

Swift implementation of the Alpine Convention targeted

Alpine countries meet in Bad Reichenhall, Bavaria

The member states of the Alpine Convention will meet on 29 September in the Bavarian town of Reichenhall for three-day talks. The focus of the Conference is the implementation of the Alpine Convention and its protocols, with the aim of ensuring sustainable development in Europe's most important mountain region. Forming the basis of the discussion is the ten point programme on the swift implementation of the Alpine Convention, developed by Germany in its capacity as Chair of the Alpine Convention for 2003 and 2004.

Key topics of the talks are transport, ecological tourism, nature conservation and protection and precautionary action against natural hazards. In light of the consequences of recent extreme weather conditions in the Alps, this last point is especially important.

The Conference will also deal with the full workability of the Alpine Convention permanent secretariat, based in Innsbruck with a subsidiary office in Bozen, Italy. The participating countries will also discuss the remaining ratification of protocols by other contracting parties and by the European Union.

The Alpine Convention is the world's first internationally binding convention on the protection of a mountain region. The framework convention was signed in 1991 and entered into force in 1995. All eight of the Alpine countries (Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, France, Monaco, Italy and Slovenia) are parties to the