

FIFTH WORLD CONGRESS ON SNOW AND MOUNTAIN TOURISM

(Principality of Andorra, Encamp, 27-29 March 2008)

The conceptual framework

The future of mountain tourism and climate change

Climate is **one of the most important tourism resources**. It has a decisive influence on the travel decisions of visitors and their behaviour. Climate change is thus a global phenomenon that will have an increasingly important influence on the existing structures of world tourism.

Mountain regions are **fragile ecological systems**. They will be particularly affected by climate change. Snow as a public good will become even scarcer. Glaciers will melt even more, to the detriment of the appearance of the landscape. The disintegration of permafrost will require ever more costly measures to protect sites and facilities.

Mountain tourism today is already immersed in strong competition at the world level. Nature and the environment are the basic elements of attractive mountain products. This conditions the possibilities of tourism development. Winter mountain tourism depends essentially on skating and snow sports, which are lucrative revenue sources. Summer tourism primarily offers trekking and mountain climbing experiences.

Climate change will probably change the fragile ecological balances of mountain regions, which will have repercussions in terms of the spatial distribution of tourism.

Climate change is a major challenge that will only be fully active and perceived several decades from now. It is therefore all the more important to reflect as early as now on its consequences for the most affected mountain regions, such as the European Alps, the Rocky Mountains, but also the Pyrenees and other large mountain ranges.

Without neglecting to consider the arrival in the market of new competitors in Europe and Asia:

The problems posed by future scenarios regarding the snowline and precipitation change the conditions for the retooling of resorts and products.

The issue at hand then is finding suitable strategies for the future in order to successfully deal with the structural change in mountain tourism caused by global warming and by new competitors.

With climate change and the effects of greenhouse gases, it will also be necessary to take into account energy-related problems and the operating costs of facilities.

At the Fifth World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism, the following subjects will be discussed:

Megatrends

- The exponential growth of tourism and its consequences for the climate;
- Projections by scientists regarding climate change;

Repercussions for mountain tourism

- The repercussions of climate change on the future behaviour of potential mountain visitors
- The direct and indirect consequences for mountain tourism

Measures implemented by resorts

- International experiences
- New players

Strategies for adapting to the phenomenon of global warming

- Measures for the reduction and the avoidance of gas emissions at the level of the accessibility of the mountain;
- Possibilities for the operation of mountain resorts while at the same time stabilizing CO² emissions and reducing them to zero.
- Innovations in energy-saving