



# International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps ISCAR

## Report 2007

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At the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the ISCAR partners (18.4.2007 in Engelberg, Switzerland), all partners agreed to extend the ISCAR convention, signed at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of ISCAR partners on 12.10 1999 in Lucerne, until 2010. Based on this agreement, ISCAR continued its activities following the objectives of the convention. 2007 Dr. Jean-Jacques Brun (CEAMGREF, Grenoble, France) took in hand the ISCAR-Presidency from Prof. Heinz Veit. All partners and members of ISCAR see: <http://www.iscar-alpineresearch.org>

### 1. ForumAlpinum 2007 and AlpWeek 2008

Due to time restrictions, the **ForumAlpinum** initially planned for September 2006 was postponed to April 18-21, 2007 and held at Engelberg (Switzerland). The ForumAlpinum 2007 on “Landscape Development in Mountain Regions” took up the main topics of the Swiss National Research Programme NRP 48 “Landscapes and Habitats of the Alps” (2001-2007) having in mind its reflection from an alp-wide perspective (<http://www.forumalpinum.org/>). Main aspects of landscape development were presented to the 250 participants in over 20 keynotes and deepened in over 15 workshops and projects fairs. The programme was completed by film presentations, excursions and an official evening on the top of the Titlis, the highest peak in reach of Engelberg. The Swiss Academies of Sciences, the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Federal Office for Environment provided financial support. The proceedings of the ForumAlpinum have been published in September 2007, and in December the Journal of Alpine Research published 5 articles based on presentations at the ForumAlpinum in a thematic issue (English/French):

Veit H., Scheurer T., Köck G. (eds.) 2007: Landscape Development in Mountain Regions. Proceedings of the ForumAlpinum 2007, 18.–21. April, Engelberg / Switzerland – International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps ISCAR. Vienna, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. Digital Edition. ISBN Online: 978-3-7001-3940-9; doi: 10.1553/forumalpinum

Various authors: „Paysages alpins en perspective / Perspectives of alpine landscapes“. Revue de Géographie Alpine / Journal of alpine research, tome 95 (4/2007), Edition Armand Colin

ISCAR, CIPRA, ALPARC and Alliance in the Alps continued in organising the second **AlpWeek** (after the first edition in Kranjska Gora in 2004), focusing on “Innovating [in] the Alps” and located at L`Argentière-La-Bessée, France, June 11-14, 2008. In 2007, the Club Arc Alpin (CAA) representing all national alpine clubs joined the partner institutions of AlpWeek. The organisation was taken in hand by the French partners with the support by a collaborator at L`Argentière-La-Bessée (Anne-Sophie Elléouet). For ISCAR, Jean-Jacques Brun and Philippe Bourdeau were engaged in the organising committee. By the end of 2007, the programme was close to finalisation.

## 2. Projects, initiatives

**The Ecological Continuum Project:** To promote the conservation of biodiversity in the Alps – one of 200 WWF-Ecoregions worldwide – the Consortium by WWF, ISCAR, CIPRA and the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) continued their cooperation focusing on ecological networks. Building upon the basic and conceptual work realised from 2002 to 2006 (see ISCAR annual reports), the Consortium submitted successfully a preliminary project for financial support to the Swiss MAVA Foundation for Nature. The pre-project contains an evaluation and assessment of existing methods (ISCAR-Office in cooperation with the Swiss Biodiversity Forum), a review of existing measures to implement ecological network (ALPARC), the elaboration of a communication strategy (WWF), the identification of important stakeholders (all partners) and the preparation of further projects (CIPRA). In 2007, the ISCAR office accomplished an expert consultation on existing methods (16 selected experts mainly from the ISCAR network) and organised a workshop (December 10-11 in Zurich, Switzerland) to discuss the findings of the consultation. The assessment report on existing methodologies will be released in 2008. In view of a future project, CIPRA presented a project idea on improving ecological connectivity in the Alps (ECONNECT) at the start up meeting of the INTERREG Alpine Space programme. All activities of the Consortium were coordinated with the new Platform “Ecological Network” of the Alpine Convention (see below).

**Research Agenda for the Multi-annual Working Programme 2005 – 2010 of the Alpine Conference:** The Research Agenda will serve as an instrument to promote interdisciplinary alpine research. At the end of 2006, the list of 22 topics of the research agenda has been presented to the Alpine Conference. Due to other priorities, the finalisation of the Research Agenda was not possible in 2007.

**Research in Alpine Protected Areas:** In 2006, the Steering Committee of the Network of Alpine Protected Areas (ALPARC) contacted ISCAR asking for support concerning research in alpine protected areas. At the 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting in Engelberg, ISCAR approved a commitment between ISCAR and ALPARC for a common working group on research in protected areas (ISCAR-P) with three main tasks until 2009: to launch a new journal (with the support of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the University of Innsbruck and Axel Borsdorf), to give scientific support in preparing the research symposium in the National Park Hohe Tauern in 2009, and to complete the data base of ALPARC on research projects. The Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention is involved by the Task Force Protected Areas. Related to the closer cooperation between ISCAR and ALPARC, Thomas Scheurer from ISCAR office was engaged by the National Parks Hohe Tauern (June 1) and Nockberge (August 28-29), ALPENCOMM (September 3), ALPARC (October 17-18) and MAB-Austria (November 29) to give insight into current alpine research or to give advice in project evaluation.

### **3. Alpine Convention: Meetings of the Standing Committee and SOIA**

As an official observer of the Alpine Convention (AC), Thomas Scheurer represented ISCAR in several meetings of bodies of the AC: at the 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee in Lanslebourg (F, 2.-4.4.2007) and Bolzano (I, 22.-24.10.2007) and at two meetings of the Platform "Ecological Network" in Munich (D, 28.-29.3.2007, see below) and in Zurich (CH, 11.12.2007). From a scientific point of view, the following activities of the Alpine Convention are of interest for ISCAR: The elaboration of the second status report on the Alps on water issues and the elaboration of an action plan climate. ISCAR kept in contact with the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention (in Innsbruck) as well as with the unit of SOIA (in Bolzano), but without a project oriented cooperation.

On March 28-29, 2007, the inaugural meeting of the Platform "Ecological Network" under the Alpine Convention took place in Munich. The Consortium of the Ecological Continuum Project is cooperating in this platform which is aiming synergies among public and private actions on ecological networks. The results of this meeting are published: Hedden-Dunkorst B, Kretschmar M, Kohler Y (ed) 2007: Establishing an Alpine Ecological Network. Inaugural meeting of the Platform "Ecological Network" under the Alpine Convention. BfN-Skripten 210, Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, Bonn

### **4. Further events, networking, public awareness**

Institutions: Members of ISCAR and its office were regularly in contact with alpine or mountain organisations and institutions as CIPRA, WWF, EUROMONTANA, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, the Mountain Research Initiative MRI (IGBP/IHDP), and the International Mountain Partnership (FAO).

Promotion: The ISCAR-website ([www.iscar-alpineresearch.org](http://www.iscar-alpineresearch.org)) with all available information was updated regularly. The current Alpine Events Calendar was sent to all members and guests of ISCAR on a monthly basis. ISCAR and some of its partners contributed financially to the international French/English Journal of Alpine Research (RGA) which published articles and notes from ISCAR activities (ForumAlpinum and Continuum Project).

Manifestations of partner organisations:

Managing Alpine Futures: This international Conference organised by the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Institute for International Mountain Research (IGF; Axel Borsdorf, Georg Grabherr) and the Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck and held on September 15-17, 2007 in Innsbruck was a big success, with more than 400 participants. <http://www.alpinefuture.com/index.php?page=veranstalter&lang=en>

100 years Institute of Alpine Geography Grenoble: During one week (4-8.6.2007), a couple of manifestations paid homage to the history of the institute and revealed a perspective towards the future (with contributions by Axel Borsdorf and Thomas Scheurer).

<http://iga.ujf-grenoble.fr/>

Which future for the alpine research in Switzerland?: This symposium organised by the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences in Lucerne on May 30, 2007 analysed the impact of NRP 48 „Landscape and habitats of the Alps“ on alpine research within humanities and social sciences. <http://www.sagw.ch/en/sagw.html>

## **5. Partners, Meetings of the Committee, Members, Office**

Partners: In France, CEMAGREF agreed that Jean-Jacques Brun is free to invest some of his time for the ISCAR presidency. In Italy, IMONT completed a reorganisation in summer 2007. In Switzerland, ISCAR office was integrated into the new “Platform Science and Policy” of the Swiss Academy of Science. In Germany and Slovenia, the Academies are still looking for opportunities to contribute financially to ISCAR.

Meetings: Under the presidency of Dr. Jean-Jacques Brun (Grenoble), the committee assembled for the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting on 18.4.2007 in Engelberg (Switzerland).

Changes in the Committee: In 2007, Dr. Jean-Jacques Brun (Grenoble, France) took in hand the presidency from Prof. Heinz Veit. Mutations among the members and guests: Susanne Grieder (Bern, Switzerland) retired and was followed by Dr. Luigi Lorenzetti, head of the “Laboratorio di Storia delle Alpi” in Mendriso (Switzerland).

The office in CH–Berne gave administrative and organisational support to main ISCAR activities (office manager Thomas Scheurer 20%, secretary Vera Kaufmann 20%) and seized opportunities for project co-ordination and co-operation.

Berne, April 25, 2008 / Jean-Jacques Brun, Thomas Scheurer