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INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION “BANSKI SUHODOL” 2014

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Introduction

The 2014 “Banski suhodol” expedition was carried out between August 23 and September 07 in the homonymous cirque, located in the central Pirin Mountain, near Mt. Vihren.

The “Banski Suhodol” cirque is formed among three marbled-limestone ridges. The “Koncheto” ridge flanks it from the South-West. The “Koteski chal” ridge separates it from the “Razlozhki suhodol” cirque from the North-West, and the wall of “Tsarna mogila” confines it from the South-East. Its length is about 3 km, and its width about 1 km. Its orientation is SW-NE. The average altitude is 2300 m asl. The highest peaks in the vicinity are Mt. Kutelo (2908 m) and Mt. Banski suhodol (2884 m).

The area is built up almost entirely of marble of neoproterozoic age. The thickness of the marble in this part of the Pirin Mountain is up to 2000 m. This determines the region’s potential for the discovery and exploring of a large cave system. The deepest perspective cave in the area is the BS №9-11 system. Its denivelation during last year’s expedition is - 307 m. Its entrance is at 2532 m asl. This cave was the priority for the 2014 “Banski suhodol” expedition. This expedition was organized by the Bulgarian clubs SC “Helictit” and SCC “Akademik”.



“Banski suhodol” cirque, Pirin Mountain – general view to NE with the base camp place in the middle.

Photo: Ivan Petrov

In the expedition also took part members of different Bulgarian caving clubs (“CCSU Sofia”, “Pod ruba” – Cerovo, “Underground” – Sofia, “Nepiast” – Burgas, “Salamander” – St. Zagora and SC “Prista” – Rousse). Beside them cavers from Serbia, Greece, and Poland also took part. At different times, a total of 36 people participated in the expedition. Some took part in the first half; others stepped up in their place in the second part of the expedition.

Here is the place to express my gratitude to all the participants in Banski Suhodol expedition. All findings made during the expedition and potential for future discoveries are entirely due to the

commitment of all the participants in the expedition. All the expedition would not be possible otherwise.

The full list of participants is published in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.



The BS №9-11 entrance and storm-camp in BS №10

Photo: H. Hristov



Part of the participants in the middle of expedition. From left to right: Miltos Xasia, Tanio Tanev, Vencislav Ivanov, Hristo Hristov (Mamuta), Lambros Makrotergios, Teodor Kisimov, Hristo Hristov and Simeon Nenkov

Photo: H. Hristov

Living conditions for conducting the expedition

As usual we used an old skiing camp as a base camp, because of the infrastructure built in it through the years – a wood stove, many awning supports, tables, benches and a dug-out. We put up a light double awning. We used additional big tent for the food and the gear.



Part from the team in the base camp

Photo: A. Lazarov

The cave system 9-11 is situated at about hour and a half from the base camp. Because of the remote location of this cave we needed to build a storm-camp near the BS 9-11 cave system. We built it in the BS №10 funnel. Two tents were put up. Over them an additional awning was also put up. The tents were equipped with sleeping bags and mats.

At the bottom parts of BS №9-11 was set up a camp with everything needed for maximum 6 cavers so they can rest and sleep in it.

Water for the base camp and storm-camp was secured from the “melter” near base camp, from BS №9-11 (the stream at the bottom) and from near-by snow-drifts.

Event program

The Banski suhodol №9-11 system (BS №9-11)

Previous year we expanded the narrowing at depth –265 m and in the middle of the expedition we found big hall, horizontal passages with water stream. We reached to a narrowing by the water, where a strong air-current is felt. The lack of hydro-suits and time prevent the further progression in depth. In the last days of the expedition we surveyed some of new found parts.

After the expedition we made the main goals for expedition in 2014.

Main goals in cave system BS 9-11:

- Building a camp for up to 6 people with conditions to sleep in it and located closer in depth to the new bottom.
- Continue with exploring and survey the new parts founded in 2013.
- Set up phone connection line from the storm-camp to the camp in the cave.
- Performing climatic research in different places in the cave.
- Exploring the parallel pitches in the Great blockage hall and searching for a path down.
- Surveying all branch-outs under the blockage in the Great blockage hall and mapping the adjacent pitches and parallel levels.
- Climbing of perspective chimneys in the cave (the Large Blockade Hall) and checking out branches.

Secondary tasks:

- Checking some of the chasms, closed by the previous expedition with covers. Work on the extending of chasms: BS № 6, BS № 8 and BS № 13, BS № 41, BS № 51, BS № 57, BS № 71.
- Checking out old and known sites and digging up of sites, picked out in previous years.
- Checking the snow-cap level in the caves.
- Continuing the work on finding and documenting sites in the high part of the cirque height under the “Koncheto” ridge.
- Biospeleology and climatology of some of the sites in the cirque, as well as conducting scientific activities, related to the geology of the cirque, gathering bane material from some caves and monitoring of all cave snow-caps in the cirque.
- Checking and adding GPS-coordinates and photo-documentation of the caves in the area.

Expedition results

BS 9-11 cave system

The work in BS №9-11 was organized in shifts. After the first three days the luggage for the new underground camp has been moved by two groups and the camp has been set up. Its capacity was for 6 people.

For better and faster movement of the groups near to the beginning of the cave this year we rigged the pitches from BS№9 and from BS№11.

There come the time for surveying the non-surveyed parts from the previous year. We had bad luck and the first group had technical fail with the Disto X. Any way we started the survey from the second time. As a result this year we surveyed the cave to the depth of -313 m and length 528 m. Most of the survey this year was performed by the cavers from caving club “Siutka” – Rakitovo (Stoicho Zarev, Jordan Tuparov and Musa Eiupov).

Parallel with this we start the exploration. During the previous year we found out that there is water stream in the new parts and these new passages are along the river stream. This year Vencislav Ivanov and Hristo Canev found for the first time that the cave continues upstream too. These new galleries started with a lot of narrow passages and turns (for crawling) through blockage level. In some places there is danger of collapse. At the end you come out in small hall and continue with narrow passages without reached end.

Group of two cavers (Teodor Kisimov and Hristo Canev) succeed to bypass the narrow place with water along the water stream and by passing some narrow passages and small pitch the group came to a big and very long new hall with inclined blockage floor. There are different levels in this blockage. At the end of this hall they came to a pitch with visible depth of -15 m. The cavers did not rigged this pitch because lack of rope and other gear.

This year was also performed climatic research in cave system BS №9-11. This research was held by Lazar Milchev, Maria Zlateva and Spas Yordanov. They measured temperature and humidity at four different places in the cave. The temperature in the beginning of the cave was in interval 1.2-1.4 C. Near the bottom the temperature was in interval 2.0-2.2 C. The temperature of the water was around 4.0-4.2 C.

This year we didn't succeed to set up a voice connect line between the storm-camp and cave camp. We didn't succeed to check the bottom of the Parallel drop or the old cave bottom of the BS №9-11 cave and not on the last place, there are left many more to survey and explore.

In the end of the expedition, the cave was partially de-rigged. Ropes were taken down from places, where is a possibility that high waters would soak them; as well as the entry precipice where the rope is highly likely to freeze.

Secondary tasks

We succeeded to go to other perspective caves and objects. In the first half of the expedition two groups did different routes searching for new perspective objects. One group went to the region between peak “Kutelo” and “Koncheto” ridge. Meanwhile the other group covered a huge area under the “Kontcheto” ridge and south-west from the base camp.



Treking on the ridge over the cirque

Photo: H. Hristov

The two groups found five new objects perspective for work. The groups took GPS coordinates and described their location and characteristics. During the rest of expedition there was not free time to return to these new object and we left them for next year.

During the expedition we measured the thickness of the snow caps of several caves in the cirque and also checked the cover which had been set over the entrance of the perspective BS № 6 in 2013. Hristo Hristov, Boyan Miloshevich and Yovana Marinkovich found out that it had been completely destroyed from the snow.

There was also performed some geological research and measurement of the height and thickness of tree species typical for this region.

As a whole we haven't enough time to work in other perspective objects. We also didn't succeed to do some biospeleological research.

Financial report

Below are listed the incomes and expenditures for the expedition.

	Incomes	Expenditures
Perticipation fees	568	
- Bulgarian team	518	
- Foreign team	50	
Sponsorship	600	
FSE grant	419	
Food		642
Logistic (on horseback and by car)		620
Cave and caving equipment		150
Technical resources (carbide, glue, gasoline, spare parts, instruments etc.)		120
Total:	1587	1532

Expedition in photos



Loading the luggage



Living conditions in the base camp



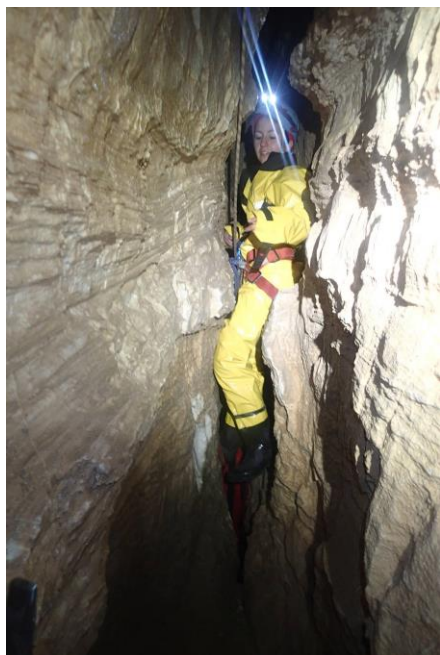
The "melting" or water source



Preparing the luggage for BS №9-11



Serbian team starting the trek to BS №9-11



Efi in the meander in BS №9-11



Tomasz passing the "Koncheto" ridge



Storm-camp



Tomasz and Efi at BS №9-11 entrance



Part from the underground camp



Base camp

Media and comments

Clips and films

Clip for BS №9-11 from Miltos Xasia - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI6Bt1C1PCA>

Impressions

*“very nice camp and exploration !
I liked it and the next year I would definitely stay for longer...”*
Tomasz Pawlowski

“Organization of Banski suhodol expedition was at high level. Bulgarian cavers gave an effort to fill comfortable in their camp and joyfull in working and free time. We reached up our experience going through different and some very hard passes of 9-11 cave. Showing practical skills and knowledge, especially method of long days and deep cave explorations, we learn something new from our Bulgarian colleagues. Serbian team is thankfull for invitation and expect new own for next year, to continue our internation cooperation.”
Nemanya Milosavlyevich

PARTNERS



We need to express strong gratitude to our sponsors for their strong material and financial support.

This expedition could not have been possible without the support of:



The European Speleological Federation



Scurion®



ЕКСПЛОРАТОР

APPENDIX 1

List of participants in the expedition

From Bulgaria

SC „Helictit“ Sofia:

1. Ventsislav Ivanov - venci207ivanov@gmail.com
2. Hristo Slaveev Hristov - icoh89@gmail.com
3. Hristo Hristov - mamuta42@goolemail.com
4. Hristo Canev - itco_stab@abv.bg

SSC „Akademik“ Sofia:

5. Pavel Bakalov - pbackalov@gmail.com
6. Konstantin Stoilov - info@akademic.org

SC “Nepiast” Burgas:

7. Lazar Milchev - sas_lazar@abv.bg
8. Maria Zlateva - maria@nepiast.org
9. Spas Yordanov -

SC “Pod Ruba” Cerovo:

10. Efrosita Hristova - effie@abv.bg
11. Marta Yordanova - pod_rb@abv.bg
12. Peter Konstantinov - pod_rb@abv.bg
13. Simeon Nenkov - moni_nenkov@dir.bg
14. Julia Statelova - juliastatelova@gmail.com

SC „Sofia“:

15. Ema Kolarova - kolarova.ema@gmail.com
16. Stoyan Goranov - stoian.goranov@gmail.com
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18. Svetlomisr Balevski - s.balevski@gmail.com
19. Alexander Lazarov - al.lazarov@gmail.com
20. Simona Atanasova - mailbox@pk-sofia.com
21. Ivailo Bakalov - mailbox@pk-sofia.com
22. Nikolai Bakalov - mailbox@pk-sofia.com

SC “Siutka” Rakitovo:

23. Stoicho Zarev - stoicho_zarev@abv.bg
24. Jordan Tuparov – hebar@abv.bg
25. Musa Eiupov – musa.eiupov@abv.bg

SC „Underground”:

26. Jivko Genchev - underground@svobodno.com

27. Ani Gateva - underground@svobodno.com

SC „Prista” Rousse:

28. Teodor Kisimov - tedich@gmail.com

SC “Caving” Sofia:

29. Vanio Giorev - vanjobg@gmail.com

SC “Salamander” Stara Zagora

30. Tanio Tanev - tanyo.markov@gmail.com

From Greece:

SC “Karditsa” and “Sales”

31. Lambros Makrostergios - info@LMakro.com

32. Miltos Xasia - info@selas.org

From Serbia:

PSK “Dvig”

33. Nemanya Milosavlyevich - nemanja84@hotmail.com

34. Boyan Miloshevich - bojanmilosevic88@yahoo.com

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From Poland:

KW Krakow

36. Tomasz Pawlowski - tomi@caver.eu

APPENDIX 2

Summary that will be published in EuroSpeleo NewsLetter

International expedition “Banski suhodol” 2014 finished successfully. The expedition was carried out between August 27 and September 07 in the homonymous cirque, located in the central Pirin Mountain, near Mt. Vihren.

This expedition was organized by the Bulgarian clubs SCC “Akademik” and SC “Helictit”. In this expedition also took part members of different Bulgarian caving clubs (“CCSU Sofia”, “Pod ruba” – Cerovo, “Underground” – Sofia, “Nepiast” – Burgas, “Salamander” – St. Zagora and SC “Prista” – Rousse). Beside them cavers from Serbia, Greece, and Poland also took part. At different times, a total of 36 people participated in the expedition. Some took part in the first half; others stepped up in their place in the second part of the expedition.

The main goal of the expedition is continuing exploration in cave system BS №9-11. Secondary tasks were to work in other perspective caves in the cirque, searching for new caves, biospeleology, climatology and geology investigations.

The work in BS №9-11 was organized in shifts. After the first three days the luggage for the new camp is moved by two groups and the camp is set up. Its capacity was for 6 people.

For better and faster movement of the groups near to the beginning of the cave this year we rigged the pitches from BS№9 and from BS№11.

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During the expedition we found five new objects perspective for work, performed some geological research and measurement of the height and thickness of tree species typical for this region.