

## A Convention for the Alps Eine Konvention für die Alpen

Andreas Weissen, Switzerland/Schweiz

Die internationale Kommission für den Schutz der Alpen (CIPRA-International) wurde 1952 gegründet. CIPRA ist eine NGO als Dachverband von über hundert Gesellschaften und Organisationen aus allen sieben Alpen-Staaten, die in einer holistischen Weise für die Bewahrung des natürlichen und kulturellen Erbes in den Alpen einstehen, sowie für eine nachhaltige Entwicklung in dieser Region.

Bereits in ihren Gründungsdokumenten in den frühen 1950-er Jahren hat CIPRA die Notwendigkeit eines internationalen Vertrages betont, um die kulturelle und natürliche Vielfalt des alpinen Raumes zu gewährleisten. In der Mitte der 1980-er Jahre hat CIPRA diese Idee wieder aufgenommen, indem vorerst vorbereitende Konferenzen und Dokumente organisiert worden sind.

1989 fand die erste Alpine Umweltministerkonferenz statt und die Berchtesgadener Deklaration wurde der Startpunkt des Alpenprozesses. 1991 wurde die Alpen-Konvention in Salzburg von den Umweltministern unterzeichnet. In den letzten zwölf Jahren haben die Vertragsparteien (Österreich, Frankreich, Deutschland, Italien, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slowenien, Schweiz und die Europäische Union) die Alpen-Konvention und acht Protokolle ausgearbeitet. CIPRA-International nahm daran als kritischer und konstruktiver Beobachter teil.

Bis jetzt ist die Konvention zum Schutz der Alpen der einzige multilaterale Vertrag, der speziell auf die Organisation von überregionalen Kooperationen in einem Berggebiet ausgerichtet ist. Die Konvention umreißt die Prinzipien und dringenden Tätigkeitsbereiche in bestimmten umwelttechnischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Zügen. Deshalb kann sie als die erste und ausführlichste Konzeption für nachhaltige Entwicklung einer großen Bergregion gelten (vgl. Agenda 21, Artikel 13 der Rio Konferenz 1992).

Die Autoren der „Konvention zum Schutz der Alpen“ (Alpen-Konvention) unterstrichen den natürlichen und kulturellen Reichtum der Alpen, ihre Bedeutung für die dort lebenden oder zu Besuch kommenden Menschen, die Notwendigkeit verstärkter, grenzüberschreitender Kooperation, die Bedrohung der ökologischen Funktion, und die Notwendigkeit der Aussöhnung von wirtschaftlichen Interessen mit ökologischen Bedürfnissen. Mit der Alpen-Konvention werden die Vertragsparteien „eine ganzheitliche Politik zur Erhaltung und zum Schutz der Alpen“ verfolgen. Zur Erlangung dieser Ziele werden die Vertragsparteien entsprechende Maßnahmen in zwölf vorrangigen Regionen durchführen, die von der Konvention ausgesucht werden (Alpen-Konvention, Art. 2, Abs.2) und in sogenannten Protokollen konkretisiert sind. Die Alpen-Konvention erwähnt als Rahmenvertrag nur die allgemeinen Ziele für jedes Thema. In den vergangenen Monaten und Wochen von 2002 haben Liechtenstein, Österreich und Deutschland die Protokolle der Alpen-Konvention ratifiziert.

The International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA-International) was founded in 1952. CIPRA is a non-governmental umbrella-

organization formed by over a hundred associations and organizations from all seven alpine countries, standing in a holistic way for the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage in the Alps as well as for a sustainable development of this region.

Already in its founding documents in the early 1950s CIPRA highlighted the necessity of an international treaty to guarantee the cultural and natural diversity of the alpine space. In the middle of the 1980s CIPRA relaunched this idea organising first preliminary conferences and documents.

In 1989 the first Alpine Conference of Environment Ministers took place and the *Declaration of Berchtesgaden* became the starting point of the alpine process. In 1991 the Alpine Convention was signed in Salzburg by the Environment Ministers.

In the last twelve years the *Contracting Parties* (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia, Switzerland and the European Union) elaborated the Alpine Convention and eight Protocols. CIPRA-International participated at this work as a critic and constructive observer.

Till now the Convention on the Protection of the Alps remains the only multilateral treaty specifically devoted to the organisation of inter-regional co-operation in a mountain area. The Convention outlines the principles and urgent action fields in distinct environmental, economic and social features. It can therefore be considered the first and most detailed conception of sustainable development of a large mountain region (cf. Agenda 21, article 13 of the Rio Conference 1992).

#### *Contents and Structure of the Alpine Convention*

The authors of the 'Convention on the protection of the Alps' (Alpine Convention) highlight right at the beginning of the treaty the natural and cultural richness of the Alps, their importance for people living there or visiting the area, the need for reinforcement of transborder cooperation, the threats to the ecological function and the need for reconciliation of economic interests with ecological requirements:

With the Alpine Convention the Contracting Parties will pursue 'a comprehensive policy for the preservation and protection of the Alps' (Alpine Convention art. 2, par. 1, General Obligations). Therefore they will apply the principles of prevention, co-operation and 'polluter pays' and consider the interests of all the Alpine States, their Alpine regions and the European Economic Community. The use of resources has to be prudent and sustained. Transborder cooperation will be intensified and extended both in terms of the territory and the number of subjects covered.

In order to achieve this objective the Contracting Parties will take appropriate measures in *twelve priority areas* that are singled out in the Convention (Alpine Convention, art. 2, par. 2):

- a) population and culture
- b) regional planning and sustainable development
- c) prevention of air-pollution
- d) soil conservation
- e) water management

- f) conservation of nature and countryside
- g) mountain farming
- h) mountain forest
- i) tourism
- j) transport
- k) energy
- l) waste management

The measures for these twelve issues must be concretised in so-called *Protocols*. The Alpine Convention as a framework treaty just mentions the general objectives for each issue.

### *Organs of the Alpine Convention*

- The Conference of the Contracting Parties (art. 5, 6, 7), called *Alpine Conference*, is the most powerful organ of the Alpine Convention. It is composed by the Ministers of Environment and is held at regular intervals to discuss issues of common concern, exchange information, accept the Protocols, examine the implementation etc. So far six Alpine Conferences have been held.
- The Standing Committee (art. 8) consists of delegates of the Contracting Parties and works as an executive body. It elaborates in working groups draft Protocols and guidelines for the achievement of the purposes of the Convention. At the same time the Standing Committee has a supervisory function since it informs the Alpine Conference about the implementation of the Convention, its Protocols and the Conference's decisions. The Standing Committee meets regularly between the Alpine Conferences.
- The Permanent Secretariat (art. 9) would be the administrative board of the Alpine Convention. But the Ministers of Environment didn't yet establish a professional office, although the necessity of a permanent secretary is obvious to guarantee the continuation and implementation of an international treaty.

Up to now there are no effective *instruments to control and evaluate* the implementation of the Convention apart from the reports of the Contracting Parties addressed to the Alpine Conference.

The Alpine Convention entered into force on 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1995, after three States had expressed their consent to be bound by the Convention. Meanwhile all eight Alpine States and the European Union have *ratified* the Convention.

Till now, eight of twelve priority areas are concretised in Protocols. The Alpine Conference adopted the *following Protocols*:

- Protocol on Nature Protection and Countryside Conservation
- Protocol on Mountain Farming
- Protocol on Regional Planning and Sustainable Development
- Protocol on Mountain Forest
- Protocol on Tourism
- Protocol on Energy
- Protocol on Soil Conservation
- Protocol on Transport

CIPRA-International appealed to the States to ratify the first eight Protocols of the Alpine Convention as quickly as possible, at least by the beginning of the International Year of the Mountains 2002. In the last months and weeks Liechtenstein, Austria and Germany have ratified the Protocols of the Alpine Convention.<sup>1</sup>

*Dr. Andreas Weissen*  
*Präsident CIPRA-International*  
*Termweg 22*  
*CH – 3900 Brig*  
*a.weissen@cbone.ch*



*ANDREAS WEISSEN, born 1957, now lives in Brig in the heart of the Swiss Alps. He has a university degree in education and in social and economic history from the University of Berne and a postgraduate degree in journalism and communication research from the University of Fribourg. He works as head of the Alpine Programme of WWF Switzerland. Since 1995 Andreas Weissen has been president of the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) based in Schaan in the Principality of Liechtenstein.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Further information (German, French, Italien, Slovenian, English): <[www.cipra.org](http://www.cipra.org)> and <[www.alpenkonvention.org](http://www.alpenkonvention.org)>

# ZOBODAT - [www.zobodat.at](http://www.zobodat.at)

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

Zeitschrift/Journal: [Monografien Natur und Geisteswissenschaften](#)

Jahr/Year: 2004

Band/Volume: [MNG2](#)

Autor(en)/Author(s): Weissen Andreas

Artikel/Article: [A Convention for the Alps. Eine Konvention für die Alpen. 247-250](#)