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CIPRA media release on youth participation

Young voices, new perspectives for the Alps

How do things stand with youth participation in the Alps? Where is action needed? A CIPRA report summarises the situation in the Alpine countries and shows the way forward. CIPRA has already taken a first step by creating a youth advisory council.

“To understand the needs of people living in the Alps, we also need to consider the views of young people” says Sara Cattani, 24, summing up the aims of CIPRA (the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps) in its commitment to youth participation. Claire Simon, Executive Director of CIPRA International, states: “At the heart of sustainable development is the idea that future generations will have the same opportunities that we have now.” These generations must therefore be fully included in decision-making processes.

What is the situation in the Alps in this regard? What are the relevant legal structures in the various countries? What are the shortcomings? A report by CIPRA, “Youth Participation in the Alps”, provides answers and also contributes to the collaboration of organisations that are active in youth participation and environmental education.

Municipalities: a major role to play

The analysis shows that many of the around two million young people in the Alps would like to do get involved in shaping their environments. They know what they need and they are ready to work towards it. In order to exploit this potential, CIPRA is demanding that municipalities create structures for youth participation that enable young people to make a contribution to public life. Such structures should not just aim at young people, as has previously been the case, but should also target young adults and include the international level.

CIPRA itself has now established a youth advisory council. Seven young people from different Alpine countries will advise CIPRA committees on strategic issues. Italian Sara Cattani from Turin is one of them. In dialogue with the executive committee, delegates, national representatives, the office of CIPRA International as well as other young people, she is developing future perspectives for living in the Alps – for her life and for her environment. Andrea Müller, 24, from Schüpflheim in Switzerland, declares: “I have a strong personal interest in nature and the Alps.” Participating in the CIPRA youth advisory



council will permit her to contribute to a healthy relationship between nature and people in the Alps.

Young people get fit

The members of the youth advisory council are tackling themes that they themselves regard as important. First on their agenda is mobility: the council members are working with the seven national CIPRA offices in the Alpine countries and other young people, with the results of the “Youth Alpine Dialogue” recorded in video interviews with their peers, with representatives of civil society, and with politicians.

The Youth Alpine Dialogue and the “Youth Participation in the Alps” report were made possible thanks to the financial support of the European “Youth in Action” programme.

This Press Release and print-quality press photos are available at www.cipra.org/en/press/press-releases.

The brochure “Youth Participation in the Alps” can be downloaded from www.cipra.org/en/young-people-in-the-alps/YouthBrochure.pdf

Further information at www.cipra.org/youth.

For all enquiries please contact:

Nicoletta Piersantelli, Project Manager Youth, CIPRA International, +423 237 53 10; nicoletta.piersantelli@cipra.org.

Katharina Conradin, executive committee CIPRA International / CIPRA Switzerland, +41 31 372 20 00 or +41 79 660 38 66; katharina.conradin@mountainwilderness.ch

For the Youth Advisory Council:

Isabella Hilber (A), Media Spokesperson, +43 67 644 360 37; isabella.hilber@chello.at
Cathérine Frick (LI), +41 79 419 89 05; catherine.frick@gmail.com

CIPRA, a diverse and versatile organisation

CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, is a non-governmental umbrella organisation with national representatives in all the Alpine countries, representing more than 100 associations and organisations from seven Alpine states. CIPRA works towards achieving sustainable development in the Alps; it also strives to preserve the natural and cultural heritage, maintain regional diversity, and bring about solutions to cross-border problems in the Alpine region.

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