

Joint declaration of protected area researchers, the Working Group Protected Area Research of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) and the International Scientific Committee of Research in the Alps (ISCAR) at the 4th Symposium for Research in Protected Areas, hosted by Hohe Tauern National Park in Kaprun, Austria, from 17-19 September 2009, for the attention of the directors of alpine protected areas and the relevant authorities across the countries of the Alps:

Long-term research and study of the species are tasks of alpine protected areas

In view of the fact that the protected areas within the Alpine Space will need an adequate scientific basis

- to protect the natural environment and its dynamics, biodiversity and cultural heritage; as well as
- to adapt to changes caused by global and climate change,

the researchers agree on the following requirements for protected areas:

1. For the long-term development of the parks and as an indispensable basis for adaptation measures to global and climate change, all protected areas within the Alpine Space need data that provides information about development trends in important environmental fields.

Measures: monitoring programmes and transdisciplinary long-term studies are a precondition for fulfilling these tasks. Monitoring and long-term research are not primary tasks of the higher education and research establishments and must in future be financed via the protected areas. Monitoring and long-term research in protected areas can be carried out more efficiently and more cost-effectively through national and international cooperation. In addition, internationally coordinated monitoring programmes allow scientists to differentiate between large-scale and local impacts.

2. The preservation of biodiversity and its development – one of the key objectives of protected areas – requires a comprehensive inventory and on-site monitoring. Protected areas must know what they are protecting and how adequate that protection is.

Measures: for protected areas to fulfil this task, they need experts with specific knowledge of species and experience in field research. Protected areas cannot supply the necessary experts themselves, therefore the relevant countries must provide targeted support of systematics and field work in research establishments and natural science museums, not least by creating new posts. Cooperation in protected areas allows experts to link up across the Alpine Space and to make their expertise available for all protected areas.

3. Many species need habitats beyond the boundaries of the protected areas and contact with outside populations. In future, better ecological networking is needed with neighbouring areas and between protected areas.

Measures: to ensure and improve ecological networking, close cooperation of the protected areas with the relevant regional and federal authorities is indispensable, e.g. for spatial planning, agriculture & forestry, hunting & fisheries, environment or transport.

Kaprun, Austria, 18 September 2009