

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

RESOLUTION (75) 9

ON ENDANGERED ALPINE REGIONS

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 April 1975
at the 244th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

The Committee of Ministers,

Having regard to Resolution No. 1 of the European Ministerial Conference on the Environment at Vienna which recognises the need for "a study of the specific ecological problems of certain mountain and rural areas, as affected by the abandonment of farming, grazing and forestry activities and by the development of tourism" ;

Considering the critical state of many of the Alpine regions in Europe and the extreme gravity of aesthetic and biological destruction and deterioration due, in particular, to the random promotion of building plans and tourist facilities and the abandonment of agriculture ;

Noting that in many resorts tourism has encouraged the construction of buildings in areas where there are obvious dangers of avalanches and floods, and noting further that very few winter holiday resorts have trained rescue teams ;

Whereas the protection of Alpine regions calls for concerted action at European level, having due regard to the preservation of the beauty of landscapes and the conservation of natural resources and the biological heritage, the balanced development of tourism, agriculture, forestry and industry ;

Whereas the decline of mountain farming may upset the groundwater regime and thus cause erosion and landslides ;

Noting the importance of tourism in the economic life of the inhabitants of Alpine regions ;

Noting that every year the Alps receive an increasing number of visitors and that in much frequented areas the population density, both local and tourist, is higher than in industrialised countries ;

Considering that regional planning authorities should bear in mind not only the immediate needs of modern society, but also the function of landscapes, flora and fauna which are of scientific, aesthetic or cultural importance to mankind ;

Having taken note of the study by the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources on endangered Alpine regions in Europe,

Invites the governments of the member states concerned to base their policies in this matter on the measures set out below :

1. adoption of the general principle that the planning and management of Alpine regions should be based on scientific data and should avoid all harmful effects on the human and natural environment ;

2. promotion of scientific research in Alpine regions by the appropriate consultative bodies to back up action taken by the public authorities ;
3. promotion of close transfrontier co-operation for the planning and management of Alpine regions ;
4. preparation of a national cartographic inventory of regions threatened by avalanches for local planning purposes, after first establishing general criteria for classification ;
5. promotion of avalanche surveying, introducing a standard methodology ;
6. encouragement of the mapping of regions with dangerous torrents on the basis of a unified classification system ;
7. stepping up of permanent protection measures in endangered Alpine regions by appropriate re-forestation (ecogram) and mechanical methods ;
8. prohibition of all intervention in high-altitude forests which constitute the only protection against damage by torrents ;
9. improvement of co-operation between prevention services and introduction of a special air rescue service ;
10. organisation of training courses for the members of avalanche committees and specialised personnel ;
11. proper education of tourists in regard to the dangers of Alpine regions ;
12. launching of a large-scale campaign to inform the public of the need to safeguard the biology of the mountain environment as being essential both for recreation purposes and as part of the natural heritage ;
13. supply of information to central, regional and local authorities, regional planners, ecologists, farmers and professional associations regarding the problems of Alpine regions as brought out in the European committee's study and in the above recommendations.