

# EUROPEAN SPELEOLOGICAL FEDERATION



**EuroSpeleo Projects FSE**

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## INTERNATIONAL EXPEDITION

### “BANSKI SUHODOL” 2014

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## Introduction

The 2014 “Banski suhodol” expedition has been 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. From the North-East, The “Koteshki chal” ridge separates it from the “Razlozhki suhodol” cirque, 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. The mentioned particularity makes the region potential for discovery and exploration of a large cave system. The deepest perspective cave in the area is BS №9-11 system. Its entrance is at 2532 m asl. Its denivelation during last year’s expedition reached -313 m. This cave was a priority for 2014 “Banski suhodol” (2014) expedition. The expedition was organized by the Bulgarian clubs SC “Helicitit” and SCC “Akademik”.



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

*Photo: Ivan Petrov*

Members of different Bulgarian caving clubs took part in Banski Suhodol in the expedition (“CCSU Sofia”, “Pod ruba” – Cerovo, “Underground” – Sofia, “Nepiast” – Burgas, “Salamander” – St. Zagora and SC “Prista” – Rousse). International participation was presented as well. Cavers from Serbia, Greece, and Poland also took part in the expedition. As a total, 36 people participated in this year expedition at different stages of the expedition.



Here is the place I would like to express our strong gratitude to all the participants who took part in the expedition. Due to their commitment all finds made during the expedition are now possible, revealing perspectives for further investigations and discoveries.

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 Makrostergios, Teodor Kisimov, Hristo Hristov and Simeon Nenkov*

*Photo: H. Hristov*

## Living conditions for conducting the expedition

In terms of living conditions, as usual the old skiing camp has been used for a base camp due to the infrastructure it offers - a wood stove, many awning supports, tables, benches and a dug-out, which have been built up throughout the years. We put up a light double awning. Additional big tent has been used for food storage as well as for 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 it was necessary to build up a storm-camp near the BS 9-11 cave system. The storm camp has been constructed in BS №10 funnel. Two tents have been set up there. 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 including everything needed for long-stay of 6 cavers (optimum) in the cave.

Water supply for the base camp and storm-camp was secured from the “melter” near the 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)**

The Previous year we extended the narrowing at a depth of - 265 m. and in the middle of the expedition we found a big hall, horizontal passages with water stream. We reached 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. During the next few days till the end of the expedition some of the newly registered parts started to be investigated, but there left more to be explored.

Bringing the expedition to the end, we started planning and pointing out our investigation plan for Banski Suhodol expedition 2015.

Main goals in cave system BS 9-11:

- Building a camp for up to 6 persons, closer to the new bottom, giving the opportunity to the cavers to stay and sleep there.
- Continue the exploration of the new parts founded in 2013.
- Set up phone connection line between the storm-camp and the camp in the cave.
- Realizing climatic researches in various parts 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 known sites and digging up of sites, picked out in previous years.
- Checking the snow-caps.
- Continuing the work on finding and documenting sites in the highest part of the cirque (height) under the “Koncheto” ridge.
- Biospeleology and climatology research in the cirque, as well as conducting scientific activities, related to the geology 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 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.

Here it comes 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 DistoX. 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 started 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 turned (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 there is 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 is 1.2-1.4 C. Near the bottom the temperature is in interval 2.0-2.2 C. The temperature of the water is around 4.0-4.2 C.

This year we didn't succeed to set up a phone 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

This year 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.



*Treking on the ridge over the cirque*

*Photo: H. Hristov*

Meanwhile the other group covered a huge area under the “Kontcheto” ridge and south-west from the base camp.

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 was measured the thickness of the snow caps of several caves in the cirque.

We also checked the cover which had been set over the entrance of the perspective cave 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.



## Financial report

Below are listed the incomes and expenditures for the expedition.

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

## Expedition in photos



*Loading the luggage*



*Living conditions in the base camp*



*The "melting" or water source*

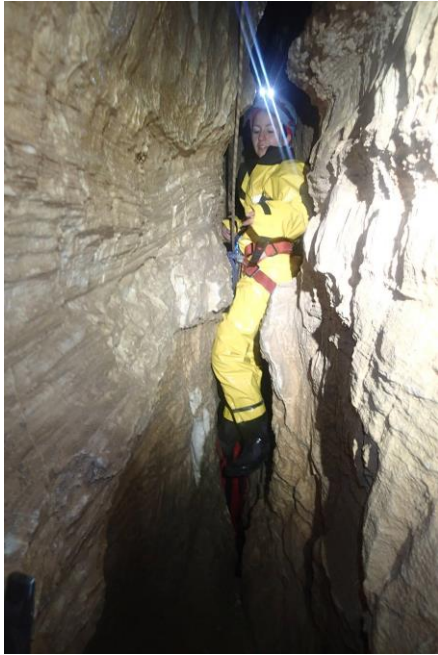


*Preparing the luggage for BS №9-11*



*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 impressions

### 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 joyful 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 thankful for invitation and expect new own for next year, to continue our international 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](mailto:venci207ivanov@gmail.com)
2. Hristo Slaveev Hristov - [icoh89@gmail.com](mailto:icoh89@gmail.com)
3. Hristo Hristov - [mamuta42@goolemail.com](mailto:mamuta42@goolemail.com)
4. Hristo Canev - [itco\\_stab@abv.bg](mailto:itco_stab@abv.bg)

SSC „Akademik“ Sofia:

5. Pavel Bakalov - [pbackalov@gmail.com](mailto:pbackalov@gmail.com)
6. Konstantin Stoilov - [info@akademic.org](mailto:info@akademic.org)

SC “Nepiast” Burgas:

7. Lazar Milchev - [sas\\_lazar@abv.bg](mailto:sas_lazar@abv.bg)
8. Maria Zlateva - [maria@nepiast.org](mailto:maria@nepiast.org)
9. Spas Yordanov - [spasepakli@abv.bg](mailto:spasepakli@abv.bg)

SC “Pod Ruba” Cerovo:

10. Efrosita Hristova - [pod\\_rb@abv.bg](mailto:pod_rb@abv.bg)
11. Marta Yordanova - [pod\\_rb@abv.bg](mailto:pod_rb@abv.bg)
12. Peter Konstantinov - [pod\\_rb@abv.bg](mailto:pod_rb@abv.bg)
13. Simeon Nenkov - [moni\\_nenkov@dir.bg](mailto:moni_nenkov@dir.bg)
14. Julia Statelova - [juliastatelova@gmail.com](mailto:juliastatelova@gmail.com)

SC „Sofia“:

15. Ema Kolarova - [kolarova.ema@gmail.com](mailto:kolarova.ema@gmail.com)
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SC “Siutka” Rakitovo:

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25. Musa Eiupov - [musa.eiupov@abv.bg](mailto:musa.eiupov@abv.bg)

SC „Underground”:

26. Jivko Genchev - [underground@svobodno.com](mailto:underground@svobodno.com)

27. Ani Gateva - [underground@svobodno.com](mailto:underground@svobodno.com)

SC „Prista” Rousse:

28. Teodor Kisimov - [tedich@gmail.com](mailto:tedich@gmail.com)

SC “Caving” Sofia:

29. Vanio Giorev - [vanjobg@gmail.com](mailto:vanjobg@gmail.com)

SC “Salamander” Stara Zagora

30. Tanio Tanev - [tanyo.markov@gmail.com](mailto:tanyo.markov@gmail.com)

**From Greece:**

SC “Karditsa” and “Sales”

31. Lambros Makrostergios - [info@LMakro.com](mailto:info@LMakro.com)

32. Miltos Xasia - [info@selas.org](mailto:info@selas.org)

**From Serbia:**

PSK “Dvig”

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**From Poland:**

KW Krakow

36. Tomasz Pawlowski - [tomi@caver.eu](mailto: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 SC “Helictit” and SCC “Akademik”. 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” – Rouse). 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.

We had bad luck in the beginning. Any way we surveyed the cave to the depth of - 313 m and length 528 m.

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 turned (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.

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During the expedition we also 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.