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EU PROTEUS SLOVENIA & CROATIA

European Commission

Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

ECHO A5, Civil Protection Policy Unit

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SECOND PROGRESS REPORT of a project:

Raising Awareness and Improving the Effectiveness of Cave Rescue within the Community Civil Protection Mechanism

-EU PROTEUS-



230301/2011/614249/SUB/A5

Ljubljana, 2013

Jamarska zveza Slovenije – Jamarska reševalna služba; Lepi pot 6, p.p. 2544, 1109 Ljubljana, SLOVENIA
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Project EU Proteus (No. 230301/2011/614249/SUB/A5)

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1. Summary update of the project past, on-going and planned activities and outputs

This report gives an overview of the activities undertaken during the second eight months of the project (1st of September 2012 – 31st of April 2013). A list of all performed actions and deliverables of this project is attached in **Annex 1**.

After the first progress report (20.8.2012), our project activities continued as planned. First, there was extra publicity of the project at the Youth caving camp JuHöFoLa 2012 (<http://www.juhoefola.de/>) held from July, 27th to August, 11th near Blaubeuren, Baden-Wurtenberg, Germany. During a specially organised Slovenian evening, we made besides a presentation about our country and its cave systems a presentation of the Slovenian Cave rescue Service, the EU Proteus project, achievements of the project and the Slovenian Cave Registry system. The German club Höhlenverein Blaubeuren e.V. also work with young cavers and found our posters very interesting (attractive and informative) and plan to prepare similar materials in the German language.

We have also given our recommendations concerning standardized cavers/rescuers' personnel equipment (from Task C: Action C.1 - Standard equipment necessary for the safe entering and in-dependent working in a cave) to allow optimal progress through a cave and enable cavers/rescuers to work efficiently with the rescue system. Response to these recommendations was very positive.

Task C (Action C.2) was also completed during this period and a report covering the Slovenian and Croatian speleological and caving legislation was prepared. This review of legislation gives guidelines for creating instructions for foreigners (who will be) visiting Slovenian and Croatian caves. Findings listed in the report will be summarized in a special document for foreign cavers.

Actions G.2 (Implementation of the International Cave Rescue Instructors Training (CRT) 2012 by the leadership of instructors of JRS and HGSS) and F.1 (Implementation of emergency medical service on the International Cave Rescue Training (CRT) 2012 and training of members of the Cave Rescue Unit); were the EU Proteus project's most important actions during 2012. These actions took place during the 16th to 23rd September in Sežana, Slovenia. All details including a list of candidates for cave rescue instructors were noted in the report of these actions (8.11.2012); the following is a summary of the most important facts. Forty participants from ten countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey) attended the training exercise. The realization of the training exercise was considered successful by the Program for International Cave Rescue instructors (result of an Action G.1). During eight days of training it was possible to fulfil the goal of eighty hours of intensive lectures, short demonstrations, and practical work. The practical work took place in a series of small caves for consolidation of knowledge and culminated in a flawless final large cave rescue exercise, for which we received the highest rating by independent evaluators. A short review of the week's activities can be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZecueONgwzg>. Amongst the most important publicity activities was a visit by the president of the Republic of Slovenia as well as our presentation day which attracted all important media in Slovenia. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction in the way the whole course was prepared and executed. Certainly, it was one of the best training activities of the whole project.

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At the same time (16.9.2012) we also publicised the project at the “Magic day” event held at the Arboretum, Domžale, Slovenia (<http://www.carobnidan.si/index.php?page=fotogalerija-arboretum-2012>), while one of our members also participated at the Meeting of the Italian technical commission from CNSAS (Commissione nazionale soccorso alpino e speleo); the main topic was equipment testing (22.-23.9.2012). As a result of the Action H.1 a list of relevant caving equipment which must be tested (6.10.2012) was prepared.

Under Actions B.3 and B.4 we researched two large (> 500 m deep) caves (6th October in Slovenia and on 16th November in Croatia): Velika ledena jama (Big ice cave) at Paradana, Slovenia and Kita Gaćešina cave, Croatia. The objectives of Actions B.3 and B.4 were achieved i.e., technical rescue plans were prepared and these two caves were made more secure due to re-rigging work. The technical rescue plans were sent as a deliverable of B.3 and B.4 Actions (21.1.2013). The Velika ledena cave was also chosen as the location of the final cave rescue exercise (Action G.2).

In October we performed the first joint training exercise of with the Croatian Cave Rescue Unit (Action E.7 – 27.10.2012). Because of poor weather, the location of training was switched from the Klementina 1 cave to the Cave system Jopica spilja – Source Bent. Klementina 1 is a temporary abyss and prone to flooding making caving during a heavy downpour potentially dangerous. For practical training proposes, we simulated an accident where a caver was injured in the furthest part of the cave. The main task was to organize the transport of stretchers to the surface. In total fifty-four rescuers from Slovenia and Croatia participated in the operation.

In November 2012 we organised several days of equipment testing (Action H.2 - Laboratory testing of caving gear and ropes used on previous actions). Some of these tests were performed in the field while others in the testing Laboratory. A final report of practical (field) and laboratory testing (Action H.4) was prepared. Overall, a large amount of testing of caving procedures and cave equipment was carried out – some of our results are unique and we aim to publish them in international journals of high quality. On 10th November we gave a presentation of the project to the Croatian cavers’ annual meeting in 2012 at Drežnik Grad near Rakovica, Croatia, which is published in the Almanac of Summaries.

In total we successfully realized all of the five planned training exercises outlined in the EU Proteus Cave Rescue Unit (Actions E.3 – E.7) and a common report of all five exercises were sent out. At the beginning of the train exercises it was very important for all members to get to know each other. The main work of the instructors was to test the compatibility of cave rescue techniques used in Slovenia and Croatia. Since both cave rescue services have adopted the protocols of the French cave rescue service (Speleo Secours Francaise - SSF) only small differences in some rescue manoeuvres were observed. In addition, the Slovenian Cave Rescue Service and Croatian Mountain Rescue Service (Speleo Rescue Commission) uses compatible cave rescue techniques and equipment. This is very important in cases of working together in a cave. During our trainings in the year 2012 we have successfully worked together several times in different caves types and different situations. The overall conclusion is that both cave rescue organizations are capable of working together as a single Cave Rescue Unit.

In January 2013 (12/1/2013) we began Action A.3 - 2nd meeting of JRS and HGSS with a reference to Task A (Identification of all special conditions and dangers in caves). For this, we organized a conference/workshop

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entitled “Dangers in caves” where the results were presented to a wider audience (over 100 participants). The main objectives of Task A were to identify the main dangers in caves and to identify the most frequent causes of accidents. We also undertook a detailed analysis of rescue operations in Slovenia and Croatia. The most frequent causes of accidents in caves were carelessness (39 %), falling (24 %), unfamiliarity with cave terrain (13 %), falling rocks (5%) and, equipment problems (5 %). From this analysis, the caving public was able to get an insight into the broad number of activities of this successful on-going project and to recognize the significance and importance of the work that the cave rescue services perform. On the basis of these studies (Task A) we prepared a brochure outlining the dangers and potential hazards of caving as well as the hazards posed by the cave itself. The brochure is available on the web page of the EU Proteus project ([link to the brochure - Dangers in caves](#)). In the field of prevention we also produced a booklet - a collection of all knots that are used in caving and cave rescue. The booklet is addressed to all cavers and cave rescuers and is a manual containing detailed descriptions for tying knots and important advice concerning their use. The booklet is also available on the web site of EU Proteus project ([link to the booklet -Knots in caving and cave rescue](#)). The workshop and conference was a great opportunity to present the results of the EU Proteus project and as well as providing a very constructive discussion on the presented topics we were able to collect ideas for our future work. A detail report of this action, including all presentations, was sent to our Desk Officers.

In February we had two cave rescue training exercises. The first was held on 16th February in Slovenia (Action E.8 - 2.joint training of Cave Rescue Unit – winter drill). This was a winter drill primary planned to be in Kanin, but due to heavy snow and problems with the ski-resort’s telpher line we switched the exercise to Tamar. In total seventy-nine participants received training under winter conditions: backpack preparation, the use of axes and crampons, making anchorages in the snow, and the use of Ortovox Avalanche Transceivers to search for avalanche survivors. In February we also received confirmation that the project will be presented at the 16th International congress of speleology in Brno, Czech Republic (<http://www.speleo2013.com/>). This will involve an oral presentation and article about EU Proteus project.

The second training in 2013 (Action E.9) was organized in Paklenica, Croatia. The course was divided in two parts – a theoretical part and a practical part. The theoretical part included lectures (see below) where the participants (29) were informed about cave rescue operation management, administration, procedures, rescue resources and evacuation. The practical part involved creating a cave rescue evacuation plan in one deep Croatian pit while participants were divided into smaller groups simulating setting up a cave rescue HQ. All these objectives were successfully achieved and team members became aware of the importance of strictly following an algorithm and the given recommendations. A high quality of cave rescue operation management is vital for optimal usage of all cave rescue resources, resulting in the shortest time needed for a rescue operation involving a minimum number of rescuers, which will result in a better outcome for the casualty. A well organized cave rescue operation is also important to prevent possible accidents during a rescue operation. In the frame of this action we also organized a meeting of the European Cave Rescue Association – ECRA with the participation of six countries. This was the ECRA’s second meeting since being established and during which we discussed future activities. For now the main goal is to find sufficient financial funding.

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2. Relevant comments on project management and partnership management aspects.

In the period after the first progress report was published although we were fully focused on realizing the project actions we were still able to publicise the project. All important publicity events are available on the project [web site](http://www.eu-proteus.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72:publicity&catid=35:task&Itemid=64) (http://www.eu-proteus.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72:publicity&catid=35:task&Itemid=64).

The site itself has received over 15.000 visits from all over the world.

We found that there was excellent collaboration between partners, and the actions performed and deliverables were all prepared on schedule. During 2013 we still have to finish certain Tasks/Actions and we have already organized a series of meetings to discuss the final cave rescue exercise involving performing a rescue from a cave greater than 500 meters deep. At this time all the necessary permits and documentation are in order and the Action I.3 - Execution of Final Cave rescue exercise (-500m, will take place from the 30.8. to 1.9.2013.

With regards to communication between the Project Manager and our Desk Officers I would also like to acknowledge Mrs. Biljana Zuber and Mr. Roman Birvon Without whom we would have not solved all the questions with respect to project implementation.

3. Financial statements

Financial statements of the second progress report are attached in Annexes 2 and 3. Annex 2 gives the spent eligible costs per cost category. According to the Partnership Agreement each partner took care of their own budget. Eligible costs per tasks for each partner (JZS & HGSS) are noted in Annex 3. Not all Personnel costs have yet been financially evaluated; those are recorded in hours spent on project Tasks.

Attachments:

Annex 1: List of all performed Actions and reached deliverables

Annex 2: Consolidated Cost Statement for the Action

Annex 3: Budget breakdown of tasks - JZS&HGSS

Best regards,

Depala vas, 18.4.2013

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Maks Merela, PhD

President of JZS (CO):
Vidko Kregar