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Press Release for CIPRA's 2012 Annual Report

Millions of Steps for the Alps

CIPRA's networking experience beyond all linguistic, cultural, geographic and political borders has been the key to success on many occasions already. In its latest Annual Report, CIPRA focuses on people who have been working for sustainable development in the Alps since its foundation in 1952. And for the future: CIPRA International has a new Director, namely Claire Simon.

Before the war, Wolfgang Burhenne, who was born in 1924 and grew up in Garmisch, went shopping in Innsbruck – and climbing in Switzerland. Then things changed. The borders were there again – in the mountains and in people's heads. That was when CIPRA, the International Convention for the Protection of the Alps, was born. Since then, CIPRA representatives like Wolfgang Burhenne have come a long way – as they did quite literally in 2012 on CIPRA's Alpine Power anniversary trek. "Millions of Steps for the Alps", the latest CIPRA annual report, is about people like him, people who are role models in the fight for sustainable development.

The old hands like Wolfgang Burhenne now have their counterparts in young people like Luzia Felder and Moritz Schwarz. At AlpWeek, which was held in Valposchiavo, Switzerland in September 2012, they and others offered a dynamic programme of film, theatre sketches and political work in support of their right to a voice – and that voice was heard, even by some of the ministers of the environment holding their Alpine Conference at the same time. CIPRA is determined to further develop cooperation with the next generation. And for its part, CIPRA had its perseverance rewarded when the ministers of the environment agreed to put reduced energy consumption and improved energy efficiency on the agenda for the newly established Energy platform within the Alpine Convention.

From observer to actor

The transalpine trek by the name of Alpine Power set a number of milestones. Across the full breadth of the Alps, from the Austro-Slovene border at Paulitschsattel to Abries in France, the walk forged bonds between people across various geographical and cultural borders. Those who stayed at home were able to share in the walkers' experiences on Facebook.



Looking across borders and learning from one another – that was again a CIPRA recipe for success in 2012. The French village of Saint-Jean-d’Arvey opened a new community centre built with local timber as an energy-efficient solution on the model of Vorarlberg – as seen on a CIPRA study tour. A video has been produced to motivate local officials on both sides of the border to implement targeted measures in support of ecological networks for fauna and flora. And a translator and interpreter who has been working for CIPRA for many years relates how he has become imbued with CIPRA’s ideas. That makes him their best ambassador.

Change at the top

At the beginning April 2013, Claire Simon took over as Director of CIPRA International. As a long-serving member of the team, she knows the Alps, the organisation and its values from top to bottom. Her student days in Annecy had a strong focus on the Alps. After her Master’s in Rural and Integrated Spatial Planning and Regional Development, she spent two years working as Director of CIPRA France. In 2006 she moved to CIPRA International as Deputy Director and has made a significant contribution at a strategic and organisational level. Claire Simon is 35 and has dual French and German citizenship. She succeeds Bruno Stephan Walder, who left CIPRA at the end of March 2013.

The Annual Report is available for download at <http://www.cipra.org/annual-reports>

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

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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. www.cipra.org