

Summit Meeting

L'EAU EN MONTAGNE

3rd International Congress of Integrated Management in High Watersheds

MEGEVE (FRANCE) - 22, 23, 24 SEPTEMBER 2010

Water resource conservation is crucial for the future of mountain regions. Given the services water provides, it is of central concern for spatial planning and the development of mountain areas: meeting basic human needs, economic and tourism development, environmental conservation, energy, or management of natural hazards... In order to face the impacts of climate change and increased demand on water resources, new, modern methods of water governance and water management in mountains need to be developed.

Both a resource and a crucial element for the natural environment, water is key feature in mountain regions. Integrated water management is important for sustainable development in mountains. Thus in 2002, during UNESCO's international year of the mountains, the first international congress "L'Eau en Montagne ¹" was organised in Megève by S.E.A. and the S.E.D. of Haute-Savoie in order to start discussions on this topic. The second conference, which took place in 2006 with further discussions and workshops, moved the analysis of the topic forward. It also led to the presentation of concrete actions to implement integrated management in 33 countries of the world and in the pilot site "Pays de Savoie – Annecy – Mont-Blanc – Léman", which was created in 2002 and has been awarded a UNESCO label.

In order to continue this process, it is important to coordinate the actions of the key players and to engage a collective mobilization. On 22, 23 and 24 September 2010, Megève will host the Summit Meeting "L'Eau en Montagne" as part of the 3rd International Congress "L'Eau en Montagne" in order to launch a **new governance strategy for the management of water in mountain areas that are facing climate change**. Four themes are proposed to facilitate discussion of the central topic:

- **"Practical experiences of integrated water management"** from the outcome of the work performed by the Pilot Site « **Pays de Savoie – Annecy – Mont-Blanc – Léman** » since 2006. Workshops of locally-elected representatives, scientists and water managers will be held to compare different points of view and the results of activities performed in different mountain regions on topics concerning risk management, wetlands, lake environments and artificial snow.
- **« Current European co-operation »**, in particular the Mid-Term event of the **Alp-Water-Scarce** project. The 17 project partners from 5 different alpine countries will present the first results of the project's activities in selected Pilot Sites. The project's main aim is the creation of an early warning system against potential water scarcity in the Alps. Additionally, workshops concerning the **Alp'Eau** project will be organized. The main aim of this project is to strengthen and assure the protective role of the forest in the sustainable conservation of water resources. Furthermore the Alpine Space project "**Silmas**" will be represented within

¹ Water in Mountains

this session of the conference. The objectives of Silmas are to implement tools for sustainable management of alpine lakes.

- « **Discussion of perspectives of AEM², ANEM³ and the Alpine Convention on the role of mountain regions in the face of climate change** ». In the context where urgent climate action is needed, water, is a determining factor. Can the Alps be considered as a pilot area for water governance? In fact, the European Union would look favourably on any action to improve the coherence of its sectoral policies across the Alpine arc. In this sense, the scope of the AEM¹ is to improve the Water Platform of the Alpine Convention, gathering different opinions and viewpoints from the Alpine Space project **SHARE** co-ordinated by the ARPA Valle d'Aosta.
- « **Integrating adaptation strategies towards climate change within the Water Framework Directive (WFD)** ». After the conferences in Megève 2006, Rome, Sibiu and Stockholm, the « **EURO-RIOB** » group (European Network of Basin Organizations) which is responsible for the implementation of the WFD will once again hold its 2010 General Assembly in Megève.

All this work will be more important than the next World Water Congress will take place in Marseille in March 2011 and the voices of the mountains will be heard!

Taking the opportunity of the year 2010 which is officially dedicated to French-Russian relations, delegates from the city of **Irkoutsk** will also participate in the Megève conference. Since 2001 various co-operation activities have been implemented within the frame of this partnership with the Local Government of Haute Savoie. The Summit Meeting "L'Eau en Montagne" will therefore offer the opportunity to foster this partnership and to present the current activities of the Institute of Limnology of the Baikal Lake, which is the biggest reservoir of freshwater on Earth.

As well as these four sessions, different events will be organized for students from the Mont-Blanc area and for the general public who will have the opportunity to take part in the workshops, panel discussions, projections and exhibitions around the topic of water.

Under the patronage of the Ministry for Ecology, Energy, Sustainable development and the Sea, the Summit Meeting "L'Eau en Montagne" will also benefit from financial support from the European Union (Alpine Space Program), the Rhône Méditerranée and Corse Agency, the Rhône-Alpes regional assembly and the Local Government of Haute-Savoie.

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² European Association of mountain elected representatives

³ National Association of mountain elected representatives