

Workshop

9 and 10 November 2017

Villach, Austria

Alpine Town of the Year

“Alpine Towns as pioneers for Green Economy”

Workshop for the preparation of the Action Programme for a Green Economy in the Alpine region

WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION



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Abstract

On 9 and 10 November 2017, with support of the German Environment Agency and the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention the workshop "Alpine Cities as pioneers of a Green Economy" in Villach (Austria) took place. As early as October 2015, representatives of Alpine towns and the business community received input on the Sixth Report on the State of the Alps of the Alpine Convention within the framework of a workshop in the Alpine town of Trento. This cooperation went now one step further in the direction of action. The following questions guided the workshop:

- How can Alpine towns and cities be an attractive "green" business location that facilitates innovation and keeps traditions alive?
- How can Alpine towns in the fields of agriculture and tourism support sustainability?
- How can Alpine towns and cities support Green Economy in the areas of mobility, transport & smart cities?

The workshop was held in German, Italian, French and Slovenian language and led to following conclusions.

Alpine towns can contribute to foster a Green Economy in the Alps:

Ambitious and “pioneering” decisions by the Alpine towns. Alpine towns should be good examples in the decisions they take regarding the way they are managed and the services they offer to the population. As far as possible, when taking decisions in their field of competences, they should choose options in line with Green Economy targets.

Possible measures:

- Deciding in favour of sustainable mobility means by reactivating, modernising, developing or creating attractive public transport infrastructures and services;
- Banning chemical substances from public parks and gardens or installing self-dimming street lights to save energy.
- Choosing to limit land reserves for new constructions and to oblige or encourage builders to renovate and increase density, in order to preserve intilled land for nature and agriculture.

Alpine towns should be smart cities and “living laboratories”. By adopting ambitious and visionary solutions, the Alpine towns offer inhabitants positive benefits and attract companies to settle. Beyond decisions in their day-to-day management, Alpine towns can engage and foster pilot projects, together with research institutions, for example, aiming at developing new services and approaches. Not only should municipalities implement their own projects, they should also be open to any positive contribution from inhabitants or companies, contributing to the development of a Green Economy.

Possible measures:

- Offer specific room, means and services, to help Green Economy project proposals emerge, start, grow and multiply.
- Pilot projects to improve the use of artificial intelligence to use resources in a more efficient way, support sustainable mobility, etc.
- Pilot projects to improve waste reduction and management.

Search and strengthen cooperation with companies. It is of major importance for Alpine towns to search and strengthen cooperation with various types of companies to urge them to develop services and products and adopt management and production strategies in line with a Green Economy transformation.

Possible measures:

- Cooperation with public transport companies to promote sustainable transport,
- Cooperation with local companies owning large buildings, to develop renewable energies or roof-top gardening on the roofs
- Working with housing and real estate companies to accelerate energy-efficient renovation of buildings by.

Generally, the “Alpine Towns of the Year” are already quite aware of needs & possibilities of how to foster Green Economy in the Alpine region. Numerous practical examples of such action were presented and discussed in the groups during the workshop. These examples can be used to inspire the planned Green Economy Action Plan of the Alpine Convention.

To be able to do their share of work, Alpine towns need close cooperation with and support from European, national and regional authorities:

Ambitious and compelling goals. Such goals need to be set for everybody at European, national or regional level, be it in climate change, biodiversity, spatial planning or other fields.

Adapting European, national and regional legal framework. Numerous legal instruments oppose the development of a Green Economy by setting standards and obligations that make it difficult for municipalities to choose sustainable solutions. This framework needs to be revised and adapted to favour a Green Economy. Again the range is wide from the field of transport, to energy, education and many more.

Allowing for decentralised, local decisions. This is particularly true in the more centralised countries, such as France and Italy, where locally adapted solutions may be blocked by a general national programme or legal framework that does not take into consideration local cultural, economic, climatic or geographic specificities.

Supporting local authorities in their efforts in favour of Green Economy. European, national and regional authorities need to support local authorities with financial and human resources to implement measures in favour of Green Economy. Many solutions cannot be designed and implemented at European, national or even regional

level, and need to be tailor made at local level. However, local authorities, in particular the smaller ones, do not always have the means to implement the solutions. They need to get support for this.



Figure 1: Group picture.

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Minutes of the workshop

What is Villach doing in the field of Green Economy?

Input **Petra Oberrauner** (deputy mayor and responsible for economic issues in the Alpine town Villach)

- Villach is member of the Climate Alliance. The city hosted the first World Climate Summit in 1985. Bluntly said, Villach was the initializing point for the Paris Climate Summit.
- Objectives of the Climate Alliance: 10% reduction of CO₂ every 5 years. Villach is also an e5-municipality (network energy efficient municipalities) and could fulfil the demands within a very short time. Lots of public funds are invested in this field.
- Villach follows its own energy policy: objectives are formulated in a broader way. In this way also enterprises have been reached. Carinthian tech research CTR is an example: Lead has been substituted with silver in photovoltaic (PV)-panels, as the material is more efficient and more environmentally friendly. This issue has been started in a pilot project. PV generally is a big topic for Villach; Austria's first community owned PV-power plant is situated in Villach.
- More than 9,000 trees are growing in the city of Villach and research is done in this field in terms of climate change.
- Concrete measures for climate protection: Leader in recycling; only 3% of households do not recycle properly; for the rest, fees are calculated due to the respective amount of waste. The municipality budget has to be balanced. The number of visitors in the recycling centre increased from 40,000 to 60,000 since the introduction of this measure.
- Villach together with a working group has initiated the "Re-use" project. Within these project home appliances are collected and repaired with clients under the supervision of skilled workers. A local energy supplier (Kelag) is now taking part in that measure (supports purchase of energy saving appliances).
- Villach is also a smart city: their goal is to offer the technology where society benefits from. As an example, information on which roads are congested or automatic dimming of illumination. The overarching goal is to transform the town into a living laboratory.
- Companies shall be motivated to settle down in Villach through the smart city approach; Green Economy exists and does have a positive impact on every day's life. Funding for construction of housing is tied to the installation of PV and solar energy.
- Small competition: Environment and Energy Award of Villach; around 60 projects applied (topics reach from children to energy saving); Audience award: 9000 votes (from 600 two years ago).
- Villach invested 4 million Euro in the research centre CTR. Currently, they implement an E-Mobility pilot project.
- Other small initiatives: "Bike butler" (supports shoppers);

Excursion to Carinthian Tech Research CTR

The Municipality of Villach considers the Carinthian Tech Research Center (CTR) as one of the examples of Green Economy in their territory. Since 1997, the CTR AG develops state of the art technologies in the field of intelligent sensor control and system integration for partner companies to make their products and processes simpler, safer and more effective. The R&D centre is therefore the connecting link between research and commerce. It enables enterprises to benefit from the latest R&D results and to significantly strengthen their innovative capacity and competitive ability.

- The city of Villach is one of the owners of CTR. Villach holds 10% of the shares. The other shareholders are Fraunhofer Society for the Advancement of Applied Research, BABEG and the Federation of Carinthian Industry.
- CTR has a low base financing. Most financing comes from funding for research from the industry.



Figure 2: The participants of the workshop got an insight in the work of the Carinthian Tech Research Center. ©CTR

Discussion in plenary

How can Alpine Towns be an attractive business location with green responsibility, that enables innovation & maintains tradition? Which public policy framework helps to improve Green Economy in this sense? What are the other Alpine Towns doing in the field of Green Economy?

Belluno

Belluno is putting a focus on energy efficiency and social aspects. In the framework of the conversion of abandoned spaces, activities with underprivileged persons, the involvement of young people and a creative approach are foreseen and have already been put into practice. Belluno will put this process into practice step-by-step. As an example: the former barracks have been transformed into a theatre, the local library is now used as a youth centre.

Morbegno

Morbegno has realised a range of activities in the field of Green Economy:

- The illumination in the city centre has been replaced by led-lamps;
- The energy efficiency of public buildings has been increased;
- Distance heating with gas and biomass;
- Consistent network of cycling and walking paths;
- “Requalification” of areas: forests and meadows;
- Re-establishment of olive cultivation on terraces.

Lacks: Uncertainties concerning continuity of funding and projects, difficulties in maintaining networks

Idrija and Tolmin

Economy: Following contributions of industry to green innovation already exist:

- Electric industry which develops advanced systems for automotive industry;
- Energy from renewable resources (biomass, hydropower, PV);
- Energy related renovation of buildings;
- Sustainable construction;
- Co-working (Tolmin).

Economy: Qualified workers are missing (→Training), especially for these topics:

- Smart electric grids;
- Smart systems;
- Educated work force.

Agriculture: Value contribution of local initiatives

- Food processing industry with local products (milk, cheese, meat, honey);
- Local cuisine (recognised brands –Tolminc cheese, Idrija žlikrofi);
- Cultural landscape;
- Local food supply chain.

Need to do: Agriculture: Support certification of ecological products, Ewald Galle, Austrian Ministry for Environment, proposed a label for mountain products and organic products. This proposal will be considered in a following discussion with the Alpine Towns.

Infrastructure: Municipalities as example, role model (e.g.: Infrastructure)

- Water cycle;
- Public lightening;
- Waste management.

Need to do: Improve infrastructure

- Better infrastructure (accessibility);
- E-Mobility.

Tourism: Announce green orientation of town:

- Green destination;
- Cultural tourism;
- Fly fishing;
- Outdoor sports;
- Man & biosphere;
- UNESCO label;
- Geopark Idrija.

Tourism:

- Sustainable tourism.

Need to do: Foster accommodation structure and capacity in Idrija and Tolmin, both towns do not have enough hotels, guesthouses and restaurants. The city Morbegno faces the same challenge.

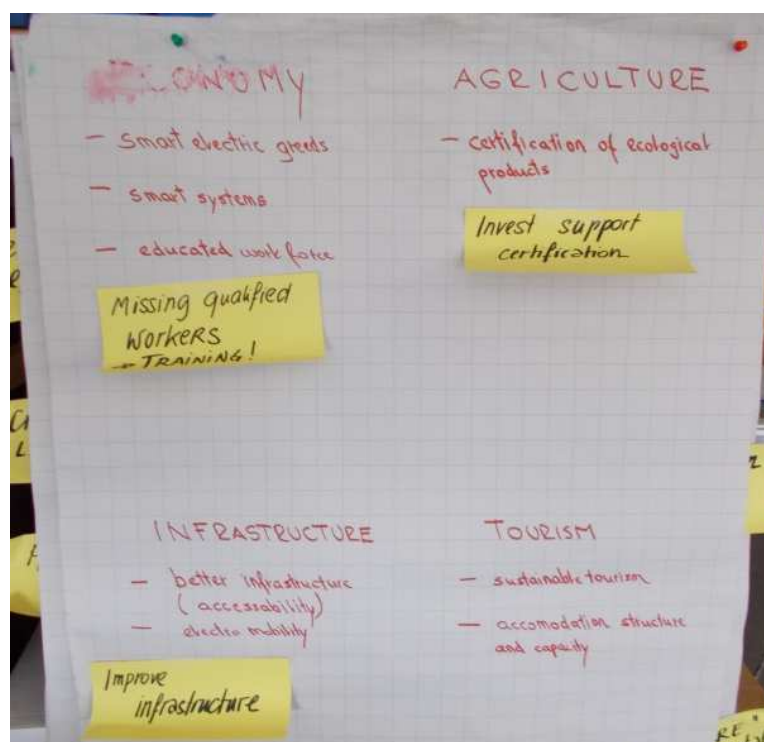


Figure 3: The discussions were held in linguistic groups. Here part of the results of the Alpine Towns Idrija and Tolmin.

Annecy

Economy - Status Quo Annecy:

- There are no specific actions to attract Green Economy companies;
- Some actions have been put into practice to accompany circular economy from private actors;

- Zero waste territory/town: (<http://optigede.ademe.fr/territoires-zero-dechet-zero-gaspillage>, in French language).

Need for more autonomy. Competences in France are concentrated at national level; municipalities lack autonomy. For example, the centralisation of energy suppliers (e.g. regarding the distribution of electricity or the hydrogen industry – there are companies in the area, but you have to apply in Paris for funds to create projects).

Sonthofen

- Lack of spaces for trade/industry → a military area of 33 ha will be free in the city centre, the development of this area will be elaborated with citizen involvement;
- Handicraft has a strong position;
- “Bicycle-town” Sonthofen;
- Town sets own initiatives: biomass for example;
- Increasing density towards the centre is very important for Sonthofen, so no big industrial areas will be created but small local commercial initiatives are fostered within the city centre;
- Sonthofen is a “Fair Trade Town”.

→ There are many small enterprises; and there is no big demand for Green Economy.

Brig-Glis

- No industrial history.

Bad Reichenhall

- Spa town, tourism, salt mine;
- Potential: wood, food, sustainable tourism, keeping clean the river Saalach.

→ There is simply no space for new companies

Bressanone

Service and industrial sector is quite strong.

- Problem: demand for space, space surface became very expensive;
- Active settlement policy; regional inter-connection;
- PV, energy efficiency and waste are important to a high number of sustainable companies;
- The town is fostering tendering local products, e-mobility.

→ “Green” in the area of the municipality; Broad understanding of Green Economy.

Workshop – Group discussion “agriculture”

What are towns already doing to foster sustainable agriculture?

- “Raccolta nel campo” (harvesting in the countryside) → supported by town (Trento);
- Events to foster diversity in agriculture: “uovo di selva” (eggs from the woods), this leads to clean forests (Morbegno);
- Organic, local nutrition in primary schools;
- Foster local production of organic food: meals in canteens owned by town (Annecy);
- Old varieties are cultivated (Bad Reichenhall);
- Problem: farmers produce mainly products from milk; demand for vegetables is there but no supply → town tries to promote cultivation of vegetables by lending fields to new farmers, also trainings are offered (Annecy);
- Problem: high prices for land; pressure on agriculture → solution: New approaches in urban planning (in Grand Annecy now task of the agglomeration);
- In Chamonix there is more and more demand by young people to work in agriculture; town supports that with financing
- Annecy: town calls on farmers and other stakeholders to recognize their social responsibility and to diversify agricultural strategies;
- In Morbegno it is an objective of the town to maintain mountains and nature. The area was once only a place for agriculture, now it is used more diversely; it is important to maintain heritage like the “terrazzamenti”, terraces build to create a larger surface for agriculture.
- In Bad Reichenhall the town has supported the establishment of an UNESCO-Biosphere-reserve. Old varieties are now cultivated again (special type of wheat). The output is lower, but consumers are willing to pay more.
- The dairy in Bad Reichenhall accepts only milk from farms which work without the use of glyphosate.
- Small farms in Bad Reichenhall can achieve additional income by doing works for the “Landschaftspflegeverband”, an association for the protection of the landscape by fighting against neophytes.
- In Bad Reichenhall the town supports the project “So schmecken die Berge”, which foresees that in Alpine huts around the town only local products are sold.
- Trento has the largest agricultural area in Trentino. Their main products are wine and apples. One objective is to strengthen small producers.
- In Trento the “giornata di mercati”, the market day is established which brings the local agriculture in the heart of the towns.
- Trento offers special trainings to reduce waste of food.
- Within the “consorzio agricolo”, the agricultural associations the decisions were made on (higher) level. Now small producers demand more influence (Trento).
- Morbegno tries to link with other regions in terms of agriculture.
- Trento developed together with the Trento University the project on healthy nutrition “Nutriti Trento”.
- Producers in Morbegno concentrate on unique products (cause: big economies nearby).
- In Morbegno the town tries to create new jobs by maintaining traditions.
- In Chamonix the municipality supports “jardins partagés” (shared gardens).

- In Chamonix there is a project, where tourists/citizens bring a kilogram of salt up to the alp, where around 800 sheep are grazing.
- In Annecy the municipality bought 2 Alpine huts in order to safe cultural heritage but also to create space for new initiatives.

What are towns planning for the future?

- In Chamonix the town is looking for solutions how to open farms for new agricultural initiatives (consortium privé). Especially shared gardens should be promoted.
- In Annecy the agglomeration wants to convince farmers to diversify their production (promote cultivation of vegetables), so that the demand for local products can be fulfilled.
- The agglomeration Grand-Annecy also wants to make aware of the social responsibility that agriculture has. In order to diversify production, cooperation with the local chamber of agriculture should be established.
- The Alpine Town of the year association will discuss the proposal of Ewald Galle, Austrian Ministry for Environment on a joint label for mountain products or organic products.



Figure 4: Claire Simon presents the collection of ideas.

Group discussion: What are the Alpine Towns doing in the field of sustainable tourism?

What are they already doing in this field?

- In Bad Reichenhall the town tries to establish better conditions for soft mobility. In order to foster public transport, the town has established a linked public transport system with Salzburg. At strategic points, the town has also set up trail and route maps to promote walking and cycling.
- Bad Reichenhall is also a model-town for natural gas mobility. The town supports the purchase of cars fuelled by gas with 500 €. To take measures to improve air quality is especially important for Bad Reichenhall, as it is selling the good quality of air since 1846 as spa town.
- Bad Reichenhall has also developed a tourist information system for sustainable activities. Goal is that people leave their cars.
- In Morbegno agriculture and tourism is very much linked.
- One good example for the success of sustainable tourism is the “ecolabel-ostello” (hostel) in Morbegno. As normal occupancy rates show 20%, the hostel has a rate of 55%.
- In Trento tourism has become a more important sector. Also a consequence of the Alpine Town of the Year title?

What are towns planning in the future?

- In Annecy many inhabitants have the feeling that tourism (especially at weekends) has become too big: too many cars, too many events. The agglomeration now wants to set up a strategy to stop guests coming by car.
- Trento wants to improve quality of tourism. It's a project the town is already working on (also with help of students).
- In Morbegno the town wants to support the creation of “Alberghi diffusi”. They have a high potential.
- The town of Trento wants to analyse the image of Trento in social media channels in order to improve quality in tourism. To do this the town employs three students every six months.

Group discussion “Soft Mobility”

What are towns already doing for soft mobility?

- Annecy has restrictions on circulation in the inner city center;
- Ongoing “decarbonisation” of mobility and investment in bicycle lanes as well as public transport is an objective of Annecy;
- Investments in public transport;
- Bressanone has restricted traffic in the old town centre;
- City bus in Bressanone has over 1 million passengers yearly.

- 250,000 Mobility Card users;
- Reintroduction of nightline bus;
- Bressanone/Plose rail link refused by citizens: no more referendums, citizens will now be more directly involved in policy deliberations.
- North-South-East-West bicycle path, passing through old town centre;
- Chamonix is investing in e-mobility: bus fleet is replaced with hybrid models and charging stations have been installed;
- Train connections are more frequent now in Chamonix and public transport in town is for free;
- Joint local and national-level investment in regional cycle lane networks is happening in Idrija;
- In Idrija transport system co-financed by 2 municipalities for school children and those using the shopping centre.
- Partial closure of the historic town centre of Idrija to traffic.
- City bus was reintroduced in Sonthofen.
- Sonthofen has introduced a bike scheme and has established solar powered e-bike charging stations.
- Two initiatives in South Tyrol: “Südtirol pass” and pedibus initiatives for schools.

What are towns planning for the future?

- Annecy wants to expand cycling infrastructure and increase safety for bicycle users and wants to introduce better rail connections;
- More shared mobility that is “decarbonised” and improved information for mobility by bicycle (Annecy);
- Bressanone wants to connect the industrial park with the centre using a “light Metro” system.
- In Chamonix “last mile” policies and integrated e-transport programmes with Valle d’Aosta are objectives;
- More car-sharing is another objective of Chamonix as well as train lines to be better adapted to local situation;
- Idrija has created incentives for the young people to use public transport in free time and not just for school travel;
- Cooperation with Hitachi and national energy network to increase e-vehicle charging stations in Idrija;
- E-bike charging station network;
- Smartphone-friendly info portal to educate citizens on existing measures, and integration of portal with car-sharing services.
- Close the “last mile gap” in tourism in Sonthofen.
- Introduce vehicle sharing for transport of goods? (Sonthofen)
- Balance between city logistics and citizens’ needs/wishes and better coordination of smart tourism.

ANNEX

Agenda
List of participants

CONTACT

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Agenda

Thursday, 9th November 2017

- 14:00 - 14:10 Opening with greetings
Thierry Billet, President of the Alpine Town of the Year association
Richard Landgraf, German Environment Agency
- 14:10 - 14:15 Short presentation of workshop aims and agenda, organisation issues
Claire Simon, director of the Alpine Town of the Year association, moderation
- 14:15 - 14:30 Input by Villach: Activities in the field of Green Economy & initiatives to foster it
Petra Oberrauner, responsible for economic policies, Alpine Town Villach
- 14:30 - 16:00 Excursion to CTR Villach
Birgit Rader-Brunner, CTR
- 16:00 - 16:30 Coffee break
- 16:30 - 17:45 Discussion in plenary:

How can Alpine Towns be an attractive business location with green responsibility, that enables innovation & maintains tradition? Which public policy framework helps to improve Green Economy in this sense?
- 17:45 - 18:00 Presentation main findings in plenary
- 18:00 Closing

Friday, 10th November 2017

- 9:00 - 10:30 **Group 1** - question 2: How can Alpine Towns support sustainable agriculture & sustainable tourism activities and companies?

Group 2 - question 3: Mobility, Transport & Smart Cities: how can Alpine Towns support Green Economy in these topics?
- 10:30 - 11:00 Summarise findings/learnings
Summary of results from the different working groups
Outlook next steps of Green Economy Action Programme, other workshops, online platform, closing words
- 11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break & Closing