NEW CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE REORGANIZATION OF SLOVENE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SLOVENE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE (SMR)

1. BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF ALPINE ASSOCIATION OF SLOVENIA (AAS):

• the roots of AAS are traced down into year 1872, when first attempts for registration of Slovene mountain society were made (“Triglav friends”)
• 1893 twenty years of efforts were awarded by recognition of the Slovene Alpine Society
• Slovene Alpine Society functioned till the end of II. world war, when political and social changes were introduced
• after turbulent times (in 1948) the Alpine Association of Slovenia (SMCA) was established that we know nowadays
• in 1991 AAS was accepted into UIAA and IKAR
BIRTH OF SLOVENE MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

• in year 1912 the Alpine Association of Slovenia (AAS) established Mountain Rescue Service for help to their members if needed
• another attempts of mountain rescue were materialized in the Slovene alpine club named SKALA in 1921
• this service was strongly associated with the Slovenian nationalism and perception of mountains as the Slovene national symbol
• in 1948 when the AAS was established its Mountain Rescue Service became the status of the only mountain rescue service in Slovenia
• Mountain Rescue Service of Slovenia is organizationally still (very important) part of AAS – but not for long
Organisation

- In 1996 renaming into Mountain Rescue Service of Slovenia (MRSS)
- In accordance with the law on Protection against Natural and Other Disasters MRSS became one of the most important pillars of protection, rescue and relief forces. It has a status of public service, organised in frame of Alpine Association of Slovenia
- Organisational structure
Organisation
Organisation
Accidents and interventions

• Some characteristics of mountain accidents
  – Changing lifestyle of individuals (poor psychophysical condition (a lack of time) leads toward numerous activities in the range of mountains of medium height where the number of rescuers is smallest
  – High professional qualification, reliability and rapid reaction time ensure frequently interventions out of mountain territory (rescuing from high buildings in the cities, in heavily accessible terrain etc.)
  – More popular adrenalin sport activities (canyoning, skydiving, hang-gliding, rafting) brought new rescue challenges,
  – Opening and availability of mountain region for mass tourism (in the mountains we have between 2 and 3 million visitors yearly) → breakthrough of mountaineering into non-alpine regions
Accidents and interventions

- Analysis of interventions:
  - 301 interventions in year 2004
  - The part of non-mountain interventions 30 %
  - In Ljubljana MRSS (a half of Slovenian territory) 0.14 interventions per rescuer, Bohinj 0.13 and 0.18 → burdening pretty the same, the problem is dispersion in some stations
  - The number of interventions and injured persons is going up
  - The number of dead persons is stagnating (about 30 person per year).
Accidents and interventions

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Nm. of injured persons</th>
<th>Nm. of sick persons</th>
<th>Nm. of dead persons</th>
<th>Rescue hours</th>
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FOUNDING OF MOUNTAIN RESCUE SERVICE

• after 2004 when the status of humanitarian organization was granted to Mountain Rescue Service continuity of further funding was insured
• the structure of nowadays founding is as followed:
  - 60% of all funds is provided by Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief
  - 40% Foundation for Disabled Peoples Organization
• based on that the MRSS is provided around $1 million
• 50% of collected funds are divided among the mountain rescue stations based on the number of interventions in each station
PROFESSIONALIZATION VS OCCUPATION OF MRS

PROFESSIONALIZATION:

• means high educational and training qualification, reliability, rapid reaction capability, exclusiveness of profession, high standards for enter the association
• isn’t directly connected to the professionalization – even amateurs can be professionals what is the case in Slovenia
• demands constant training and education, what may represent high burden on the individual

OCCUPATION:

• in based on full time employees, regardless the rang of professionalization – not all occupations are considered as professions
MRS IS VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION BUT HOW LONG?

Main problems of MRS today are:
• growing number of accidents, spreading area of intervention, new rescue challenges
• huge “time burden” on the individuals who must be in constant training and educational process (all rescuers are employed elsewhere)
• financial insecurity in the future (not determined status of MRS on the state level)

OCCUPATIONAL MRS IN THE FUTURE
YES OR NO – THAT IS THE QUESTION?