

Mountain Wilderness International General Assembly

Chambéry, France - 25 March 2006

Opening of the general Assembly

Patrick Gabarrou, international Coordinator of Mountain Wilderness, welcomes the participants, particularly Carlo Alberto Pinelli, father of the movement, and the delegates coming from far. He then pays tribute to Jean-Christophe Lafaille, guarantor died at the end of January at the Makalu.

A - Activity report

Hugues Thiébault, general Secretary - MW International

1 - Extension of the network of national associations

One of the tasks devoted to the new MW international Board: help creating new MW national associations. The task is harder than at been planned since it necessitates the existence of committed people inside the considered country. Thus, in 2005, the creations of MW Georgia and MW Bulgaria were expected, but the negotiations are still under way.

Prospects:

- During 2006: creation of MW Belgium;
- End 2006: creation of MW Bulgaria;
- At mid-term: MW Georgia, thanks to the common work of MW Switzerland and MW Germany; rebirth of MW Greece as soon as the present problems are solved;
- At more long term: Croatia, Poland, Chile.

2 - Communication

A single speaker for MW international

Creation of a unique electronic mail address for the international Coordination: coordination@mountainwilderness.org. This unique address is working well and strengthens the cohesion between associations by facilitating the exchanges. Each association must remember to communicate all the important national actions to this address, thus allowing the information of all the network of MW associations, and the case being give an international echo to the aforementioned action.

A MW international Internet website: <http://mountainwilderness.org/>

Created by Philippe Imbert, this important tool permits us to be present everywhere in the world; particularly, it allows us to be visible and intervene in countries having no national association. It is a more and more visited tool.

200 articles have been put online in 2005, the majority of them in English, but also certain Latin languages. The national associations can send the information they wish to be published on the MW international website by mailing the texts in their national language or in English to the Coordination (coordination@mountainwilderness.org). A special acknowledgement to the Slovenians, the Spanish and the Germans for the effort they have made last year in sending their information directly in English.

The website's architecture allows delegating the management of a heading to people wishing to participate to this showcase of MW international. The most consulted headings:

- 1: "MW worldwide news" - actions of MW international or actions undertaken by several national associations;
- 2: "What is MW?" - the inter-nauts come to discover our movement;
- 3: "News from MW national associations";
- 4: "Mountains of the world" - heading bringing together important information, not necessarily linked to MW actions.

3 - Actions on the preferred themes of MW international

The activity report of MW international should in the absolute recall all the actions undertaken by all national associations. This being not possible, the general Secretary presents what has been realized in the great areas defined as having priority at the executive Board meeting in Mojstrana.

Ecotourism

MW has emphasized this positive theme by developing a policy of environment friendly tourism:

- MW Switzerland with "Butiner au pays du Mont-Blanc", a concept used again by MW France for the Belledonne range.
- MW Slovenia by collaborating with the Andes porters of the Inka Porters Project.

Field actions have also taken place; Mont-Blanc Solstice, Five Continents Fair in Martigny (Switzerland), ski tour in Valtelina, in Italy. The most emblematic action carried on this theme is the organization by the MW international Asian Desk of liaison officers' courses in Afghanistan. This action has had an important echo: messages have arrived from the entire world to get information on this operation. The effect of this was also a peak in the number of connections to the MW international Internet website. This action is the concrete proof of the positive action MW can have on a country's tourism.

Mountain protected areas (Categories UICN I and II)

MW Italy: action carried out in the Stelvio national Park on the occasion of the Park's birthday, as well as against marble quarries installations in the Apuan Alps national Park; MW Slovenia on the problem of forest management in a Croatian national Park (Velebit mountains); MW Switzerland intervenes in the management of the World Heritage site Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn. Several MW associations have also been involved in actions to oppose projects modifying laws on national Parks: MW France: thanks particularly to the involvement of Jean-David Abel and François Labande, in the frame of an inter association mobilization, it has been possible to limit the damages; MW Slovenia, facing attempts to modify the area and relaxing the management of Triglav national Park, has carried out a lobbying campaign toward members of parliament and the press.

In Bulgaria, MW International has intervened toward the president, the prime minister and the environment minister regarding the law governing nature parks, as well as the law on water. We have also supported the action of local associations. Changes resulting from the elections have at the present time solved the problem.

MW International has also asked the government of the United States to maintain the integrity of the Alaska Wilderness Refuge, threatened by oil exploitation projects: call to sign an international petition; support of the Italian high mountain guide Ario Sciolari, who is crossing Alaska alone with skis from South to North to point out this project. Beyond these defensive actions, MW international keeps on working to get the creation of protection measures: Mont-Blanc (a special point is planned during this General Assembly), listing of the Guadarrama Sierra (submitted to tourist pressure from Madrid), listing to World Heritage of the Dolomites range (one of our priorities). We have also claimed the creation of a national Park at the Chahdag in Azerbaijan, project undertaken in 2003 with a big financing of the World Bank, but on which the government is coming back, wishing today to develop a ski resort there. Contacts with the government are under way on this subject.

Obsolete Installations

This theme, originating from Free K2, one of the founding actions of Mountain Wilderness, has a different importance depending on the countries. Thus, in Slovenia, the only obsolete installations are patrimony remains dating back from World War I and not wastes. On the contrary, France, Switzerland and Italy among others have carried out important actions. In France, following an inventory and the first dismantling actions carried out by MW, one is succeeding in involving communities and representatives for the sites' return to nature. Thus the first dismantling of a ski resort has just taken place in the regional Nature Park of the Bauges range. Since 4 years, MW is associated to the Mercantour national Park to clear the boundary ridge from barbed wires left by the two world conflicts, mainly the second. In 2005, 7 tons of scrap iron have been removed. This operation will be renewed in 2006. In Switzerland, MW has begun an inventory, carried out media actions at the Black Lake (Friburg) and at the Chaussy Peak (Vaud Canton), and got the dismantling of two old rain gauges at Trient (Wallis). MW Germany communicates on this theme in the press.

In a comparable area, MW Switzerland keep on carrying its operation "Stopp dem Schrott" to require the army to collect its ammunitions abandoned during mountain manoeuvres. It is an old campaign that bears fruits. From a general point of view, MW tries to get this problem taken into account in the legislations of the affected countries, leaning on the article 12 of the Tourism protocol of the Alpine Convention.

Planned actions in 2006: barbed wires in Mercantour, old mine in Ariège...

Mountain sports impact

MW is composed by mountaineers, which must serve as examples. In France, a specific work group on this theme is on the way to be established; in Switzerland, the very efficient "KeepWild!" program goes on and a guide "Climbing and public transportation" has just been issued, as well as a DVD on "Climbing without bolts".

Contacts have been taken with Argentina to develop practicing respectful of the environment in the Andes. Some of our actions can also be registered under different headings. So is it with our formation actions in Afghanistan that fit to this theme as well.

MW Italy has taken position against the tarring of the road to the Finestre Pass on the occasion of the cyclist Italy Tour (the Giro), that will encourage attendance with individual car. Via ferrata keep on developing in certain countries, forcing our associations to deal with them. If in France the problem has come to a standstill (the fashion is today at tyroliennes that spoil a huge area!), in Catalonia, the number has grown from one to more than 70 in 15 years! We must keep on with the same motto: there are enough and even too much of these equipments. In Germany, MW has organized a demonstration against the "Pidinger Klettersteig" in Hochstaufen.

Silence !

Everywhere in the world, we are invaded by motorized leisure: planes, helicopters, small tracked vehicles, 4x4, quads... All the MW associations are thus mobilized on this theme.

In Switzerland, two campaigns are under way: "Stop heliskiing!" and "Stop Off-road!"; in France, a great number of actions (demonstrations, lobbying, sensitization, lawsuits, federating of the inter association action...) are carried on, ran by Daniel Rouzier, deputy chairman; in Catalonia, our guarantor Joan Cervera has chosen the theme of silence in the mountains for his lecture given during the annual mass in memory of the Catalans dead in the mountains. No point of the world is under cover from the motors' nuisance: Mountain Wilderness has had to protest against the first landing of a helicopter at the summit of Mount Sagarmatha (Everest).

In France, in Italy, in Slovenia, our action aims to have the law enforced, or to strengthen its terms. Thus MW France has mobilized the associations' circle for the defence of the law forbidding motorized leisure in nature areas. In Switzerland, MW has won its trial against Air Zermatt for illegal helicopters' landings, but the fine inflicted by the court has been derisory...

Demonstrations: in France against the White Cruise and the Transvalquad, two emblematic meetings of 4x4 and quads; in Switzerland, with the help of the Swiss Alpine Club (CAS), against heliskiing on the Aletsch glacier, yet listed at the World Heritage, but also in the Jura, with MW France, against snowmobiles. This last action is the proof that this plague does not know any border! These harmful leisure are everywhere, we too.

Glaciers protection/Ski resorts

In Europe, the number of ski resorts is great enough to satisfy all the publics. We have acted in the world, against new resorts' setting up:

Slovenia: Karawanke, in Natura 2000 area;

Spain: Valdelinares, Sierra de Teruel;

Greece: the project of a mechanized ski resort is back at Olympus Mount! Kostas Tsipiras has mobilized; MW international has planned an intervention near the European Commission, and even envisages registering there a complaint for breach against environmental and archaeological patrimonies of this summit of the gods. A protest meeting is planned in summer 2006.

MW International has also expressed itself on various projects of ski resorts' development, in Azerbaijan, in Turkey (on the Tahtali Dag, on the south coast of Turkey, at 1 600 m above sea level). All these projects could not be viable without resorting to artificial snow. Our positions have found numerous echoes in these countries' press.

We have also intervened in the case of extensions of ski resorts in virgin sites. Indeed, from the commercial point of view, only counts, for the ski resort, the possibility to announce the greater possible length of tracks.

The action of Mountain Wilderness Italy has permitted the giving up of the cable car project at Cresta Rossa, at Monte Rosa; an article against illegal extensions of the Bansko (Bulgaria) ski resort, signed Hugues Thiébault, has been published in an economy newspaper of Bulgaria; Mountain Wilderness Spain has participated to the coordination established against the extension of the Formigal (Spain) ski resort, in the Spanish Pyrenees.

Inter-resort connections: it is another mean to fulfil the selling argument on track length: interconnect ski resorts. In Italy, in France (New Tourist Unit of the Turra, for which we have won a refusal of the authorities last year), in the Pyrenees, (with the formation of an inter-associations group against the inter-connection of the Andorra, Catalonia, and France ski resorts), Mountain wilderness has worked on a lot of these files.

Artificial snow: Mountain Wilderness Germany has organized a demonstration in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Germany), allowing with a simple device, to visualize the water and energy consumptions of the snow guns; edition, in France, of a document pointing out the excesses of this artificialization of the mountain.

Glaciers: this theme is directly linked to the preceding, numerous being the glaciers exploited by the ski industry. However, two important files not connected to ski must be noted:

- Mountain Wilderness Pakistan has realized the "Black Book of the K2 ascent's commemoration", on the impact of tourist attendance on Baltoro glacier. The edition has been reported, due to the Pakistan earthquake;
- Barrick Gold Project, in Chile, aiming at the displacement of three hanged glaciers to allow mining exploitation of the underground. Mountain Wilderness International has written to the Chilean President, an approach that has received a large welcome in the press. Mountain Wilderness International is working with three great Chilean associations to widen the debate internationally, since, beyond the ethical problem linked to these glaciers' disappearance, there is also the one of pollution by heavy metals. MW International keep mobilized in order to have this project foundering.

To conclude his report, the general Secretary of Mountain Wilderness International congratulates all the associations: «We have worked well together: keep on!».

Debate on the activity report

Following the presentation by the general Secretary, a number of remarks and ideas have been championed:

Regarding the race to ski track length:

Richard Gödeke recommends making an alliance with the small resorts that have everything to lose in this runaway.

On the Mountain Wilderness associations' network:

François Labande is sorry of the lack of Mountain Wilderness in Austria. Hugues Thiébault answers him that contacts have been taken, notably with Peter Haslacher and some members of the Austrian Alpine Union (OeAV), but they won't lead to something at best before 2-3 years. Bernard Amy underlines that it is not necessary to be in a mountain country to create a MW association. It is enough that there are alpinists in the country. MW is the association of the alpinists throughout the world in defence of the mountain: we must defend the physical concept of mountains and the image people are having of it, as much as the mountains themselves. Thus he greets the Belgian friends that will present their approach at this meeting! And regarding to the Austrians, they can believe that, since they are behaving well at home, they do not need MW. False: one must create MW Austria so that they become conscious that, beyond preservation of their sole mountains, they must act to protect all mountains!

Moreover, Patrice Tordjmann participates to a French-Kabylia mountain friendship group. There is a local need to the taking into account of Algerian mountain protection, threatened by some projects linked to the country's rebuilding. He proposes to encourage the structures that are on way to be constituted, to create MW Kabylia. He receives the general assent to carry out this step.

Cristiano Ghedini, webmaster of Mountain Wilderness Italy's website, indicates that, on the contrary to what make believe the activity report, things did not go that well everywhere. MW Italy is working well, but encounters more and more hardship to recruit members, thus endangering the very existence of the association. Inside MW Italy, the communication has been reoriented on international. Since that, the number of connections to their Internet website has made a true spring! It is vital that all MW associations rely on the existence of the international coordination; it is what makes our specificity and our strength. He recommends to increase the exchanges between MW associations, through MW International, and use all this information in our communication tools (Internet, newspapers...). Hugues Thiébault agrees : « Does someone knows something ? » must be at the basis of all our exchanges inside MW.

Obsolete Installations:

Richard Gödeke finds that the soldiers, responsible of the fitting of barbed wires in the mountains, must work with us to remove them: it is good for their image and their training! Patrice Tordjmann answers him that in general the Army wishes to have the control of any operation she undertakes and thus works alone. Moreover, there is the buildings' problem: if everybody feels necessary to remove the barbed wires, the fortifications are considered as patrimony. But all are not such and some even present real security problems.

B - Presentation of Mountain Wilderness Belgium

Jérôme Meessen and Grégoire de Hemptinne came to present Mountain Wilderness Belgium, which they are on the way to set up. Their action has begun with the creation of an Internet website www.mountainwilderness.be, relaying the ideas and actions of MW; they are in the process of birth: the legal statute should be deposited since the end of the 2006 year. One of the issues is to succeed in federating, beyond linguistic differences, all the Belgian mountain and climbing clubs, which are very scattered. An inaugural conference will take place in Belgium, with one of the guarantors and the international Coordinator or its delegate. Pinelli recalls that precise rules exist for the creation of a new MW association: there must be an inaugural conference, actually, to which must be invited all the country's alpinists, seeking to involve in the approach the great alpinists and

the country's philosophers. For example: it is because this meeting has not yet taken place - due to political problem at first, then to the seism in a second time - that MW Pakistan has no official existence, even if the hard core of the country's alpinists is ready. For MW Belgium, Jean-Claude Legros, who was before part of Free K2, must be involved. Gödeke and Pinelli underline the interest of such a Belgian association, bridgehead toward Netherlands and European Union.

C - International Commission for Alps' Protection and Mountain Wilderness

Patrick Le Vaguerèse, President of CIPRA-France, recalls the links between Mountain Wilderness and the International Commission for Alps' Protection (CIPRA), as well as the role of this one as regards the Alpine Convention. CIPRA is at the origin of this convention and makes every effort to promote it. Le Vaguerèse recalls the information vectors of CIPRA: alpmedia.net and CIPRA-Info, as well as the great programs carried by the organization: the towns' network "Alliance in the Alps", "Future in the Alps", aiming at the gathering of all the actors of sustainable economy, and Climalp which treats the problem of construction and energy.

He recalls the support brought by CIPRA-France to Mountain Wilderness France in the campaigns Silence! and against snow guns, or in the field of transports (Lyon-Torino). On its side, MW France backs CIPRA in various areas: promoting the Alpine Convention, Lyon-Turin, Future in the Alps.

In 2008, the annual CIPRA conference will take place in France. It will be the occasion to organize an alpine week with the alpine Network of protected Areas, ISCAr and Alliance in the Alps.

D - Communication

Grivel ice-axe

Grivel proposes to produce magnificent ice-axes designed for Mountain Wilderness, which we will be able to resell them with making a benefit. This very beautiful tool must also be used as a present for official demonstrations. Purchase price for MW: 60 euros inclusive of tax. Recommended sale price: about 90-100 euros. The orders will be managed by Mountain Wilderness International.

Printed matters

During the past year, in addition to the Internet website, has appeared the necessity to have at one's disposal printed documents, in English, for the presentation of Mountain Wilderness International. A presentation leaflet of the movement, in English, has been written. It remains to print it.

An annual report will also be realized, allowing showing the sphere of activity of Mountain Wilderness. The executive Board must still define the form. This document must be printed on eight pages, and put online in different languages.

Common logo

Antoine van Limburg runs, since 2002, the project aiming at the creation of a logo common to all Mountain Wilderness associations. The work done since allows today to propose to the Assembly the passing of the following concept, elaborated by Emmanuel Amy according to the directives of the work group "International logo", and associating a mountain profile and the words mountainwilderness:



Pays

A debate follows. If everybody recognizes that it is indispensable, for reasons of visibility, coherence and unity of the movement, to have a common logo, some regret that the chosen lines are a little "weak". Some wish also the wilderness mark to be present in the drawing, a flower, an eagle...

Everybody agree that white and blue must be the basic colours, that they match well our image, to the point that C.A. Pinelli proposes the logo of Mountain Wilderness France to be adopted for all! Bernard Amy intervenes to ask the attendance to take its responsibilities, the passing of a common logo being very important and the rejection of the proposed one will surely entail the report sine die of the passing of a common logo!

In order to ratify the concept drawn above, a vote takes place, controlled by Anne Ille and Laurent Servières, which do not participate to the vote. On 60 voters, there are 53 for, 7 against and 0 null. **The principle of a logo on this concept is thus passed.** The work group will finish the offer of the concept according to the various uses (logo, banderol, flag, letter paper, newspaper, in clear on dark background, in dark on clear background...) and will send it to all the associations in order for the change to take place.

E - Elections

Every two years, the Mountain Wilderness International general Assembly is the occasion to elect or re-elect a certain number of Boards: Committee of Guarantors, Board of Auditors and Arbitration Board, and also to take a vote on the international Coordinator. These elections aim to satisfy at the same time the MW International statutes (Guarantors, Coordinator) and the terms of the Italian law, which governs MW International (Auditors, Arbitration Board).

These elections have been performed under the control of two assessors: Tristan Fromentaud and Laurent Servières. Apart from the elections, it is made clear that, from now on, it is Vincent Neirinck (Mountain Wilderness France) who is in charge of the support to the international Secretariat.

International Guarantors

Since the Puicerdà (Catalonia) general Assembly, two guarantors are deceased: Patrick Bérhault and Jean-Christophe Lafaille, and two others have not wished to stand again: Lionel Daudet and Sergio Martini. These last two have well let know that it was not a matter of disagreement with the positions of our movement, but a desire to let to other alpinists the possibility to express themselves on behalf of the movement.

Are elected, with absolute majority and in the first round, Guarantors of Mountain Wilderness International:

- Bernard Amy;
- Valérie Aumage (new representative, French, high mountain guide, professor at the National Ski and Alpinism School);
- Nuria Balagué;
- Bernard Batschelet;
- Edwin Bernbaum;
- Christian Bonington;
- Joan Cervera i Batariu;
- Jean-Pierre Courtin (new representative, French, serving chairman of MW France);
- Fausto De Stefani;
- Kurt Diemberger;
- Patrick Gabarrou;
- Maurizio Giordani;
- Richard Gödeke;
- Alessandro Gogna;
- Viktor Groselj;
- François Labande;
- Nicole Niquille;
- Olivier Paulin;
- Carlo Alberto Pinelli;
- Corradino Rabbi (new representative, Italian, general chairman of the Italian Academic Alpine Club);
- Josep Sicart i Tauler.

One of the ballot papers was bearing the name of Jean-Claude Legros. Bernard Amy asks that, as a conclusion, this one applies to the position of Guarantor. Bourgeois, other great Belgian alpinist, must also be appealed to on the occasion of the creation of the Mountain Wilderness Belgium association.

Revisors

Francis Odier and Emilio Cavalieri are renewed to their position with absolute majority of voters.

Arbitration Board

This committee is in charge of solving the conflicts that can intervene between Mountain Wilderness International and a MW national association, between two associations, or between a member and his national association. Michel Fourcade, Joachim Molins and Manuela Vesci are elected with absolute majority.

International Coordinator

Patrick Gabarrou is re-elected unanimously, till the next Mountain Wilderness International general Assembly, in two years. The position of international Secretary is not submitted to vote; it is up to the international Coordinator and the executive Board to appoint him. Hugues Thiébault keep on fulfilling this role until the next meeting of the executive Boars, which will take place in Allgäu (Germany) at the beginning of October 2006.

F - Financial report

Accounts presentation

Mountain Wilderness International owns two bank accounts : one in France and one in Italy. These accounts are managed separately: the French account is managed directly by the international Secretariat; the Italian account is reserved to the management of the Afghanistan operations of MW International Asian Desk.

Elsbeth Flüeler is in a position to present only the accounts directly managed by the international Secretariat, the balance of the account managed by the Asian Desk having not reached her before the general Assembly. A very strict management of these accounts is on the way to be established, in order to answer the attribution criterion of European Union' financings. Particularly, it will be mandatory to integrate in the accounts presented by Elsbeth the data regarding the Asian Desk account. One should note that this system involves three countries (French account, Swiss management carried out by Elsbeth, Italian account); this explains the installation's delays. Particularly, it has been difficult to open an account in France, which has been possible hardly 10 months ago. **The Assembly passes a motion of confidence to Elsbeth, with the mission to clear these accounts completely as quickly as possible.**

Provisional budget

- Hiring of a Mountain Wilderness International employee

It was envisaged to hire a half-time person, but this necessitates being able to insure his salary and the decision has not been taken. The corresponding expense will thus not take place.

- Payment of the employees of Mountain Wilderness associations working for MW International

It was convened in Puigcerdà that the national associations that set one of their employees at the disposal of Mountain Wilderness International will be compensated for. MW Switzerland's delegation has insisted to go back on this decision during the Mojstrana executive Board meeting. However, Elsbeth Flüeler is compensated for the accountancy work she performs for MW International, it must be planned to compensate also MW France for the work done by Carmen Grasmick first, then Vincent Neirinck.

Mountain Wilderness France charges 13 euros per hour to MW International the work of its project leaders (since the hourly salaried cost of MW France's secretary exceeds 17 euros); in 2004, 700 euros have been deduced from MW France fees paid to MW International, in 2005, the work been more important, it will be of the order of 2 000 euros.

- Office

Mountain Wilderness International will hire an office in Chambéry (France), in the House of Mountains and Parks. The rent proposed by the town of Chambéry is 60 euros a month. This will permit to materialize MW International, which will take delivery of the office in May. 480 euros of rent must thus be planned for 2006.

- Help fund to Mountain Wilderness Slovenia

3 000 euros are provisioned to permit Mountain Wilderness Slovenia's functioning. Since they do not have yet the public utility statute that should permit them to raise public financing, they need this fund to advance 50 % of the expenses linked to the projects they carry.

- Projects

Hugues Thiébauld presents project after project the expenses planned for 2006. Mountain Wilderness Switzerland does not want to see the money sleep on the account, and questions the payment of its share of 10 % of the fees paid by the members.

The general Secretary answers that all associations have proportionally the same difficulties in paying this 10 % share, which represents 7 000 euros for Mountain Wilderness France, for example. As regards to MW Spain, the whole of its budget is spent in sending its two delegates in Chambéry!

If we want to lower the fees to Mountain Wilderness International, it is mandatory to find other financing sources and it is wished to be done: private sponsoring, public funds, even if it will be hard to get these last ones quickly, since the procedures are lengthy. On the private side, very good contacts have been taken on the occasion of the Outdoor Show in Friedrichshafen (Germany); Patagonia has already paid 5 000 US\$, and a request is on way for Black Diamond.

Moreover, there is no question of letting the money sleep on the account, it must be spent to make the different projects live. Other expenses are planned in the communication area (presentation leaflet, annual report). And each national association can ask for a Mountain Wilderness International's contribution for its projects in the frame of the great intervention's areas of MW International.

CA Pinelli underlines that Mountain wilderness International can undertake actions with great budgets: 30 000 US\$ have been spent last year for the Afghanistan operations; 90 000 US\$ will be spent this year. Everybody agrees to the necessity to keep on paying this 10 % annual fee. It is also wished most of this money to be allocated to projects and not only to administration, as is the case at the present time. The provisional budget is passed unanimously, less one vote against and one abstention.

G- 2006 action program

Projects structuration

The Mojstrana's executive board meeting has validated a list of six fields of action for Mountain Wilderness International, list established taking into account the possibility for all associations to make it out and make these projects live: Ecotourism, Mountain protected areas, Obsolete installations, Mountain sports' impact, Silence!, Glaciers' protection and ski resorts. This list of themes is endorsed by everybody; it is proposed to add two items:

- Sensitization and education to environment;
- Energy and conservation of the water resource.

One point however is at issue: the wording of the theme "Impact of mountain sports". Beyond the management of the various mountain sports' practicing, this theme must also take into account the "alpinists' protection", as demand it Jordi Quera and Bernard Amy. Patrick Gabarrou recalls that the very basis of Mountain Wilderness' existence is to preserve the possibility of experiencing wilderness, but in the frame of a dialog, accepting restrictions linked to environment's protection. Carlo Alberto Pinelli insists on the notion of "experiencing Wilderness", which could not be questioned by prohibition of "umbrella opening" type (example given in the Beaumont, in Isère, of a mayor forbidding ski touring all winter in his town for security reasons). Patrick Le Meignen deplores this de-responsibilization of the citizen, in fashion nowadays.

François Labande quotes on the contrary a positive example: the climbing Convention of the Ecrins National Park banishing equipment in the core area, regulating it in the peripheral area, but leaving free access to climbers and alpinists. A general agreement is found that the theme must be reformulated taking into account these elements.

Silence !

The Assembly's approval is asked to engage a campaign at the European scale, to get the passing of an European directive on motorized leisure. The general Secretary proposes to set up a work group on this theme, the first task of which will be to identify the feasibility of this campaign. For that, it is necessary to take contact with well-informed people knowing the functioning of the European institutions. This proposal is passed with a broad majority.

Motion for Mont-Blanc protection

Jean-Pierre Courtin makes an historical account of the Mont-Blanc's protection and the developments of the 6 last years, leading to the setting of a Sustainable Development Scheme by the Espace Mont-Blanc. We have discussed this project, there is a sure risk that some representatives would kick out of touch line, but we want to believe in it. The territory of the Espace Mont-Blanc being diverse, the analysis is slightly different from Mountain Wilderness France, Italy and Switzerland. We however need to have a strong utterance, while taking into account the possibility to preserve favourable cooperation. After a first reading, various proposals are made, regarding the cable-car of the Pointe Helbronner, the need to take into account ecotourism and the alpine Convention. The text proposed for vote is the following:

Motion for Mont-Blanc's protection by the Sustainable Development Scheme

Gathered in Chambéry on 25 March 2006, the general Assembly of Mountain Wilderness International:

RECALLS

- that on the occasion of the bicentennial of the first Mont-Blanc's ascent in 1986, the founders of the movement have initiated the thinking on the international protection of the range,
- that in 1990 an official report concluded to feasibility of a French national Park with inclination to be enlarged to the two others countries,
- that the structure Espace Mont-Blanc (EMB) , driven by the Mont-Blanc Trans-boundary Conference (CTMB), has accepted responsibility in 1991 of a project of management and protection of the range in the three countries.

ESTABLISHES

- that various and positive actions have been engaged taking into account the territories' diversity, notably the creation of pedestrian itineraries and "Butiner au Mont-Blanc",
- that fifteen years of studies been exhausted, the EMB presents a Sustainable Development Scheme (SDD) which, in its orientations and action's memoranda, allows to engage policies toward the announced goal,
- that however the implementation of this scheme is guaranteed neither by the definition of a stable action perimeter, nor by the juridical means proper to each country into the common finality's service.

Fearing a new short-lived step, after the renunciation to the initial project of national Park, then of the structuring study on sensitive environments, Mountain Wilderness International

ASKS

- that the CTMB, complying with the SDD recommendations, asks officially to the three States to engage the procedure for listing the range to the World's Heritage of the United Nations Education, Science and Childhood Organization (UNESCO),
- that the CTMB transforms the SDD in a management plan eligible by UNESCO,
- that the CTMB, demonstrating its political will, asks to the public authorities of each country to implement the first measures of recovery and good management of the range.

RECOMMENDS particularly

- the stopping of the extension of the lifts' network and of the growth of the access flows in the heart of the range (Pointe Helbronner),
- the suppression of the nuisances induced by motorized leisure in the terrestrial and aerial spaces (prohibition of tourist flights)
- the limitation of artificial snow's production, taking into account the impacts on soils, landscapes and water resource,
- the dismantling of the White Valley cable-car, after broad study,
- the implementation of a plan for the dismantling of obsolete installations.

ENGAGES ITSELF to work as in the past, with all the affected parties, to the realization of the goals and actions of the Sustainable Development Scheme in the spirit and the letter of the Alpine Convention.

This motion is passed unanimously in session on 25 March 2006.

Planned actions for 2006

The general Secretary recalls some of the engagements and the great meetings for year 2006.

- Continuation of the actions in Azerbaijan (realization of the Shahdag national Park and renunciation to the ski resort's project in its perimeter) and in Chile (struggle against the Pascua-Lama mining project);
- Demonstration organized by the Initiative for Aragon's Mountains Defence on 25 June 2006, for the Pyrenees' protection, with the participation of Mountain Wilderness Catalonia, Spain and France;
- International action at Mount Olympus, in Greece, from 1st to 5 August;
- Dismantling of obsolete installations, at the Cerise Pass, in the Mercantour national Park, in France, this summer, with the participation of Mountain Wilderness Italy;
- Impassable Pass: the helicopters landings are there very common. Problem: on the Italian side, it is legal but very difficult from a practical point of view, on the French slope, it is illegal but easily workable. One must inquire very precisely on the boundary tracing and the place of the landings, before organizing either a public opinion demonstration, if it proves that the landings were taking place on the Italian side, or a formal notice to the Italian operators if they land in France;
- Cable-car at Monte Rosa: the project that has been blocked last year on Cresta Rossa has been presented again. MW Switzerland and Italy must thus mobilize to have it prohibited.

A particular point has been made on the **operations in Afghanistan**. This summer will take place the second formation course for liaison officers in Afghanistan. It must be recalled that last year, two Afghani women had participated, representing an advance for this country. They have thus been able to testify during the final press conference of the social progresses it was representing.

These courses can take place thanks to the support of American funds, of the United Nations Organization and the Aga Khan Foundation. Mountain Wilderness will realize the first alpinism guide from Noshaq to Baba Tengri, at the request of Aga Khan. It is in this area that will take place the courses of this year. A trek will also be organized with a professional organization, during a month through Little and Great Pamir.

European mountain law

Mountain Wilderness Spain puts a last point to the agenda: they ask the implementation of a work group on a European law for the mountain. Their wish is to study a text which would be based on the Spanish Charter of the Mountains financed by the Spanish Environment Ministry at the occasion of the international Year of Mountains in 2002. This charter, similar to the Alpine Convention and the Carpathians Convention, is not yet enforced, but the existence of these three texts, covering a great part of European mountains, makes plausible the passing of a global European law.

First work to do: recording the existing texts (charters, conventions, etc.); even if we do not succeed in fine to get such a directive, the knowledge would give us access to numerous tools to make our files progress. François Labande draws the attention on the fact that it is the subsidiarity principle that prevails in Europe; we must take care that a global directive will not be modified by the representatives.

Following this exchange, Patrick Gabarrou closes the works of the general Assembly.