a new level of esteem and the feeling of belonging is becoming ever stronger. A few young people have moved here from the town – only six of them, but all the same: our community has grown by 10%."



MORE INFORMATION

AlpCity

Local endogenous development and urban regeneration of small Alpine towns
» www.alpcity.it

ALPTER

Terraced landscapes of the Alpine arc
» www.alpter.net

DIAMONT

Data Infrastructure for the Alps: Mountain Orientated Network Technology
» www.uibk.ac.at/diamont/home.htm
» www.diamont-database.eu

DYNALP

Anderung Dynalp: Valorisation of nature, landscape and culture for marketing and tourism in the rural Alps
» www.dynalp.org

PUSEMOR

Public services in Mountain Regions – new needs and innovative strategies
» www.pusemor.net

QUALIMA

Quality of life improvement by supporting public and private services in the rural areas of the Alps
» www.alpinespace.org/qualima.html

Via Alpina

Promoting the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps on a network of hiking trails
» www.via-alpina.org

"Sportello del Cittadino" in the Scrivia Valley
» www.cittadino.altavallecrivia.net

Website of the Massello community
» www.comune.massello.to.it

Website of the Podblica community
» www.podblica.si

“EUROPABRÜCKE”

EUROPE'S BRIDGE

LOCATION Austria, Innsbruck/Tirol

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION Beam bridge

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL Reinforced concrete

YEAR OF CONSTRUCTION 1960-1963

TYPE OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE Autobahn

TOTAL LENGTH 815 m

HEIGHT ABOVE GROUND 190 m

*Spans over the Wipp valley between Patsch and
Schönberg. 22 persons died during construction*



FINDING A HUMAN LEVEL

HOW MOBILITY SHOULD BE MANAGED IN THE ALPINE REGION,
WITHOUT QUALITY OF LEFT BEHIND

17 November 1963: the new “Europabrücke” (Europe’s Bridge) on the Brenner motorway is celebrated as the “construction of the century”. Engineering has conquered the obstacle of the Alps at the lowest-lying crossing point between Geneva and Vienna. At the chapel above the structure, frescoes idealize it as a bridging of the gap between the peoples of Europe.

Today, the “construction of the century” stands more as a monument to impending traffic grid-lock, which is making man and the environment sick. The people living along the other principal corridors near Fréjus, Mont Blanc, the Gotthard or on the Tauern stretch can also tell you a thing or two about this. On all five axes, goods transit increased by 41 per cent between 1994 and 2004. In addition, vital economic centres, such as Lyon, Milan, Munich, Lubljana, Zurich or Vienna, line the edges of the Alps. On weekdays, commuters swarm like ants out of the surrounding countryside into the hubs of conurbation and then back again, while at weekends, hordes of city dwellers in turn stream out of the urban agglomerations. The price for this mobility is paid by the people and nature in the valleys. It is high time we had some pan-Alpine transport solutions. However, owing to the different national rules and regulations as well as infrastructures of the Alpine countries, such solutions represent a major challenge.

The project partners of the Alpine Space Programme have taken up this challenge, paving the way between 2000 and 2006 for people- and nature-friendly solutions. Committed regions, countries, provinces, cities and towns, authorities, means of transport, logistics companies,



and tourism communities no longer want to be part of the problem, but involved in the solution. Whether through monitoring, sustainable transport systems, a modal shift, interconnectivity, raising people’s eco-awareness or through an innovative range of local transport and tourist products and services – the shared vision is: intelligent transport solutions so that the Alps remain an attractive living space and economic area in the heart of Europe. And who knows, perhaps the “Europabrücke” will soon acquire a new, positive image again.

“We need intermodality in the Alpine Space. We have to co-operate even closer, create combined rail, bus ‘n’ bike tickets and offer a convenient transport supply.”

Florence Alheily, Keolis, Besançon, France



ALPINE TRANSIT – UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

If you want to understand exactly how road traffic impacts on the quality of life of people living in the Alps, you need to take many things into account: bottlenecks, temperature inversions, erosion, inclines and declines, and periodic fluctuations in traffic flows. Previously, there had been a lack of harmonized data, with countries, regions, agencies and trunk road operators collecting information independently of one another. But now the **ALPCHECK** project team has created an open information system, which can be used for exchanging data on road traffic volumes in the Alpine space. It takes into consideration all kinds of road traffic, including long-haul, short-distance, leisure and goods traffic as well as commuter traffic levels.

The partners of the **MONITRAF** and **ALPNAP** projects also got to the bottom of the scheme of things, concentrating on transit traffic. For the first time, they bundled and compared its well-known effects on a pan-Alpine basis, extrapolating future scenarios. To this end, they gathered data across disciplines on air pollution, noise pollution

and land consumption, using common indicators. This showed that back in 2005 the average concentration of particulate matter but also of NO_2 on most of the Alpine passes already exceeded the EU limit values set to apply from 2010 onwards. Some gaps in our knowledge – i.e. traffic effects that had previously been little understood, for example in the areas of tourism, health or regional development – were filled. The focus was on the four main transverse roads (Fréjus, Mont Blanc, St. Gotthard and Brenner). In the **MONITRAF** Declaration – a joint policy document issued by the eight project partners – the regions most impacted by the transit finally agreed on guidelines for joint steps to be taken. Toni Aschwanden of the “Alpine Initiative”, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Switzerland, liked the approach: “The combination was exciting and new. **MONITRAF** laid scientific foundations but also formulated policy statements, meaning that we not only have another fine study but have also made headway on the consensus front.”

The **MONITRAF** partners have incorporated in their declaration one of the proposals of the “Alpine Initiative”: the Alpine Transit Rights Trading Exchange. Just as with emission rights, the market should regulate supply. “Unfortunately, capacity is not limited at present. A political decision is needed for this, that’s the major point. Then trading would be left to the market.” Thus, capacity could be limited step by step, while expanding rail services in parallel. Even if the freight carriers are still very critical of the idea, many logistics companies are already providing positive feedback.

With regard to rail transportation, many look enviously to Switzerland, which is the only country where a transit limitation can be derived from the constitution. Its or LSVA (heavy goods vehicle supplement dependent on mileage) applies to the country’s entire road network and kills two birds with one stone. On the one hand, it implements the polluter-pays principle and, on the other, improves the competitiveness of the railway system. In addition, the LSVA supplement covers most of the external cost of damage to the environment.

Other specific demands made in the **MONITRAF** Declaration are cost transparency, internalizing external costs (including e.g. accident costs, road maintenance and soil pollution), and promoting the powers and responsibilities of the regions.

Alpine transit is not only the problem child of the pan-European traffic system but also part of this system. Its direction is defined by the guidelines of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Referring closely to these guidelines, the **Alpen-CorS** project analyzed the relationship between investments in transport infrastructure and their impact on accessibility and competitiveness. Along corridor V – which links Lisbon with Kiev, passing the Southern Alps – the project team developed new technologies for improving safety and efficiency in the transport sector.

But back to the “Europabrücke”. The rising values for CO₂, NO_x and particulate matter not only affect

the quality of life of the people living there but also endanger their health. In 2007, an average of 32,000 vehicles a day, including 5,500 heavy goods vehicles (HGVs), trundled over the Brenner Pass, with goods traffic growing exponentially. It is true that the volume of rail-borne freight has increased to a record level of 14 million tons per year. Nevertheless, road-borne freight is still in the lead, comprising roughly two and a half times as much. Currently, in the battle of road versus rail for goods traffic on the main axes, the overall score stands at 67.3% to 32.7%. A successful “modal shift” – transferring road traffic to other means of transport – looks different.



“Precisely when we are talking about rail transport, we need transnational partnerships,” explains Guido Piccoli, who is responsible for inter-modal freight transportation projects in the Italian province of Brescia. In the **AlpFRail** project, Mr. Piccoli formulated together with 16 other partners common perspectives for transit traffic. The partners included countries, regions, provinces, transport companies and an NGO as well as the Italian Environment Ministry and the Austrian Ministry of Transport. To begin with, their aim was to understand rail traffic not in terms of axes



but as a network, as a system, with a view to then making better use of the existing infrastructures. They were also concerned to bridge different statutory provisions, organizational forms right through to power systems. Accordingly, they analyzed the current situation as well as its environmental implications, created a common data basis, revealed bottlenecks, and elaborated specific recommendations: "Our task was to develop a catalogue of guidelines and measures. The content of this "masterplan for co-modality" fed into, for example, the infrastructure law of the province of Brescia," says Mr. Piccoli. This groundbreaking law is considered to point the way to the future for the entire Alpine region.

Innovative transport solutions should also take into account the sources of Alpine transit traffic. With this in mind, the *AlpFRail* team took a close look at Mediterranean ports and economic areas outside the Alpine space as "originators". After all, 50% of Alpine transit arises outside the mountain region. "We expect a significant in-

crease in container traffic," reports Franco Gaggia of the Italian Environment Ministry, coordination unit of the Alpine Convention in Bolzano. To absorb this growth, train capacities are needed that are ready for use before the Mediterranean ports send their containers over the Alpine roads. Mr. Gaggia suggests that precisely for this reason the network should be expanded from port to port – from the Mediterranean to the North Sea. In *AlpFRail*, the team also came up with – as a first step – two examples of a trimodal transport chain (rail, HGV, ship).

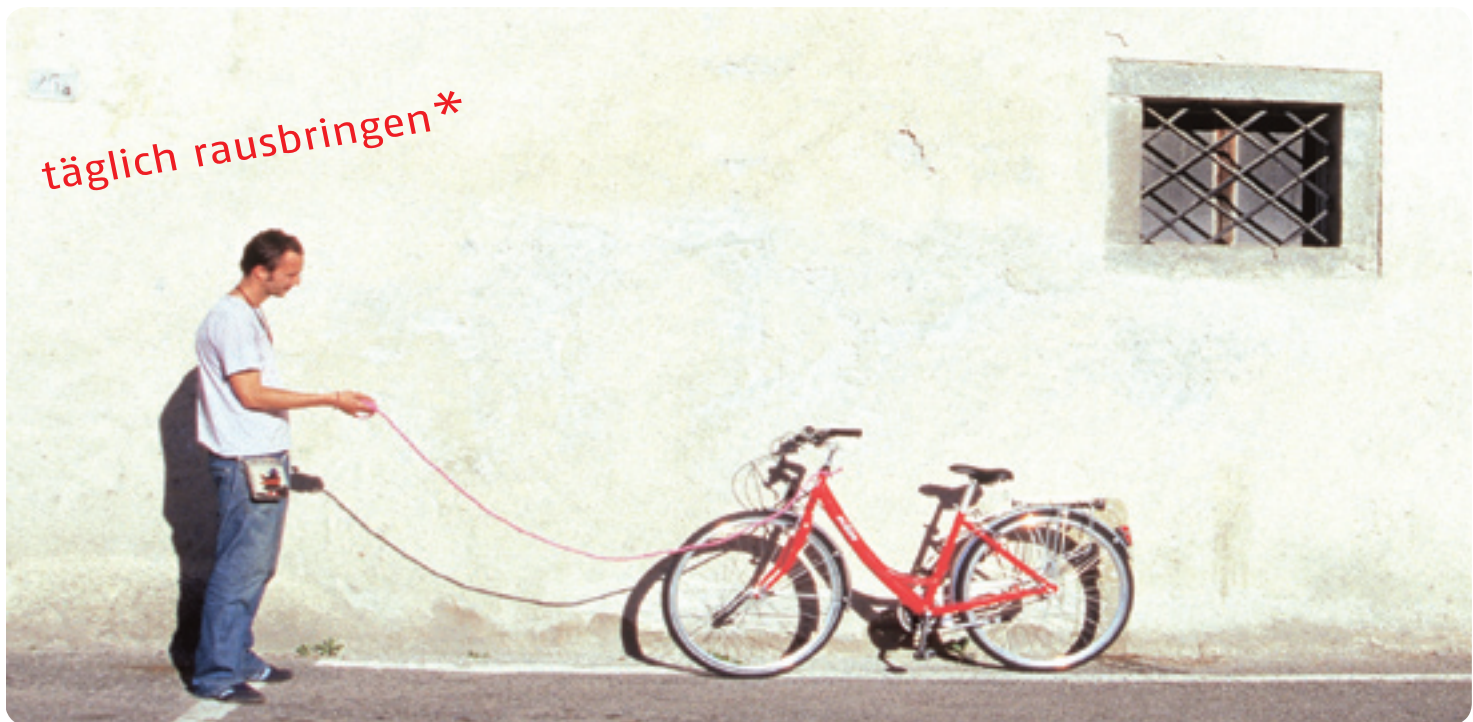
However, companies only accept alternatives if they are comparable with road transport in terms of quality, efficiency and cost. This was why the province of Brescia worked together with the district of Ludwigsburg Donau-Iller (D) to find out what the demand might be for rail services between the two regions. Armed with their findings, the project partners confronted the rail companies and terminal coordinators. The cause was taken up by the Swiss HUPAC group. In workshops, the project partners informed and motivated small and medium-sized carriers of the regions. Since December 2007, a new combined (intermodal) transport service has now linked Brescia with Bingen. The service involves the cooperation of the German DB subsidiary Kombiverkehr and Italy's CEMAT. Guido Piccoli: "Bringing institutions and private companies face to face is an important step towards solving the Alpine transit problem."

The regions affected by transit not only view themselves self-critically as "victims" but are also prepared to put their own house in order, so as to reduce the strain on the environment. This is why, according to the *MONITRAF* Declaration, they want: "... to implement local measures in passenger transport and offer alternatives to travel in private motor vehicles."

THINKING FORWARD – MOTIVATING REGIONS

In order to think forward, the regions could draw on the new collection of best practices compiled by CIPRA for the Alpine Convention's "Transport" working group, or they could search in the European Local Transport Information Service (ELTIS), or profit from the experience gained in the **VIANOVA**, **ALPINE AWARENESS** and **ALPS MOBILITY II** projects. Helping the environment and at the same time the health of people living in the Alps was the aim of the **VIANOVA** project. "Transport policy marries health prevention," was the

ual, their guide to communal bicycle systems, and their **VIANOVA** film, the ten project partners from Italy, Germany, Liechtenstein, Austria, France and Switzerland want to motivate other transport players to emulate their example. Over 60 instances of best practice provide an ample selection for encouraging the inhabitants of the Alps to start taking healthy exercise while practising eco-mobility. One of these examples is the "Bike to Work" initiative of the Bavarian AOK local health insurance scheme, which 40,000 people



creed or, to put it another way, transport policy and health prevention go hand in hand. After all, doing your daily journeys using an eco-friendly integrated transport system (eco-mobility) – by bus, train, bicycle or on foot – reduces CO₂ and particulate matter but also the risk of getting diabetes or suffering from cardio-vascular diseases. Improving local public transport, bicycle services or a combination of the two, changing people's patterns of perception, and creatively raising their eco-awareness – all this added up to an innovative mixture. With their compact planning man-

take part in annually – an initiative that has already been exported to six regions as part of the **VIANOVA** project. Another instance is Bolzano, which has managed with its "Bici Bolzano" to increase the proportion of its cyclists from 17.5% to 25% in less than ten years. When, one year after being installed, the city's new bike barometer clocked up its millionth cyclist, the whole of Bolzano joined in the celebrations. And then there is Weiz (A), whose creative "Walking Miles" have persuaded pedestrians of the attractions of walking. Two further examples of best practice

daily walk your bike*

With manifold activities "Bici Bolzano" has managed to increase the proportion of its cyclists from 17.5% to 25% in less than ten years.



are the Slovene Parliament, which has approved a health strategy, and France, which has gained kudos with an innovative range of bus services in the Franche Comté region.

In the **ALPINE AWARENESS** project, young people played the leading role. School children, teachers and young people got involved in making eco-mobility more attractive in five Alpine regions and in promoting its use. An analysis of what sustainable mobility means to young people was followed by action days and competitions, the use of new teaching materials, training young people or employees in public passenger transport, and a whole range of communication measures. Here, too, a local provider of public passenger transport services, Dolomiti Bus in the province of Belluno, was able to demonstrate its willingness to innovate.

New ideas in eco-mobility are popular not only regarding everyday mobility. Creative solutions are also in fashion in tourist and leisure transport. "Strictly speaking, it is not the job of the public sector to develop marketable products," thinks Veronika Holzer, representative of the lead partner of **ALPS MOBILITY II** in the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Water Management, and Environment. "Nevertheless, it has turned out to be right and proper to give a helping hand to a tourist product that integrates sustainability factors and climate protection, thus contributing to an important environmental policy concern. The success of this product, which was developed with public funds as part of an EU project, is that it is holding its own on the market." Far-sighted tourism professionals and mayors had joined forces early on to create a viable marketing network. This gave rise to 22 mountain villages, so-called "**Alpine Pearls**", whose website says: "They all guarantee holidays with sustainability, climate protection and the highest quality of tourism." From the French village of Villard de Lans to Bled in Slovenia, the "Pearls" have proved that low-impact mobility in tourism can be a competitive advantage. Their transnational cooperation is

distinguished by its good working climate and visible successes in product development and marketing.

Meanwhile, Les Gets is considered to be the French paragon of eco-friendly mobility. "We can adopt solutions from our experienced Swiss and Austrian colleagues," explains Keran Larue, development officer of the village in the region of Portes du Soleil. "These days, our hotels are selling packages including transport with accommodation. Don't forget that the soft mobility concept was still unheard-of here five years ago."

Stefan Otz, Managing Director Interlaken Tourism (CH), is also pleased with the product's success: "With a turnover of approximately 30,000 euro, the **Alpine Pearls** package occupies the top position in our list of packages. Car-free transport is totally in keeping with the spirit of the times."

The partners are also developing joint products and services, such as rail journeys from pearl to pearl, are expanding a network of hiking trails on the **Via Alpina**, and are engaged in intensive media work. In 2009, their agenda will include "Alpine Crossing" (a transnational press trip), scheduled for January. Its route is planned to lead from Interlaken via Les Gets, Chamois, to Arosa, Deutschnofen, Villnoess, via Bad Reichenhall, and finally to Werfenweng, the pioneer of the pearls. Incidentally, Werfenweng's mayor, Peter Brandauer, who is also chairman of Alpine Pearls, is already going a step further, redoubling his efforts to get his fellow citizens themselves to switch to eco-mobility. Well, after all, visitors to a car-free destination also expect their hosts to demonstrate exemplary mobility behaviour!

REDISCOVERING DAY TO DAY MOBILITY

INTERVIEW WITH FLORENCE ALHEILY, HEAD OF "SERVICE COMMUNICATION" AT KEOLIS BESANÇON (GINKO). KEOLIS IS FRANCE'S BIGGEST PROVIDER OF LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT SERVICES.



You have already worked together with Keolis Besançon in the E-MOTION project (see chapter "Competitiveness") and now represent the company in VIANOVA. What has been new?

Our approach has been to combine transport services with health. In every campaign, we have tried to bring the health issue into play.

How has your company profited from this?

The project has enhanced the image of the company and also of the region. The exchange of experience during VIANOVA has inspired us to do some unusual things. Thus, we printed fitness exercises on the back of posters at bus stops, a witty idea that we borrowed from Liechtenstein. And on "wellness day", fitness trainers encouraged passengers to join in exercises at bus stops.

What incentives have been provided for road users to switch to eco-mobility?

Very effective was our direct marketing campaign for employees in the region. For this campaign, we put together small information packages about health and the range of local public or commuter passenger transport services, distributing some 6,000 of them to companies. The companies, in turn, passed on the packages to their employees. Anyone interested was able to request a free ticket, a customized timetable, and a personal travel plan. About 600 employees downloaded the information offer. In this way, they were able to try out eco-mobility, experiencing everyday mobility in a new way. Many have switched over long-term.

What do you see as being the most important future challenge for local public transport in the Alps?

Intermodality. We must cooperate even more, create season tickets that combine rail, bus and bicycle, and we must design the services offered to make them very convenient.

MORE INFORMATION

AlpCheck

Managing Traffic Monitoring Data within the Alpine Space

» <http://progetto-alpcheck.regione.veneto.it>

AlpenCorS

A "bottom up" approach for interpreting the meaning and the usefulness of Corridor V

» www.alpinespace.org/alpencors.html

AlpFRail

Innovative concepts for shifting Alpine crossing freight transport from road to rail

» www.alpfrail.com

Alpine Awareness

How to motivate the population – in particular young people – to switch to sustainable mobility in the Alps

» www.alpineawareness.net

ALPNAP

Monitoring and minimisation of traffic-induced noise and air pollution along major Alpine transport routes

» www.alpnep.org

Alps Mobility II

A network of Alpine holiday resorts with environmentally sound mobility

» www.alpsmobility.net

MONITRAF

Improving quality of life by monitoring road traffic related effects in the Alpine Space and common measures

» www.monitraf.org

Via Alpina

Promoting the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps on a network of hiking trails

» www.via-alpina.org

ViaNova

Optimising people's perception and motivation as well as urban transport infrastructure towards healthy and sustainable structures

» www.eu-vianova.net

THE ALPINE CONVENTION – BRINGING INTERESTS INTO LINE

WHAT IS THE ALPINE CONVENTION?

In 1995, the Convention on the Protection of the Alps came into effect. By means of this agreement, the eight Alpine States together with the European Union intend to both protect the unique natural heritage as well as support a sustainable development in the Alps. Hence, they wish to harmonise economic concerns with ecological needs and at the same time keep in mind the cultural and economic needs of the Alpine population. The Alpine Conference is the political decision-making body of the Convention.

Specific measures implementing the principles laid down in the framework Convention are contained in the “Protocols”. These include concrete steps to be taken in many issues, such as spatial planning, mountain farming, soil conservation, energy, tourism or transport. So far, eight protocols have been signed. Each Member State is bound to implement the protocols it ratifies. The international agreement applies to an area of 190,600 km² and 13,9 Millionen people, focusing on mountainous regions, whereas the area of the EU-Alpine Space Programme also covers urban agglomerations lining the edges of the Alps. (450,000 km² and 70 Millionen people, respectively).

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INTERVIEW WITH MARCO ONIDA

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ALPINE CONVENTION



Where do you see synergies (bridging potential) between the Alpine Convention and the Interreg III B Alpine Space Programme (ASP)?

The Alpine Convention and its protocols are very much centered on the concept of transnational cooperation. The protocols call for cooperation “between the institutions and regional authorities

concerned so as to encourage solidarity of responsibility, in particular to exploit and develop synergies (...)”. So, there is great similarity in the objectives of the Alpine Convention and in the Alpine Space Programme.

To what extent did ASP-projects bring useful results to the Alpine Convention?

In the past, there have been quite a few projects which helped directly applying the protocols of the Alpine Convention. The Via Alpina project is a case in point, which helped applying the tourism, nature and transport protocols of the Convention across the whole Alpine arc. Or ALPS MOBILITY II, through which the network of the Alpine Pearls was set up. Or, projects like ClimChAlp, LexALP or DIAMONT, which contribute to the diffusion of knowledge related to Alpine issues.

How could ASP-projects establish links or cooperate with the Convention?

The problem of many projects is that, sooner or later, they finish. This may lead to the dispersion of valuable knowledge or experience. The Alpine Convention can contribute to the perpetuation of the project results, be it in the form of data (through our permanent information and observation system – SOIA), or by means of recognition and institutionalisation of structures. So, for example, in order to keep the idea of Via Alpina alive, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding for a continued cooperation.

What are your expectations for the future cooperation?

My expectations, or should I say my hopes, are that the awareness about the potential of the cooperation between Alpine Space and the Alpine Convention bodies will grow further. So that together, we could achieve that mountain issues will be given higher political priority by European institutions.







COMMON VISION AT THE HEART OF EUROPE

THE ALPINE SPACE PROGRAMME

AN INCENTIVE AND INSPIRATION FOR 70 MILLION PEOPLE



The area has a surface of almost 450,000 km² and is one of the most diverse regions of Europe.

INTERREG was created as an incentive for cooperation within the European Union. The third generation of the INTERREG Community Initiative that ran from 2000 to 2006 fostered economic and social cohesion and regionally balanced development in all countries of Europe. In the Alpine Space Programme, national, regional and local stakeholders cooperate on various transnational projects. The common vision is to maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the Alpine region.

The beneficiaries of this programme are to be found across the entire Alpine region, including a small section of the Mediterranean and Adriatic coasts, the regions of the large river valleys of the Danube, Etsch, Po, Rhône and Rhine, and the surrounding peri-Alpine belt with its attractive European cities such as Lyon, Munich, Milan, Geneva, Vienna and Ljubljana.

LOOKING BACK: PERMANENT NETWORKS

The ambitious aim of the programme, which should benefit the 70 million people of the Alpine Space, is to achieve homogeneous, sustainable development. The challenges faced by the lead partners were enormous: how can we make the Alpine Space more competitive? How can we achieve an Alpine-wide exchange of knowledge? Where does economic potential lie, particularly in rural areas? What do sustainable traffic systems look like in sensitive Alpine areas and how can we ensure better accessibility? And finally: how do we manage the natural surroundings, the landscape and the cultural heritage and protect ourselves against natural hazards?



The priority of all projects was to generate a sense of community that takes precedence over all specific goals. Partners from all Alpine countries have created durable networks between regions, communities, sectoral planning agencies, companies, non-governmental organisations and research

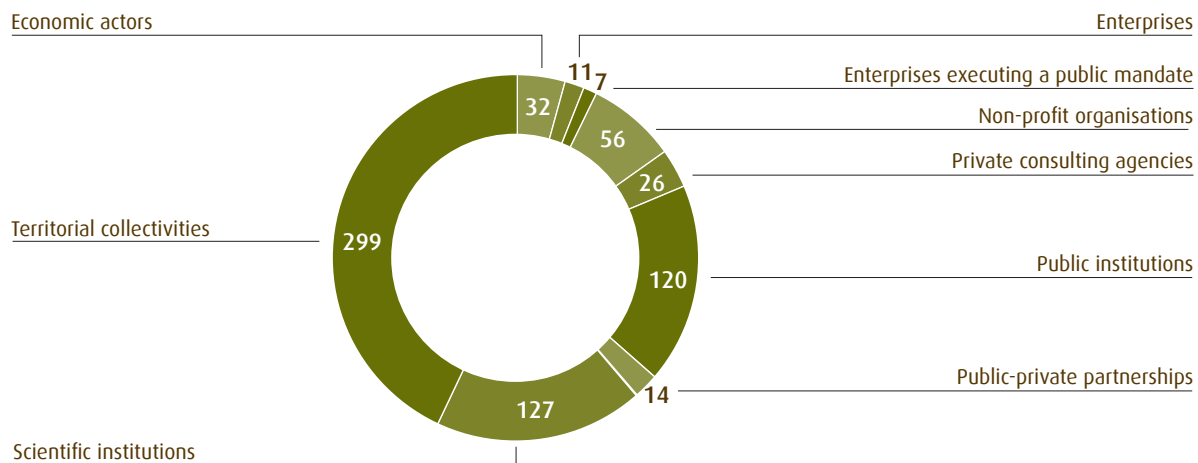
institutions in the Alpine Space. In many cases it was this programme which generated the interest in such networks in the first place and they continued to flourish even after the completion of the project.

Within the course of INTERREG III B, 58 projects were promoted in the Alpine Space with a total budget of approximately 120 million Euro. 50% of the costs of each project were subsidized by the European Regional Development Fund ERDF, with 75% being provided in Slovenia. The individual states and countries of the Alpine Space and local government or private agencies also granted funding, so in total an average of about two million Euro was made available for each project. Between 2000 and 2006 approximately 700 partners from 33 regions worked closely together, generally for a period of two to three years.

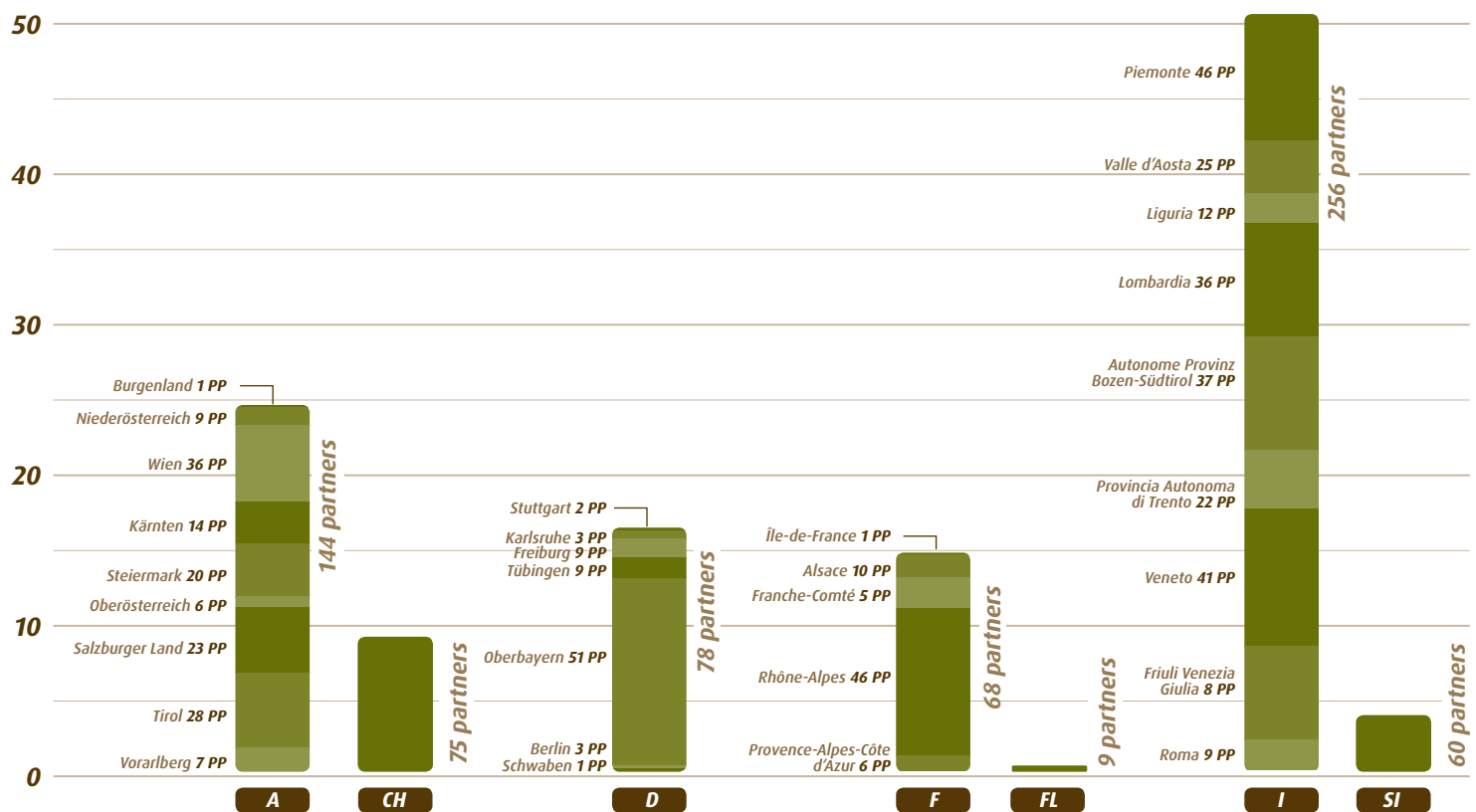
INTERREG is a Community Initiative which is supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). It includes three programme types: "INTERREG A" funds cross-border cooperation, "B" funds transnational cooperation and "C" funds inter-regional cooperation. The Alpine Space Programme belongs to the "B" strand. Its main objective is to contribute to a more balanced and sustainable territorial development of the area by improving trans-European cooperation. The programme promotes collaborative projects between authorities, universities, research institutions, associations, economic actors, organizations and non-governmental organisations – at national, regional and local level. Partners from at least three Alpine countries must be involved in the project teams.

PARTNERSHIPS: FACTS AND FIGURES

TYPE OF PARTNER



PROGRAMME BUDGET AND PROJECT PARTNER PER COUNTRY AND REGION (NUTS 2)



m. Euro Programme budget

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: LIVING SPACE WITH A COMPETITIVE EDGE



The community Initiative INTERREG – and with it the Alpine Space Programme – was upgraded to a separate Structural Fund objective of the European Territorial Cooperation Programme for the period 2007–2013. This shows just how important transnational cooperation is to the European Commission and to its Member States. The regions in the Alpine Space are once again being given the opportunity to forge transnational relationships and establish sustainable links within the Alpine region as an area of working and living.

In this new programme period, issues of strategic importance are the main concern. These issues have not been prescribed from above but developed jointly by the countries of the Alpine Space in a “bottom-up process”. In three workshops, organised by the Programme, representatives from all regions discussed their experiences from previous projects and debated future-oriented ideas. In conclusion, they appointed a transnational Expert Group which outlined future challenges for the Alpine Space in a prospective study. Their findings influenced the focus points of the new programme.

As a result, future projects are to strengthen the competitiveness and appeal of the Alpine Space, stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship and improve physical access and the quality of the local public transportation. The natural and cultural heritage are to be protected and used as a source of potential, and risk prevention is to be strengthened – particularly with regard to climate change. In all these areas, transnational partnerships will pave the way for sustainable solutions which are important to large sections of the Alpine region.

THE LISBON STRATEGY OF THE EU

GROWTH AND JOBS

Start: 2000

Reorientation: 2006

Aim: The EU is to become the most competitive and most dynamic knowledge-based economic area in the world, capable of achieving sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

Measures: Increased investment in education and research, intensified support for SMEs, more jobs, a common EU energy policy

THE GOTHENBURG STRATEGY OF THE EU

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Start: 2001

Reorientation: 2005

Aim: Enhanced quality of life for everyone; security of supply, competitiveness and climate protection

Issues: Measures relating to climate protection and climate change adaptation strategies, sustainable transport systems, public health, management of natural resources, sustainable production and consumption patterns, social affairs, demography and migration, global challenges with respect to poverty and development

HIGHER LEVEL OF CO-FINANCING – HIGHER DEMANDS

An essential change to the Structural Fund programmes in the period 2007-2013 is the strategic approach: the Alpine Space Programme must now also demonstrate how it contributes to growth, employment and sustainable development – a requirement of the Lisbon and Gothenburg Strategies. Results are to be tangible and visible.

Grant recipients can build on the experience and outcomes of the pilot campaign programme according to Article 10 EFRE (1997-1999) and INTERREG III B (2000-2006). An additional incentive here is an increased co-financing quota of up to 76% for all partners from Member States and a total budget of 130 million Euro.

WE SUPPORT YOU

The Joint Technical Secretariat (JTS) and Alpine Space Contact Points (ACP) provide a service package to support all funding beneficiaries in achieving success in their project work. This includes information days, conferences, individual consulting appointments with the Alpine Space Contact Points, an idea exchange section and the online tool ... and this brochure. The aim is to inspire the many protagonists in the Alpine region to build on the success of INTERREG III B, initiate

new partnerships and project ideas and also feed interesting results into their daily work.

Further information on the Operational Programme, applications, previous project results, thematic conferences and other services are to be found at www.alpine-space.eu.



USEFUL CONTACTS AND HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

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PLEASE FIND INFORMATION ON THE ALPINE SPACE PROGRAMME 2007–2013 HERE:

www.alpine-space.eu



PLEASE FIND ADDITIONAL PROJECT RESULTS OF THE INTERREG III ALPINE SPACE PROGRAMME 2000–2006

www.alpinespace.org/approved-projects.html

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Project AlpFRail

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Image campaign “Fahrrad Bozen 2003”
 Project coordinator Ökoinstitut Südtirol/Alto Adige
 Initiator: Community of Bolzano
 Idea, foto, design helios.bz

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Project Alpine Awareness

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