

Charter of Konkordiaplatz (Amended by Additional Communes)

Declaration of Signature of the Charter by Additional Communes

On 26 September 2001, the communes of Bellwald, Fieschertal, Betten, Ried-Mörel, Naters, Birgisch, Mund, Baltschieder, Eggerberg, Ausserberg, Raron, Niedergesteln, Blatten im Lötschental, Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald signed the Charter of Konkordiaplatz on the Jungfrau-Aletsch, thereby testifying to their willingness to support the sustainable future development of this World Heritage Region. On 13 December 2001, the World Heritage Committee inscribed the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn site on the UNESCO World Heritage List – the first Alpine area to be inscribed on the famous list of world heritage sites. This network of “Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn” communes has pledged to UNESCO that it will undertake to establish an association, a financial mechanism, and a management plan for the World Heritage Site. In the context of developing this plan, it is foreseen that the perimeter of the site will be expanded to the east and the west, and that its southern border will be optimised in the Lötschental and the Lötschbergsüdrampe region. This expansion process was completed in mid-December 2004. The 11 communes below have confirmed this arrangement. By so doing, they become members of the network of World Heritage Region communes and, by signing the Charter of Konkordiaplatz, testify to their willingness to support and promote the sustainable development of the Region.

Preamble

We, the 11 additional communes of the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn World Heritage Region – Steg, Hohtenn, Wiler, Kippel, Ferden, Schattenhalb, Guttannen, Innertkirchen, Meiringen, Reichenbach i.K. and Kandersteg – hereby join the network of “Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn” communes. As members of this network, we pledge to support the development of the Region in accordance with the principles of sustainability. We are aware that we live in a landscape of outstanding beauty. The Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn region is of great aesthetic value and of major ecological and cultural importance. The Charter of Konkordiaplatz is the result of discussions and a constructive approach to fundamental ecological, economic and social issues relating to the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn region. The designation “Konkordiaplatz” symbolizes the coming together of different philosophies to form one of “concord”, just as a number of glaciers combine to form the Great Aletsch Glacier. We are proud that our communes will be included in the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn UNESCO World Heritage Site. This inclusion testifies to our past efforts – undertaken in conjunction with the cantonal and federal authorities, the regions and environmental associations – to protect, conserve and enhance this landscape. Our signatures on the Charter are an expression of our determination to continue to seek and to promote sustainable landscape development. Inclusion on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites would be a mark of international recognition for these endeavours. By signing this Charter, we are expressing our commitment to continue to promote the conservation and sustainable management of our environment, so that its quality and diversity may be bequeathed to future generations.

Foundations

This Charter is based on Agenda 21, the key document adopted at the UN “Earth Summit” held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The communes joined together in the network undertake to meet the requirements of Agenda 21 and to cooperate with all elements of our society – citizens, companies and special-interest groups – in establishing a “local Agenda 21”. As members of this network, we pledge to become involved in the processes of the local Agenda 21, and, in the long term, to develop action plans designed to promote sustainability.

Annex 1.1 B)

Definition of sustainability

Development is sustainable if it meets the needs of all segments of the population of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At the same time, it ensures that the diversity of the natural environment, including

flora and fauna, is preserved, together with the cultural heritage (adapted from the Brundtland Commission Report, 1987).

Charter of Konkordiaplatz

This Charter lays the foundations for sustainable development in the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn UNESCO World Natural Heritage Region and is to be understood as the "regional conscience" of the area in question. It rests on three pillars of equal status – ecological, social and economic.

We, the members of the network of Jungfrau-Aletsch- Bietschhorn communes, hereby declare:

- that we wish to survive as centres of community life, as supporters of the local economy, and as guardians of our natural and cultural heritage and traditions. We shall develop and put into effect long-term action plans, thereby strengthening our cooperation and creating links between the process of sustainability and the political authorities, the cantons of Bern and Valais, and all other interested parties;
- that the family and the commune represent the basic elements of our society within the cantons and the Confederation;
- that we aspire to social justice, viable economic systems and sustainable management of the natural environment;
- that we shall seek to reconcile the satisfaction of fundamental needs and the quality of life with conservation of the environment;
- that we shall endeavour to preserve existing jobs and to create new ones that cement social bonds within the community and are in accordance with the principles of sustainability;
- that we support measures to protect the climate and are committed to the promotion of renewable sources of energy as sustainable alternatives;
- that we are committed to the environmentally sound disposal of unavoidable waste and wish to avoid the release of toxic substances into the atmosphere, water, soil or foodstuffs;
- that we shall enable all citizens to obtain access to information and allow them to participate in local decision-making processes;
- that we shall seek to provide information, training and continuing education for the general public;
- that, in order to achieve the goals of sustainability, we shall review the measures taken (by collecting and processing environmental data, etc.) so that any necessary adjustments can be made to the action plans;
- with regard to the Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn UNESCO World Natural Heritage site, the network undertakes in particular:
 - to spell out the protection goals already defined for the proposed World Heritage site, and to show how these goals can be achieved;
 - following the inscription of the site in the List, to pursue the question of possible extensions and/or the addition of buffer zones;
 - and to promote sustainable management of the landscape, especially with regard to agriculture, forestry and tourism.

This Charter may be supplemented or further elaborated in accordance with discussions conducted within the network of communes.

Issued at the City of Berne UNESCO World Heritage Site , 1 March 2005

Signed by the Presidents (or Secretaries) of the communes of the expanded "Jungfrau-Aletsch-Bietschhorn" network: