

CONCLUSIONS

As the Water Conference experience reaches its end it is a pleasure to thank all those who made it possible, namely the Authorities that graciously hosted the conference and workshops, for their active collaboration in the success of the event.

A special thanks goes to all the speakers for their excellent presentations, and to all of those who attended the event for their active participation in the works of the conference.

The two-days Conference, as well as the three preparatory workshops that preceded it, gave us the chance to tackle the issue of “Water in the Alps” from different points of view, covering several aspects of great interest and relevance for those who live in this area.

First, with regards to hydro-geological risk, it was possible to examine the various planning tools available and the perspectives, which differ according to the different countries of the Alps, to actually implement the Flood Directive 2007/60/EC. In this respect, it was possible to find out that the implementation of this Directive and the deadlines set by the Water Framework Directive (WFD), provide the opportunity to change the past approach to flood protection and prevention, allowing for a better maintenance of rivers or, at least, the respect of the principle of non-deterioration. Great importance was also given to the role played by mountain forests in the mitigation of natural hazards induced by climate change.

It was then possible to appreciate the great work done in each Country for the drafting of the RIVER BASIN MANAGEMENT PLANS under the WFD, putting the important results already achieved concerning the non-deterioration (of the quality status of) rivers to good use. However, much remains to be done over the coming years for the practical implementation of the plans. The move from planning to implementation is a challenge that requires the combined efforts of many with, daring choices and actions

to be taken. In this sense, it was found that the Alpine Convention (and the alpine area in general?), may play a primary role, promoting a continuous dialogue with local and national Authorities and, where appropriate, with counterparts at the European level, representing the issues of those who live in the Alps and, day by day, are confronted with the issues pertaining to this wonderful and complex territory.

The preparatory workshops, beyond their unquestionable scientific contribution, have revealed the wish of the inhabitants of the Alps for a more direct impact on the future of the territory in which they live, and their desire to contribute more actively to the works of the Alpine Convention.

The will of local communities to contribute actively revealed especially on the topic of PRODUCING ENERGY FROM WATER. The inhabitants of the Alps, in many occasions, made their knowledge of the area available to help the institutions to establish, for example, whether new facilities can be built in a certain location or not. Locals also made their voice heard on to how to efficiently distribute the considerable economic benefits that this sector will generate, in order to compensate the impacts generated by the use of water resources.

With reference to the latter, countries will need to share experiences and information in order to avoid dangerous market distortions. To find a satisfying agreement with the inhabitants of the Alps on economic issues, without compromising the environmental protection, seems to be the main challenge in this area.

Many expect the Alpine Convention, that has already established itself as an important forum for discussion, comparison and decision-making in the region, to provide a material contribution on these topics by means of its "Water Platform" which has already proven an effective negotiating tool.

Once again, we wish to praise the work of all those who have contributed to the results of this Platform so far. Firstly the experts who have inspired its foundation and works such as Co-Presidents, Mr. Pfaundler and Mr. Schwaiger which we wish to thank for their excellent work, in hope that

what has been done over the last two years will serve as an incentive to carry on, if possible, with even more enthusiasm.

THANK YOU