NEW CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE REORGANIZATION OF SLOVENIAN MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

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Abstract: History of mountain climbing has a very long history among Slovenes. Therefore the same may be anticipated for the Slovenian Mountain Rescue Service. The first Slovenian mountain rescue station was set up in 1912, however the tradition of mountain rescue dates even further back. Law established the current Slovenian Mountain Rescue Service (SMRS) as a public rescue service of national importance. Today 17 stations that cover the entire Slovenian Alpine and Sub-Alpine regions represent the SMRS. The SMRS was formally recognized in 1992 by the International Mountain Rescue Commission (IMRC), although the SMRS has co-operated actively with this Commission and was the representative of all Yugoslav mountain rescuers from 1955. From the organizational point of view the SMRS represents the most important pillar of Alpine Association of Slovenia (AAS). Originally the SMRS was organized for help and rescue of the AAS’s members. Visitors of More Slovene Mountains grew lately (in year 2005 the estimation was around 2,5 million) and many of climbers are not members of the AAS. But despite of SMRS rescue a priority, help was in still is provided regardless of the membership of individual. Because of this new challenges have to be tackled in the future. Number of realized rescue missions is growing from year to year; besides more and more rescue missions are in close connection with new sports and activities of the mountain climbers. Therefore the SMRS has to cope with new rescue approaches using new equipment on even more difficult terrain. Based on that the SMRS stands on the crossroads where two organizational possibilities are offered for the future existence: professionalization of the SMRS or preservation of the current status with the core of the rescue workers as amateurs. Along this question the assurance of adequate financial resources has to be solved. Some experts recommend the transfer of responsibility from state (that finances all rescue missions regardless insurance of the injured person) on the shoulders of mountain climbers. But there are several obstacles on that path. Some of those questions are discussed in this paper and several answers to them are offered.

KEY WORDS: mountain rescue, professionalization, profession/occupation, mountain insurance, mountain rescue service (SMRS) interventions.

INTRODUCTION

Although the roots of organized and institutionalised mountain climbing among Slovenes can be undoubtedly proved only from 19th century on, visiting of Slovene mountains has much longer history. The same can be stated also for the organized mountain rescue that went a long with the increase of mountain climbers and other mountain visitors. Nevertheless, the Alpine Association of Slovenia (AAS) established the Slovene Mountain Rescue Service (SMRS). The main reason for this step was responsibility of the AAS towards its members in case of mountain accidents. First Mountain Rescue Service station was created in 1912, and with this fact, the institutionalisation of mountain rescue in Slovenia had begun (Habjan, 2002: 10).

Nowadays the legal fundation of mountain rescue activities represents the Law of security against natural and others accidents (Zakon o varstvu pred naravnimi in dugimi nesrećami). With that the SMRS was given the status of public service for protection, rescue and help with special importance. The SMRS has on the bacis organizational level 17 rescue stations that cover whole area of the Republic of Slovenia. However, special emphasis is given to the Alpine and Subapline region. For normal daily work of the SMRS damands more than 600 mountaion rescurers. From 1992 the SMRS was recognized as a good organized, equiped and successful mountain rescue service by the International Mountain Rescue Commission – IMRC. Despite different opinions is the SMRS from organizational point of view very important part of the Alpine Association of Slovenia. Number of different visitors (from professional mountain climbers
to the occasional mountaineers) of Slovene mountains is constantly increasing. Just in 2004 number reached 2.5 million. This data underlines very important fact – more and more visitors of Slovene mountains are not members of Alpine Association of Slovenia. But help, if needed, has to be provided, regardless of the nature of the accident and possible responsibility of the victim. However, many of them are foreigners, poorly prepared (physically and psychologically) and equipped for serious mountain climbing. At the same time they unfortunately don’t respect the basic directives regarding the weather and mountain climbing procedures what leads to carelessness and underestimation of the mountain climbing. Based on that the preventive efforts of the SMRS in case of foreign mountain visitors aren’t as successful as it might be.

On the other hand, some of the above-mentioned facts may be assigned to the huge modification of the mountain climber’s culture or mountain perception. The live style of today’s life changed dramatically. Mountains became area of so called adrenalin sports like canyoning, skydiving and hang-gliding. Consequently the rescue missions cannot be perceived as classical mountain rescue task. The victims should be helped in even more unapproachable areas, where new equipment and modified rescue techniques have to be exercised. But the SMRS has to cope also with the non-mountain rescue missions like rescue interventions from high buildings in urban areas. That represents very high burden on volunteer mountain rescuers that might to be employed in total different branch of business and in many cases several kilometres from the rescue stations where each and every rescue mission is started (Škerbinek, 2006). Besides, social changes dramatically modified values in every day life. Volunteer work, altruism and self-sacrifice aren’t reasonable in modern, self-oriented and profitable society that we nowadays live in. Therefore question of reorganizing the SMRS offers itself. But moreover, one answer has to be given – how to assure extra founds in case of professionalization of the SMRS. We’ll discuss some aspects that might pop out if such structural changes might be implemented. Consequently several answers will be given to most sensitive questions of the future development of the SMRS.

THE SLOVENE ORGANISED MOUNTAIN CLIMBING AND MOUNTAINEERING

The fact is that mountains had always very significant role in Slovene national consciousness and development. If till 18 century the mountain visiting was connected with communication roads (mountain pass) and food searching (known are slopes of Trenta and Bohinj poachers towards Triglav mountains) in 19 century the mountaineering became one of the central parts of Slovene national culture (mountain culture – Alpenkultur – of Slovens), in the beginning within intellectuicals, later also within other social strata (Šaver, 2005). At the end of 19 century the Slovene mountain climbing had begun to organize and institutionalise, especially on the waves of national awoken movement. Clear proof for this is certainly the establishment of first Slovene mountain climbing club "Triglavski prijatelji" (Triglav's friends) in 1872, just 15 years after English mountain climbing club, the oldest in Europe (the first Triglavski prijatelji club's president was Ivan Žan, chaplain in Srednja vas). The club had own cottage and also the road toward Triglav. The also put an application for registration, but was rejected by Autro-Hungarian empire bureaucracy. Therefore for the first legal recognised form of Slovene organised mountain climbing and mountaineering the Slovene alpine club (Slovenski planinski klub) could be put out. The Slovene alpine club was formed in 1893 and was working with continuity until 1945, when fundamental social changes were occurred with arising of socialism (Donaj, 2000: 3-8).

The Second World War and arising of socialism radically changed the whole civil society organisation and mountaineering is not the exception at all. After transitional period the new very important abuttal is the year 1948 when the Alpine Association of Slovenia was founded. For the president Fedor Košir was elected. Such organisational form was valid until 1991, when Slovene Alpine Association got out from Yugoslav Alpine Association and became independent in accordance of independent Slovene state. Slovene Alpine Association also entered into The International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation – UIAA as well into International organisation of Mountain Rescue – IKAR.

By the side of Slovene mountain club there had been more attempts for organizing climber and mountaineers. All attempts have the same origin, the national consciousness placing on and preventing the German activities in Slovene Alps. One of the most important such attempt was the establishment of Turistovski klub Skala, which was working
between 1921 and 1945. It reflected the contrarieties within Slovene mountaineers where one side spoke in favour of popularisation of mountaineering all over Slovene social strata, the other side in opposite favourites exclusiveness and elite as well as technical pretentious climbing. Skala was already think-tank of Slovenian mountaineering, carrying for ideological and educational matters, signposts (well known white sign with red ring), publishing, and mountain climbing as well as Tour skiing. Skala had own ski “departure” and helped very much for emancipation of skiing as Slovene national sport activity. Although in 1945 the Skala activities were broken off (socialist system didn't allow the competition on any social sphere and Mountainearing isn't exception), the idea was revived in 1995, when Alpine club dr. Henrik Tuma was organised with its basic task, to resume Skala tradition and climbing approach (Jeglič, 2001).

What is very important for our discussion is the fact, that both major mountain organisations had own rescue teams. Here the roots of Slovene Mountain rescue could be found. Because the Skala attempted to stress on qualitative climbing and mountain visiting was a logical consequence that its rescue teams were better prepared and trained. Nevertheless Slovene Mountain Rescue Service recognises its roots in the Rescue Teams of Slovene Alpine club, established 1912 in Kranjska gora with its basic task to help injured or exhausted mountaineers. Although the Slovene Mountain Rescue service was able to keep its monopole in the field of Rescuing all the period after the Second World War till present time, in this year was making clear, that Slovene Mountain Rescue Service surpassed own founder, Slovene Alpine Association. If the secession from Slovene Alpine Association would lead towards demonopolisation of Mountain Rescue (with appearance of different rescue service in Alpine world) we shall see. But we can paraphrase saying that never will be the same, as sometimes was.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES OF THE SMRS IN THE FUTURE?

Nowadays, the SMRS is organized as a public service with the national importance. This status is recognized also to the Firefighter's service, Cave Rescue Service and Service for protection and rescue in case of ecological and other accidents on the Slovenian see. Consequently, this legal and de facto (provided help on the rescue missions) status of the SMRS gave to it very important position of the national-security system of Republic of Slovenia (Ušeničnik, 1999: 16). Although the SMRS has many achievements and developed from small into successful and well-known service, it didn’t go though any worth mentioning organizational changes. But there were many reasons that announced vivid discussion relating the organizational future of SMRS. Some of them were already mentioned in the introduction however two of them were fundamental:

- New challenges that SMRS confronted lately (many accidents where help was provided to the people not being members of Alpine Association of Slovenia like adrenalin sports) that put huge burden on the volunteer mountain rescuers – many of them were constantly on the rescue missions
- As expected consequence, the question of further founding of the SMRS came on the surface, because new equipment has to be bought and maintained, mountain rescuers has to be constantly on the trainings, what dramatically changed their personal life (not being able to attend to work and be at home)

On this point the discussion regarding professionalization or introducing the occupational mountain rescue service in Slovenia began. But already swiftly mentioned arguments showed the complexity of the situation. Answer to the question of abolishing volunteer principle among the mountain rescuers can’t be simple. The experts and professionals divided in two groups, concerning the future organization of the SMRS. Each of them has presented very essential arguments for their standpoint, however the main goal of possible organizational changes mustn’t be forgotten: accessible and professional help to all visitors of Slovene mountains has to be provided. Reorganization of the SMRS in direction of occupational and not volunteer employment of mountain rescuer would most probably preserved the quality of the mountain service on high level, but the question is what would happen to the universabby and accessibility respectively. There are legitimate doubts on higher financial participation of the state regarding growing expenses of possible occupational orientation of the SMRS. Therefore, very important share of further financing in this case is expected by insurances or personal by in mountains injured person. Consequently the adequte help would be provided only to those mountain visitors who would have concluded the insurance policy. This approach is practiced in different European countries like France and Switzerland (Pograjc, 2006). In this way the state transfers the responsibility for
funding of all costs of rescue and medical treatment on the insurance companies and consequently on each individual. This transfer of responsibility may cause different problems. One of them could be introduction of social segregation among the mountain visitors, since some of them could not afford to pay for such insurance. It has to be emphasized that these costs shouldn’t represent enormous burden to the mountain visitors, but certain negative attitude among them may be expected (Pavliha, 2001: 47). This would happen especially in case of members of the Alpine Association of Slovenia (AAS), since the SMRS was originally established for help and support to them. The AAS as volunteer organization must not divide its members upon their financial or social status in society. Besides, the mountaineering has very important historical place in the history of Slovenes as a symbol of equality and national cooperation. Slovene mountains were and still are the area of national unity. Because the social and moreover the financial segregation is taking place among Slovenes as a young, transitional society after the collapse of the socialism and communism, this values, according to majority of mountaineers, shouldn’t be applied to visitors of Slovene mountains. In case of introduction of the insurance policy into mountaineering, system has to have thoroughly organized inspection service that must eliminate possible irregularities and prevent unpleasant occurrences in case non-reimbursement of the rescue costs if individual didn’t have appropriate insurance. Besides, it can be imagined the moral dilemma of mountain rescue worker on the site of the accident if he shouldn’t help to help in limited way to the injured person without proper insurance.

Perhaps is more importantly than introduction of insurance system and occupationalization of the SMRS to discuss the relations between the AAS and the SMRS, since these two institution are very closely connected. Cooperation between those institutions is based not only on the legal and historical grounds. All future members of the SMRS are firstly members of the AAS, because basic knowledge regarding mountaineering is expected. With that fact the AAS represents recruitment pool for the SMRS what that and the fact of biggest association regarding the number of members, gives the AAS special position. Therefore the intensive cooperation between the AAS and the SMRS must be continued and further development in the field of further organization and financing of the SMRS must be accomplished through mutual consensus.

Final question that still doesn't have an answer among Slovene experts is: would occupational structure of the SMRS enhance further qualitative development of the SMRS and resolve questions regarding enormous pressure on individual rescue worker? At the first sight the correlation between quality of the rescue work as one of most important factor of professionalism might be established, however, in case of mountain rescue well paid and strictly professional relations might not be enough. According to Strojin (1995: 47) mountain rescue work does need more. Mountain rescue worker must love his job and enjoy the mountains firstly because different physical and psychological pressures happen during the rescue missions. Besides, personal integrity and even the life of mountain rescue worker have to be risked – normally for totally unknown person. This is the reason that Strojin sees the indispensable ethnical and human component in the act of mountain rescue. Therefore, mountain rescue is an act where personal expectations and even security are replaced by the needs of the injured person. Therefore must be the mountain rescue work considered as a noble, extremely human and altruistic act that isn’t very common in the modern society. Majority of the stress might not be easy to eliminate for the mountain rescue worker, but from the standpoint of the organization other unnecessary burden could be minimized. And this is very important argument from the side that eagerly defends occupational organization of the SMRS. At present the mountain rescue worker is employed in different sectors, which in many occasions isn’t event slightly connected to mountain rescue activities. In case of an accident he or she is paged to come to the mountain rescue station where all the necessary equipment for this particularly mission is prepared. Because the time is essential in mountain rescue work, rescuers have to be on the mission as soon as possible. Many times everything runs so fast that even closest family members don’t know what is happening with the individual rescuer. But this isn’t all. Rescuers have to be on constant trainings and educational seminars besides growing number of mountain accidents, what leads into constant absence from the family and employer. Because of this, some employers don’t want to have a mountain rescuer among their workers.

Because of possible introduction of occupational reorganization of the SMRS new aspects came to surface. Most important is definitely financial one. The SMRS was and this isn’t going to change in the near future, financed from two basic pillars: first is the Ministry of Defense who through the URSZR provides around 60% of total financial resources
to the SMRS. Other 40% comes from the Ministry of Health or more precisely with the help of Foundation for financing of Invalid and Humanitarian Organizations. In 2005 the SMRS was granted status of humanitarian organizational what means that it can’t be privatized or changed in a great manner. Although, this kind of financing may provide constant financial flow but on the other hand it means more or less fixed budget of the SMRS for the future. At the same time close cooperation was established between the SMRS and Ministry of Defense (Slovene Armed Forces) on one hand and the SMRS and Ministry of Interior on the other (Zupanc, 2006). Both ministries provided extra help through helicopter rescue activities, because the SMRS doesn’t have material possibilities for these kinds of missions. But the professional knowledge and expectations towards mountain rescuers are growing due to the new equipment and rescue technique introduced lately. Future development of the SRMS clearly goes into further specialization that may be provided only on total professionalisation, especially in sense of constant employed rescuers. Therefore is fair and necessary to get an answer to the question: is it possible to put even greater burden on the shoulders of the mountain rescuer that is volunteer and above all not constantly employed in the structure of the SMRS? The answer to this question wouldn’t be easy but from the standpoint of mountain rescuers the nowadays activities in the SMRS might already reach the peak of available free time of mountain rescuers and with that understanding of the employers and family members. Because of this the reorganization of SMRS through the full employment of mountain rescuers would be highly recommended if the level of professionalism and quality of mountain rescue work were to be maintained.

Chart 1: Organizational structure of SMRS

ACCIDENTS AND RESCUE ACTIVITIES OF SMRS

Mountain accidents and therefore mountain rescue actions go far back in history and are closely correlated with the interference of human being in this region. However, organized mountain rescue service in Slovene mountains has its roots in 1913, when first Mountain and alpine associations came to existence. With that mountaineering became popular and accessible to all social groups and status. Nowadays popularity of different mountain visiting clearly shows the analysis of free time activities and accidents during practicing them. Around 65% of all accidents occur right during different forms of mountain visiting\(^1\). Consequently the number of interventions and rescue missions conducted by the SMRS grew from year to year. This fact could be even expected, since the MCA is largest association in Slovenia with more than 100.000 members. Therefore, by the estimations of the SMRS Slovene Mountains are visited by 3 million visitors yearly. Their mountain climbing backgrounds and knowledge varies greatly among them. Consequently in year 2004 the members of the SMRS conducted 301 rescue missions, where 323 people were involved. Among them 160 were injured and sadly 32 died despite all efforts of mountain rescuers. Intensity of rescue work may be described also through 8.931 realized rescue hours. In 98 of them police or military helicopter and supported the rescue action and in 156 direct medical support was needed and therefore provided. It must be emphasized that parallel to the growing number of the mountain accidents happened also substantial growth of accidents not directly connected to the mountaineer activity. In 2004 around 30% of all SMRS rescue missions were carried out in this manner (Natural and other accidents in Republic of Slovenia in year 2004: 2005, pp. 68)\(^2\).

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1. It has to be emphasized that nowadays mountaineering went far beyond borders of just Alpine region. New tracking and hiking ways were created and in regions where dominate mountains of medium height but accidents occur also in this areas. In some cases even more often.
2. SMRS doesn't react only in case of so called classical mountain accidents like falls, slides, strokes of lightnings, snow avalanches, but also in case of people searching in mountains, rescue of illnes mountaineers, however one important aspect of SMRS rescue activities represent the rescue of injured sportsmen and athletes practising different adrenalin sports in mountain and hilly regions but still difficult approachable for rescuers (Natural and other accidents in Republic of Slovenia in year 2004: 2005, pp. 68).
Just a quick glance over the mountain accidents statistics give us many characteristics that might be linked to the social changes in Slovene society and new geopolitical relations of Slovenia after the membership of EU and NATO. Some of them have to be underlined:

- Way of life changed drastically. Intensifying burden of daily work and lack of free time lead into poor physical preparedness. Trying to avoid this, many people want to take advantage of every free moment to make a brief visit to mountains. In many cases they don’t consider the weather conditions or even the summer time, necessary mountain equipment and their physical and psychological readiness for the upcoming efforts. Based on this lower mountains or range of mountains of medium height are visited in growing number what is a direct consequence of underestimation. Therefore, the SMRS has to intervene into remote areas, fairly more distant from the SMRS stations, what may prolong the response time. Besides this interventions require direct medical support, since the accidents happen because of physical overburdening of the organism. Most frequently injuries are heart failures, damages of muscles tissues, bad sprains and dislocations of the joints and bone fractures.

- Because of their specific knowledge, SMRS members are more and more indispensable in different rescue missions that are not related to mountain rescue. Nice and very frequently example is rescue from high buildings and similar accidents. Main reason for this kind of involvement of SMRS lays in its professionalism, reliability and very short reaction time.

- Different sport activities known as adrenalin sports like canyoning and skydiving for example, urge the SMRS member into additional rescue work that is in many cases even more dangerous. New rescue equipment and techniques have to be used. Besides the areas of this kind of accidents are commonly even less approachable because adrenalin sports are based on discovery of non-explored sites. Some rescue missions have to be carried out from tight and deep canyons, rock walls etc.

- Foreigners more and more visit Slovenian Mountains. Higher percentage of foreign mountaineers might be direct consequence of geopolitical changes on the European continent – EU and NATO enlargement. It must be emphasized that many of foreign mountain visitors come from traditionally non-mountain states or without any mountain climbing background or knowledge. Besides they aren’t properly equipped, they don’t respect warnings of the SMRS members (or they just don’t understand them), they underestimate the Slovene mountains and last but not least, their physical and psychological preparedness for mountain climbing is very poor. All this might be labeled as a very low mountaineer culture what normally leads into enormous difficulties in case of rescue activities – they don’t leave any messages at the mountain huts regarding their mountain route.

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3 In year 2004 the number of all non-mountain rescue actions grew over 30%. This fact must be understand as greatly additional burden for the SMRS members on one hand and proof of highly respected, well coordinated, reliable and professional work on the other. Very famous intervention of SMRS was the rescue of injured worker from a deep cave in construction yard – he had to be risen over several metres high (Pograjc, 2006: interview).
Table 1: Mountain Rescue Service activities between 1995-2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of interventions</th>
<th>Number of rescuing persons</th>
<th>Number of injured persons</th>
<th>Number of sick persons</th>
<th>Number of dead persons</th>
<th>Rescue hours</th>
<th>Helicopter interventions</th>
<th>Doctor presence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6341</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12024</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7467</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6172</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6005</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9552</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8983</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8525</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>161</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>7982</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>383*</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>104</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>


Table 2: MRS interventions in 2004 by individual stations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATION</th>
<th>Number of interventions</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>Dead</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Nb. of intervention</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Bled</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>280</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bovec</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celje</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesenice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jesenice-ko</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kranj</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>174</td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kanalak Gora</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ljubljana</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maribor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mojstrana</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pervlje</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radovljica</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratece</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skofja Loka</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Telenin</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>418</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trzic</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>300</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>2142</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


CONCLUSION

Mountain rescuing has a really long and a very special tradition among Slovenes considering its contribution for strengthening national consciousness in a period of Austria-Hungarian empire. In this time of German pressure against Slovene national territory, Slovene mountains as well as mountaineers, climbers and rescuers have become a symbol of defending Slovene national interests. On this base mountain (alpine) associations have been formed. And this is the true reason why the AAS belongs to major civil society organisations in Slovenia.
Mountain visiting in Slovenia was always very intensive, but in a fact never comprehending just with mountaineering and Alpine climbing. But at this stage we have to put out chance visitors, which number is increasing very fast especially with Slovenia's development into tourist country. Nearby increasing number of mountain visitors the increasing number of mountain accidents has to be mentioned. But they are not just a consequence of greater visiting but also a consequence of changing lifestyle (psychophysical preparedness and fitness are in average very poor, mountain accessibility on the other hand better and better), adrenalin sport activities (canyoning, skydiving, hang-gliding, rafting) and non-consideration of mountain culture especially by foreign visitors from Eastern Europe. The SMRS should adapt to mentioned new challenges by all means. Its interventions increase very quickly, on the other hand specialisation in technique steps forward. Altruistic endeavour of rescuers doesn't ensure further efficient working thereby the discussion about professional mountain rescue service appears and pretty split mountain rescue community. In this case professional volunteers within mountain rescuing should become occupational rescuers (also very professional), focused just on performing pretended mountain rescue. This dilemma was a base for convening Mountain Rescuer Assembly in March 2006. All this session was going into direction of changing position of Mountain Rescue Service within Slovene Alpine Association. After the voting the assembly has decided to leave Slovene Alpine Association and form independent mountain rescue organisation. The reasons are numerous but one of the most important is belief that independent rescue organisation would fulfil its mission in better way. At this point we have to think over how to go forward. Will Slovene Alpine Association establish its own mountain rescue service and what kind of cooperation would develop two services at all? The both organisations are connected with each other very closely especially by personnel and social mission. All members of Mountain Rescue Service are first fully mountaineers (in social sense) and then climbers. In a case of breaking ties the both organisations would have starting troubles. Slovene Alpine Association would have troubles with a lack of qualitative professional personnel, on the other hand Mountain Rescue Service would get new skilled cadre with difficulty (personnel base will maintain in hand of Slovene Alpine Association). Whatever the probable outcome of this complicated situation will be, it shouldn’t affect the individual security of mountain visitors, what has to be the most important task of all proper services and organisations in Slovenia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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