



International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps ISCAR

Annual Report 2008

Based on the convention signed by all ISCAR partners* on 12.10 1999 in Lucerne (Switzerland), ISCAR continued its activities following the objectives of the convention under the presidency of Dr. Jean-Jacques Brun (CEMAGREF, Grenoble, France).

*All partners and members of ISCAR see: <http://www.iscar-alpineresearch.org>

1. AlpWeek 2008, ForumAlpinum 2010

350 participants attended to the second **AlpWeek** (after the first edition in Kranjska Gora in 2004) organised by ISCAR, CIPRA, ALPARC, Alliance in the Alps and, for the first time, the Club Arc Alpin (CAA) on June 11-14, 2008 in L'Argentière-La-Bessée, France. The management was taken in hand by CIPRA France, ISCAR (Jean-Jacques Brun and Philippe Bourdeau) and ALPARC, with the support by the Alliance-in-the-Alps-community of L'Argentière-La-Bessée (Joël Giraud, major) supported by a collaborator (Anne-Sophie Elléouet). AlpWeek 2008 was a perfect meeting point while the presentations and discussions were of quite different quality. ISCAR will try to publish English abstracts of all presentations and moderations.

The Bavarian State Ministry for Environment and Health (Dr. Peter Eggensberger) took the initiative to look for public funds for organising the **ForumAlpinum 2010** in Bavaria. The Bavarian Academy of Sciences (Secretary general Eva Regenscheidt) assured support with human resources and localities. *Decision by Bavarian Minister will follow soon.*

2. Projects, initiatives

The Ecological Continuum Project: The Continuum Project, a cooperation of the consortium WWF, ISCAR, CIPRA and the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC), started in 2007 and ended by the end of 2008. This project was financed by the Swiss MAVA-Foundation for Nature Protection and focusing on basic information for planning and implementing ecological networks in the Alps. ISCAR in cooperation with the Swiss Biodiversity Forum accomplished a report on the "Evaluation of approaches for designing and implementing ecological networks in the Alps". Further results are: Strategic guidelines for pilot regions, a catalogue of measures, starting stakeholder networks in 4 pilot regions and instruments for information (web page, newsletter, brochure, glossary, etc.). By the end of 2008, a proposal for a continuation of the Continuum Project was submitted to the MAVA Foundation. Detailed information: <http://www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/the-ecological-continuum-project>

In 2007 the Continuum Project initiated the Alpine Space project ECONNECT which was accepted finally by Interreg IVB and started in September 2008 (until 2011) with 16 Partners and among them a range of scientific partners from Austria and France. The

ISCAR-office is an observer in ECONNECT. 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. By the end of 2008, rationale, goals and activities were described for selected priority topics. A consultation concerning the Research Agenda among the bodies of the Alpine Convention is planned in early 2009. The Research Agenda should be accomplished for the Minister Conference in March 2009.

Research in Alpine Protected Areas: The cooperation between the Steering Committee of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) and ISCAR which started in 2006 continued. The first 2 meetings of the committee ISCAR-P (Protected Areas) were held in Innsbruck (21.1.2008) and in L`Argentière-La-Bessée (13.6.2008). Three main activities were established during 2008: The launching of the new scientific journal *eco.mont* with a first issue foreseen in spring 2009 (editorial office at the IGF in Innsbruck; Axel Borsdorf, Valerie Braun, Brigitte Scott; ISCAR-P as editorial board), the preparation of the 4th Symposium on Research in Protected Areas in Kaprun (A, 17.-19.9.2009; ISCAR-P as scientific board) and the up-date of the project and expert database Mountain Pool (SCNAT and ALPARC) concerning protected area research by IGF.

3. Alpine Convention: Meetings, contributions of ISCAR

As an official observer of the Alpine Convention (AC), Thomas Scheurer represented ISCAR in several meetings of the bodies of the AC: at the 37th and 38th meeting of the Standing Committee in Monaco (MC, 26.-28.3.2008) and Innsbruck (A, 19.-21.11.2008) and at the 2nd meeting of the Platform “Ecological Network” in Chambéry (F, 16.3.2007).

From a scientific point of view, the following activities of the Alpine Convention are of interest for ISCAR:

- a) Elaboration of the second status report on the Alps on water issues. The report advanced well and a preliminary version was presented and discussed at the Water Conference in Munich (30.-31.10.2008). Leo Füreder was invited to present considerations of ISCAR to the preliminary report. The final report will be published in 2009.
- b) Elaboration of an action plan climate. A first draft of the action plan was discussed in Paris (F, 6.2.2008), ISCAR was engaged with Thomas Scheurer. After this meeting work didn't proceed sufficiently, and at the 37th meeting of the Permanent Committee of AC the action plan was still in a very rough state.
- c) SOIA: ISCAR office kept in contact with SOIA (meeting on 9.5.2008 with Regula Imhof) regarding a cooperation concerning SOIA databases and the implementation of the Research Agenda.

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). Axel Borsdorf represented ISCAR at a coordination meeting for mountain research activities organised by the mountain Partnership in Rome (4.12.2008). ISCAR office gave support to the initiative “Science for the Carpathians (S4C)” driven by the Mountain Research Initiative (MRI-Europe; Astrid Björnsen). IGF and MRI started a closer cooperation to bring forward MRI-Europe.

Promotion: On the occasion of AlpWeek, Jean-Jacques Brun (CEMAGREF) produced a flyer presenting ISCAR. The ISCAR-website (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 periodically. ISCAR and some of its partners contributed financially to the international French/English Journal of Alpine Research (RGA).

Manifestations of partner organisations:

Swiss Mountain Research 2008: This symposium organised by the Swiss Interacademic Commission for Alpine Studies in cooperation with other research networks as MRI, GMBA or CDE focussed with presentations and workshops on current research and mountain related policies. <http://brig08.alpinestudies.ch/d/index.php>

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

Partners: 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 (CEMAGREF), the committee assembled for the 17th meeting on 13.6.2008 in L`Argentière-La-Bessée (France) and on 8./9.12.2008 in Berne (Switzerland).

Changes in the Committee: The Bavarian Academy of Sciences nominated Prof. Hans-Peter Bunge (University of Munich, Institute of Geophysics), succeeding Prof. Herm.

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 coordination and cooperation.

Berne, 8. December 2008 / Jean-Jacques Brun, Thomas Scheurer