



## International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps ISCAR

### Report 2005 – 2006

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At the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of ISCAR partners (24.9.2004 in Kranjska Gora) all partners agreed to extend the ISCAR convention, signed on 12.10 1999 in CH–Lucerne, until 2006. The Bavarian Academy of Sciences attended as a guest. Based on this agreement, ISCAR continued its activities following the objectives of the convention. For 2005-2006, Prof. Heinz Veit (Berne, Switzerland) took in hand the ISCAR-Presidency from Prof. Ivan Kreft. All partners and members of ISCAR see: <http://www.alpinestudies.ch/iscar>

#### **1. Between AlpWeek 2004, ForumAlpinum2007 and AlpWeek 2008**

*Alpweek 2004 and 2008:* In 2006 have been published in English the proceedings of the AlpWeek 2004 in Kranjska gora (Slovenia) as an online-publication by the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna.

Brancelj A, Köck G, Muri G 2006: The Alps of the next generation. Proceedings of AlpWeek 2004, 20.-25. September, Kranjska gora, Slovenia. Vienna, Austrian Academy of Sciences Press 2006. Digital edition: <http://epub.oeaw.ac.at/alpweek2004>

The Journal of Alpine Research dedicated the issue number 2/93 in June 2005 to “The futures of the Alps” with 5 contributions from the AlpWeek in Kranjska gora.

The four AlpWeek partners ISCAR, CIPRA, ALPARC and Alliance in the Alps, all international and alpwide organisations, agreed in 2005 to organise commonly the next AlpWeek in 2008 in France, which will hold the Presidency of the Alpine Conference at this time. The international consortium assembled for meetings on 23.9.2005 (Salgesch/Brig) and 24.10.2006 (Geneva) to decide on the framework, while the French organizing committee met regularly to advance financial and organisational affairs. At the end of 2006 was decided, that Alpweek 2008 will take place on June 11-14 in Argentière-la-Béssée (Pays des Ecrins) in the Southern Alps and focus on “Innovation in/for the Alps”.

*ForumAlpinum 2007:* In 2005 ISCAR has been asked by the Swiss National Research Programme NRP 48 “Landscapes and Habitats of the Alps” to organise, following the rotation since 1994, a next ForumAlpinum in Switzerland. ISCAR agreed in April 2005 to a ForumAlpinum focusing on “Landscape Development in Mountain Regions”, which is also the main topic of NRP 48. Thereupon, the Swiss organising committee started its work. Financial support has been warranted by the Swiss Academies of Sciences SCNAT and SAHS, by the Federal Agency for Environment and the Swiss National Research Programme NRP 48. ISCAR dedicated all four Meetings during 2005 and 2006 (5.4.2005 in Berne, 15.11.2005 in Lugano, 16.3. 2006 and 1.9.2006 in Zurich) to the elaboration of the scientific programme of the ForumAlpinum, the last of them together with moderators of the Plenary Sessions. For organisational reasons, the ForumAlpinum planned for September 2006 in Engelberg was postponed to April, 18-21, 2007. The programme of the ForumAlpinum was published on the Web in November 2006: <http://www.forumalpinum.org/2007>

#### **2. Projects, initiatives**

*Biodiversity visions for the Alps:* To promote the conservation of biodiversity in the Alps – one of 200 WWF-Ecoregions worldwide – WWF, ISCAR, CIPRA and the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) continued their co-operation in designing ecological corridors throughout the Alps, linking the 23 priority conservation areas identified in the report published in 2004. The

main work has been done by WWF in organising an expert workshop in Buchs (CH, 19.-20.9.2005) and a full workshop documentation on CD. In parallel, ALPARC realised a study mandated by the Alpine Convention, on potential ecological networks linking nearby protected areas. Based on these two studies, a preliminary "Ecological Continuum Project" has been proposed to the MAVA-Foundation at the end of 2006, intending the implementation of measures to improve connectivity in and between priority conservation and protected areas. On December 11, 2006, the project has been presented to some members of the MAVA-Foundation board, who will take a decision in early 2007.

Promotion of interdisciplinary alpine research related to the Alpine Convention: ISCAR continued the co-operation with the secretariat of the Alpine Convention (A-Innsbruck and I-Bolzano) to promote alpine research in favour of the Alpine Convention by focusing on

- 1) the elaboration of a **Research Agenda for the Multi-annual Working Programme 2005 – 2010 of the Alpine Conference,**
- 2) a database on alpine research projects and scientific experts (CODALP) and
- 3) contributions to the SOIA-Report on the status of the Alps.

In 2005-2006 no time was left to develop activities concerning CODALP. The status report on the Alps was decided to be elaborated by national administrations and their experts. Nevertheless ISCAR mandated two experts (Felix Walter, Michael Schmidt) to review the draft of the status report on traffic issues in October 2006. The two reviews were sent to all delegations.

ISCAR concentrated its activities on the elaboration of a Research Agenda, reflecting the key issues of the Multi-annual Work Programme 2005 – 2010 of the Alpine Conference: Mobility, Society/Culture, Tourism and Nature/Landscape. In a first workshop with Swiss participants, organised by the Swiss Interacademic Commission for Alpine Studies (ICAS) and the Swiss Transdisciplinarity Network (td-net) and financed by the Swiss Academy of Science in June 2005, an appropriate methodology to achieve research topics has been developed and then implemented in a second workshop organised by ISCAR in November 2005, where more than 30 experts (ISCAR members, invited specialists and representatives of the Alpine Convention) identified 22 main research topics. Based on two consultations during 2006 – a first one by the participants of the Lugano-Workshop and a second one by scientists and concerned administrations – the Research Agenda is on the way to be verified and will be completed in 2007. A first public presentation of the Research Agenda has been given by Axel Borsdorf at the Conference of the Alpine Convention in Innsbruck (see below) and a first publication of the 22 topics appeared in the Journal of Alpine Research 94/4 (2006; pages 132-133). The final Agenda will be presented to the bodies of the Alpine Convention and to the alpine research scientific community.

Global change research in mountain regions: In early 2006 has been edited the GLOCHAMORE Research Strategy by the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI). Elements from this Strategy finally were taken up by the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework programme of the EU, which was in preparation in 2006. In view of the call for the 7<sup>th</sup> FP, MRI and ISCAR assembled scientists and European Mountain Biosphere Reserve at a Workshop on 3./3. May 2006 in Zürich (Switzerland) to develop global change topics shared by both, the scientific community and Mountain Biosphere Reserves. Finally this approach was not really successful, regarding that EU-projects will not focus field and case studies on Biosphere Reserves.

### **3. Alpine Convention: Meetings of the Standing Committee, Water Conference 2006 in Innsbruck**

As an official observer of the Alpine Convention (AC), representatives of ISCAR participated in several meetings of bodies of the AC: Heinz Veit represented ISCAR at the meeting of the Austrian Presidency with all observers (15.3.2005); Thomas Scheurer attended to the SOIA-

meeting for the status report in Bolzano (5./6.9.2005) and represented ISCAR at the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee in Galtür (A, 27.-29.9.2005), the 32<sup>nd</sup> meeting (4.-6.4.2006 In Bolzano), the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting (27.-29.9.2006 in Innsbruck) and the 34<sup>th</sup> Meeting (6.-7.11.2006 in Alpbach) and at the same place the Minister Conference on November 8, 2006. These meetings provided good opportunities to arrange project meetings with CIPRA, ALPARC and other partners.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee, ISCAR was invited by the Austrian Presidency to present a proposal on how to shape the **dialogue between the Alpine Convention and the scientific community**. Following this presentation, the dialogue has been stated in 2 ways: First, the Austrian Presidency participated at the elaboration of the Research Agenda and ISCAR reported regularly to the Standing Committee and finally to the Minister Conference 2006, on the progress of the Research Agenda. Second, ISCAR joined together with the University of Innsbruck, the preparation of the international conference "The Water Balance in the Alps", organised by the Austrian Presidency of the Alpine Convention on September 28, 2006, in Innsbruck.

Finally, the Alpine Conference mandated a Working Group including also observers and NGO to develop strategies and concepts for ecological networks. The "Ecological Continuum Project" by WWF, CIPRA ISCAR and ALPARC (see above) will be coordinated with the activities of this Working group.

#### **4. Events, networking, public awareness**

Workshops: ISCAR organised the Workshop "Research Agenda" in Berne (together with ICAS and td-net, 13.6.2005), and in Lugano (CH, 15./16.11.2005), and supported WWF in organising the workshop on "Ecological Corridors" in Buchs (CH, 19.-20.9.2005) and cooperated with MRI in organising the Workshop on global change research in Mountain Biosphere Reserves (3./4.5.2006 in Zurich).

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 and the International Mountain Partnership (FAO).

Communication: The ISCAR-website ([www.alpinestudies.ch/iscar](http://www.alpinestudies.ch/iscar)) with all available information was updated regularly. The current Alpine Events Calendar was sent monthly to all members and guests of ISCAR. Further, ISCAR and some of its partners used the French/English *Journal of Alpine Research* to publish information on ongoing activities, conferences and research (Mountain Research in Austria, Research Agenda, ForumAlpinum). A portrait of ISCAR was published in the journal *Mountain Research and Development (MRD)*, Vol. 26, Nr. 4 (pages 372-373). The same portrait has been published also on the Webpage of ISCAR.

GLOCHAMORE research strategy: In October 2005, the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) and MAB-UNESCO organised an Open Science Conference in Perth (Scotland) to promote research on Global Change in mountain regions. The research strategy, which has been accomplished at the end of 2005, was the result of a 2-year project within the 6<sup>th</sup> EU-Framework-Programme. Several ISCAR-Members were present in Perth. ISCAR started to cooperate with MRI by elaborating the Research Agenda for MAP 2005-2010 (see point 1.) in order to implement parts of the GLOCHAMORE research strategy in the Alps.

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

Meetings 2005-2006: The chair Prof. Heinz Veit (Berne) assembled the committee for 4 meetings: for the 12<sup>th</sup> meeting on 5.4.2005 in Berne, the 13<sup>th</sup> meeting on 15.11.2005 in Lugano, and for both, the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 16.3.2006 and the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting on 1.9.2006, in

Zurich. These meetings were mainly dedicated to the preparation of the ForumAlpinum 2006 and to the elaboration of the research agenda.

Changes in the Committee: In 2005, Prof. Heinz Veit joined the Committee as President. Prof. Iwar Werlen (CH) retired and was followed by Ms. Susanne Grieder from the Swiss Alpine Museum in Berne. The Mountain Institute (Rome) delegated two new Italian members, Dr. Loredana Alfaré and Dr. Massimo Pecci, who followed Prof. Paolo Cerretelli and Dr. Flavio Ruffini.

Partners: In France, CEMAGREF and the University Joseph Fourier took the ISCAR-partnership from the University Pole Grenoble at the beginning of 2005. Both French partners confirmed in November 2006 that Dr. Jean-Jacques Brun will take the French presidency of ISCAR for 2007 and 2008. After the AlpWeek 2004, the Slovenian Academy of Sciences established an internal expert group for alpine research. However the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts announced at the end of 2006, that no funds will be available from 2007 for financial contribution to ISCAR, and asked to remain in ISCAR with the status of an observer, as actually the Bavarian Academy of Sciences.

Cooperation with the Network of Alpine Protected Areas (ALPARC): Since ALPARC was looking for scientific support in its activities, ISCAR proposed ALPARC to establish a working group for research in protected areas following a decision at the meeting on 1.9.2006. ALPARC appreciated such a solution and the installation of this working group will follow in 2007 after some modalities have been arranged. Axel Borsdorf took up this cooperation and initiated to establish an office at the Institute for International Mountain Research in Innsbruck, mainly focused on the edition of a new journal on protected area research and for giving support to the working group of ISCAR. Arrangements will be worked out in 2007.

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 (Switzerland) February 22, 2007 / Heinz Veit, Thomas Scheurer