



INTERNATIONALE VEREINIGUNG DER BERGFÜHRERVERBÄNDE  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF MOUNTAIN GUIDES ASSOCIATIONS  
UNION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS DE GUIDES DE MONTAGNE

**General Meeting Tignes/France, May 2012**

**President's report, first six months of the year 2012**

**Identity of the IFMGA**

The statements about the identity of the IFMGA and about our mission statement were adopted in Prague.

**Website**

The website will be available in a first version in German on the date of the GM in Tignes. Before the texts will be inserted in other languages, the website shall be adopted in German first – basically by the GM in Tignes and in detail by the managing committee. The subjects presented on the website and the corresponding texts were already adopted in the languages GER, F, E, SP in Prague or later by circular way by the affected national associations in their final version. They are ready to be inserted.

We also want to thank different mountain guides who have sent us numerous pictures of good quality.

The technical realization of the website is not as easy as expected, but this has no impact on the budget, because the offer is based on a fix price. The managing committee is making pressure so that the realization can be finished as soon as possible.

**Sponsoring**

According to the decision of Prague, the negotiations with the company tribevine have been pushed on and a definite LOI has been adopted. It was presented in Prague. Tribevine has now to achieve accreditation by its investors for the agreements arranged in the LOI. After all it is about an annual amount of € 50'000 for the IFMGA. We expect this decision within the next weeks.

Independently from that we are negotiating with two banks. The sponsoring amount would as well be € 50'000.

**Reciprocity**

*Principle*

This subject always prompts discussions. The managing committee has composed a declaration of intention where it is written down what has to be understood under "reciprocity". This statement is available in the languages GER, F, E, SP and shall be approved in Tignes.

*Peru*

We are having discussions with the Peruvian authorities about the admission to Huascarán national park. Here we have made further improvements, also if they have been slow and tough. Present situation of the negotiations:

- The IFMGA training has to be accepted by the Peruvian authorities as equivalent (!)
- Like this the IFMGA mountain guides can be active at Huascarán national park during 30 days, such as up to now

We have strongly been supported in our efforts by the Peruvian Mountain Guide Association and especially also by Mrs Dorothee Fierz from Switzerland who travelled twice through Peru in political missions and who led at the same time the negotiations with the authorities about our affair. Mrs Fierz is again in Peru in these days and it shall soon be decided about the mentioned issues. Many thanks to Mrs Fierz!

*North America*

The North American association strives for a more open regulation concerning the access of foreign mountain guides in the USA. Nevertheless there is an improvement in only a few national parks – especially Mount Rainier. This has also to do with the American law system and the mountain guides are a very little group with few political importance. The North American mountain guides will inform us about the present situation.

**Europe**

The negotiations with the EU concerning the European professional card went on. Roger Payne represented the IFMGA and did a great work – thanks a lot.

In January there was a meeting with the responsible people for the EU professional card. He sees potential to regulate the mountain guide profession in terms of the IFMGA on European level. The general aim is to regulate the professions that concern safety and health (thus also the mountain guide profession) in a stricter way. Other professions should rather be de-regulated.

Although we are making progress and the mountain guide profession has a good image now among the European committee, this process is going ahead rather slowly. This has also to do with the rhythm of the European committees. The different IFMGA countries can however help to make some pressure through national coordinators – what already happened several times.

### **Quality assurance and cooperation in the training**

#### *Japan*

Japan is doing a part of the present mountain guide course in the Alps. The IFMGA offered the Japanese to support them during the course and to exchange experiences.

#### *South America*

In order to keep on consolidating the quality of the training in South America the TC plans a course of about a week for instructors in South America. It is planned for autumn 2012. The IFMGA is going to pay the costs of the instructors. The South Americans pay the costs of their participants.

### **Applicant countries**

#### *Nepal*

As discussed at the GM in Prague, an IFMGA expert visited Nepal again in December 2012, it was the Austrian Herbert Mayrhofer. His report looks absolutely positive now and the managing committee is very grateful to see that the Nepalese mountain guide association is now ready to be admitted into the IFMGA. The decision will be taken in Tignes.

#### *Kyrgyzstan*

We want to remind again that the Kyrgyzstan project is a project of the company Mammut AG. The IFMGA only helps with advice and manpower. The training shall be given over step by step to the Kyrgyz themselves until 2013 and Mammut AG is going to stop its financial support.

The IFMGA plans to send observers to Kyrgyzstan only then when the course will be executed by the Kyrgyz on their own.

#### *Greece*

Greece is not an applicant country, but temporarily suspended, that means it is not anymore a member of the IFMGA. Therefore a solution has to be found for the existing Greek mountain guides. They should become members of an existing national association and do their further education there among other. Up to now no such association could yet be found. We have been trying to find a solution with the mountain guide association of Val d'Aosta, but in the light of their legal regulations it is not clear if this solution can be realized.

### **Interested countries**

#### *Russia*

Canada is in charge of setting up the training in Russia and therefore we refer to their report.

#### *Romania*

Romania has started to elaborate an extensive regulation about the training and the mountain guide profession. This happens for the technical issues as well as for the political level. The TC of the IFMGA works together with the Romanians and we will see what steps are necessary to raise this training to the IFMGA standard. This will, as always, be a process that lasts several years.

#### *Bulgaria*

Up to now no mutual consent could be found with the Bulgarians about the proceeding to bring them towards the IFMGA. According to the TC, the number of Bulgarians who fulfil the IFMGA level is very small. Therefore we made the proposition to the Bulgarians to make this training in an IFMGA country. The Bulgarians don't accept it like this, but they push for a training that takes place in Bulgaria and a sponsor country that supports them in their activities.

Obviously Bulgarians are working (illegally) in the Alps and therefore they are under pressure and want to get an IFMGA diploma as fast as possible. The IFMGA is ready to look for solutions together with the Bulgarians. They can however only be the way that the IFMGA standard is reached, such as in all other IFMGA countries. We are expecting a long and difficult process.

### *Georgia*

After several years of silence Georgia has now got in touch with us again and wants to set up again an education together with the IFMGA. The TC will get in touch with them in order to find out how the present situation looks like in this country.

### *Other*

As always there are some other interested parties, but there were no additional activities or contacts.

### *Illegal guides*

There are illegal guides in the Alps, especially from eastern countries. This has to be stopped, also with regard to the future European regulation. The IFMGA has been informed about different concrete cases. As decided in Prague, lists of these illegal guides should be composed in the most important huts, so that corresponding controls will be possible.

### **Contacts to other organizations**

The IFMGA does not live on an island and the mountain guide profession is politically supported only in a few mountain regions. Generally we only have a lobby in single countries of the Alps. Therefore the managing committee has decided to cultivate augmented political contacts if the opportunity is given. One such opportunity is the GM in Tignes and several representatives of the authorities have been invited to join the social part.

We have by the way also had contacts with the UIAA. The IFMGA was represented by Peter Kimmig on the occasion of their GM. Obviously the UIAA supports trainings in single countries that come close to a „mountain guide light“. The IFMGA has to intervene here in order to advance our position clearly.

A permanent issue of discussion with the UIMLA is the training of the mountain leaders.

In the context of the discussions about nature protection we are more and more striving for a communication with the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature).

In Europe there is an organization called „Nature and Sport“ which invited the IFMGA to join their meetings and to present its position.

### **Training of mountain leaders**

The perspective about the adopted technical means is not equal within the training of the mountain leaders. The managing committee and the TC always thought that mountain leaders do not use any technical aids (rope, crampons, axe etc). This position is also officially supported by the managing committee of the UIMLA. Still there are some educations where these auxiliary means are used, some even under the management of IFMGA mountain guides.

It is very important to find a clear line in this issue that goes across the borders. Therefore we want to set up clear guidelines from the IFMGA's view concerning this education. Then, the IFMGA has to implement them towards the affected training institutions.

### **Structure of the IFMGA**

The IFMGA's position towards the public and the authorities has changed a lot since the foundation of the federation. Among other the IFMGA plays an important role in professional occupation and this has automatically to do with the laws of the different countries. Also this report shows that the work of the IFMGA is not getting less, but that it needs a lot of commitment.

The managing committee of the IFMGA asks itself whether the IFMGA can still be managed in the medium term by a managing committee that is able to fully work mainly in low season and is composed by a system of members where the proposed candidates are usually elected anyhow.

We think that the IFMGA should be managed in a professional and modern way. This task should be executed by the best forces we have in the IFMGA, independently from their home country. This management should be active all around the year at least in the executive position and not only in low season or when the weather is bad.

The managing committee is going to initiate a discussion about this in Tignes.

### **Sub-committees**

The president's position is vacant in the sub-committees of Canyoning, Rope Access and Safety (formerly Alpine Accidents). Furthermore a target specification should be set up, if not already existing.

Zermatt, 14.4.2012

Hermann Biner

President IFMGA