

News from ALPARC CENTR'ALPS – Strengthening cooperation between protected areas in the Alps – new network office in *Immenstadt im Allgäu* (DE), and a workshop

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The protection and conservation of biodiversity are two of the great challenges of our time, figuring among the responsibilities of protected areas such as national parks, nature reserves or one of the manifold other protection types. Depending on the protected area's country and protection category, there are different requirements and different management approaches. The spectrum of activities ranges from information campaigns to determining and regulating which outdoor pursuits are allowed or not, from environmental education offers to research projects, from species monitoring to visitor guidance measures.

The goals of ALPARC (the network of Alpine protected areas; one of the initiators of this journal) and its new regional platform ALPARC CENTR'ALPS include making the diversity of their roles more visible, and ensuring the transferability of approaches and experiences of individual protected areas to others.

In order to discuss possible areas of future cooperation and the concrete implementation of projects, a workshop took place in Immenstadt (Germany), which was organized by ALPARC CENTR'ALPS together with the Nagelfluhkette Nature Park. Taking part in the workshop were long-standing active ALPARC members from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, as well as representatives of protected areas that had not so far been active in the network. Active participation and cooperation by no means go without saying. An important message from ALPARC's President Peter Oggier, therefore, was: *“All of you are the network, and it is your contributions that make our joint network active and successful,”* as he told participants right at the start of the workshop.

Important future topics for cooperation were identified, including: how best to integrate different stakeholder groups into the work of the protected areas; how digital visitor guidance succeeds, or how the results of management measures can be gauged and presented in an appealing way to potential new partners as well as to the general public. With regards to the important task of species monitoring, it was agreed that existing data should be collated on a supra-regional basis. The participants also agreed that the results of existing projects should be highlighted and disseminated much more widely, and should be made available for use by projects in other protected areas.



A present from Oberösterreichische Kalkalpen National Park for the new contact point in Immenstadt: a 3D relief map showing ecological connectivity in the Alps and within EUSALP's perimeter. Ecological connectivity is an index including indicators like transport infrastructure, population density and protection status. This illustrative tool was much appreciated by the ALPARC CENTR'ALPS team. From left: Volkhard Maier (Director of Oberösterreichische Kalkalpen National Park), Rolf Eberhardt (Nagelfluhkette Nature Park), Peter Oggier (President), Guido Plassmann (Director), Sabine Weizenegger (Network-Coordination).

Background information about ALPARC and ALPARC CENTR'ALPS

ALPARC

ALPARC, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, was founded in 1995 to support the implementation of the Alpine Convention, in particular the nature protection and landscape conservation Protocol. Since 2013, ALPARC has been a non-profit organization (*association loi de 1901* in French), whose activities cover a large geographical area, from the French to the Slovenian Alps.

The main objective of ALPARC is to promote the exchange of expertise, techniques and methods between the managers of all the major protected areas in the Alps, such as national parks, regional nature parks, nature reserves, biosphere reserves, UNESCO World Heritage sites, geological reserves, and other areas with special

protection status. This exchange enables protected areas to participate in projects that they would not be able to implement on their own at local level. Through international cooperation, ALPARC acts as a mediator between institutions, local actors and Alpine communities in the implementation of the Alpine Convention. The network has three main areas of activity:

- biodiversity and ecological connectivity;
- regional development and quality of life;
- education for sustainable development in the Alps.

ALPARC achieves its goals through:

- organizing thematic events and workshops;
- disseminating information on common issues, including through publications;
- cooperation with other international bodies, organizations and networks;
- developing and coordinating international (in particular European) projects on behalf of, and in conjunction with, alpine protected areas;
- finding partners for projects, providing expertise on various topics, data exchange, map production and linguistic support.

ALPARC CENTR'ALPS – ALPARC's regional platform

ALPARC CENTR'ALPS is a regional platform of ALPARC, to which it is closely linked, and under German law has the status of a non-profit organization (*gemeinnütziger Verein* in German). As part of the international network, ALPARC CENTR'ALPS pursues the same goals and areas of work as ALPARC.

The decentralized structure of the regional platform makes it possible to adapt activities to local needs, guarantee implementation on the ground, promote local initiatives, and enable greater proximity to those responsible for protected areas. The platform offers smaller protected areas the possibility of exchanging information within the ALPARC network via shorter routes and without language barriers, and of implementing joint projects, primarily for the protection of biodiversity.

The ALPARC CENTR'ALPS working area covers the German-speaking central Alpine region, in particular the eastern parts of Switzerland, Liechtenstein, the Bavarian Alpine region, the Austrian provinces of Vorarlberg, Tyrol, Salzburg and Upper Austria, and South Tyrol (Italy).

Further information and ALPARC CENTR'ALPS Team

Further information

ALPARC: <https://www.alparc.org>

ALPARC CENTR'ALPS: <https://www.alparc.org/de/alparc-centr-alps>

Ecological connectivity in the Alps, JECAMI project: <https://www.jecami.eu/>

Projekt Youth at the Top: <https://www.youth-at-the-top.org/de/>

ALPARC CENTR'ALPS Team

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Peter Oggier, Director Pfyng-Finges Nature Park (CH) and president of ALPARC and ALPARC CENTR'ALPS (FR, DE).

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