

International Year of Planet Earth: The Swiss contribution

<http://iype.scnat.ch>

A Swiss national committee for the International Year of Planet Earth has been active since February 2006 under the umbrella of the platform geosciences of the Swiss Academy of Sciences. President: Pascal Kindler

In addition to the involvement of Switzerland in two international IYPE initiatives (**OneGeology** and **Via GeoAlpina**), numerous activities dedicated to the IYPE are offered at the national, regional or local level.

At the national level, the official launching event of the IYPE in Switzerland took place on June 1st and 2nd 2007 with the outreach initiative « **Erlebnis Geologie / Géologie Vivante** ». Numerous events were proposed by professional and amateur geologists all over Switzerland during these two days, with the aim of furthering the understanding of geology amongst the Swiss citizens. The second edition of « Erlebnis Geologie / Géologie Vivante » will take place on May 28th and 29th 2010

BaseCamp09 is the major outreach and educational initiative in Switzerland dedicated to the International Year of Planet Earth. BaseCamp09 will consist of an itinerant festival that will stop in different cities in the four Swiss linguistic regions during the year 2009. Six of the 10 official IYPE themes will be developed under the common concept of «experiencing environmental changes».

BaseCamp09 will consist of a mobile infrastructure reminiscent of the base camps used in large scientific research missions. Not only will it be a place of dialogue, debate and reflection about environmental change, but also a place for relaxation and entertainment. Guided excursions radiating from the base camp will offer the visitors the opportunity to see for themselves the changes to our environment.

The six following themes of the International Year of the Planet Earth will be developed in the festival. They will not be treated in an individual way but integrated in the overall concept of «experiencing environmental changes»:

- * Earth & Life
- * Hazards
- * Climate
- * Resources
- * Deep Earth
- * Earth & Health

For maximal impact, a large media coverage has been assured.

The 2008 edition of the «**Swiss Geosciences Meeting**» has dedicated a special symposium to the International Year of Planet Earth under the umbrella of the Swiss IUGS national committee and the International Lithosphere Program.

On July 7th 2008, the World Heritage Committee included the «**Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona**» in the UNESCO's World Heritage List. The World Heritage Committee acknowledged in particular the educational and scientific value of the "Swiss Tectonic Arena Sardona": *the mountain-building processes, with numerous exposures, and the overthrust, visible over considerable distances, were impressively manifested and had played a significant role in scientific research since the eighteenth century. The nomination set a high standard for other tectonic or geological sites.* The Committee emphasized that probably only a small number of tectonic properties are suitable for inclusion on the World Heritage List.

Swissmint, the Swiss Federal Mint, has dedicated the 2008 commemorative CHF 50.- **gold coin** to the International Year of Planet Earth.

For other activities and initiatives related to the International Year of Planet Earth, please see: <http://iype.scnat.ch>