

Горска служба спасавања Србије

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Dear Tom,

Thank you for consulting us in this matter. With our current view and information, we feel strongly opposed to RCS joining ICAR. Please find the rationale below.

RCS did not reach out to offer a display of their merit in alpine rescue. Mountaineering Association of Serbia (the Founder of Serbian MRS in 1952), is one of the successors of Mountaineering Association of Yugoslavia (MAY). Again, MAY was one of the founders of ICAR so, historically, there has always been a thread spanning the Serbian MRS and ICAR. Nonetheless, when Serbian MRS applied to rejoin ICAR in 2007, we went through a significant ordeal of displaying our resources, knowledge and expertise to a number of ICAR member organizations so that we have a wider alignment on our merit and contribution when joining ICAR. Conversely, RCS did not contact us in any way. We feel that this would have been a good and natural first step being that we come from the same country.

There is no need for another alpine rescue organization in Serbia. Serbia has a very limited need for Alpine Rescue. Roughly, we have 0.1 rescue mission in both cave and alpine environments per year. Currently, MRS has a team of highly skilled rescuers that we invest very much into to have them ready for the unlikely situation of actual rescue mission. To that end, we constantly organize a number of training missions, educational sessions, courses, etc. in Serbia but also with rescue teams from the region. We currently do not see a need for another alpine rescue organization in Serbia.

RCS does not have the resources for alpine rescue. MRS has a team of 250 people that have annual licencing procedures. Our members are active in climbing, caving, mountaineering and other such organizations. We have close to 5000 rescuer days in the field per year. In preparation of writing this email, we've made a wide survey throughout our members, trying to identify the RCS members that are active in either climbing or similar associations. The results were that we were unable to identify a single RCS member active in this domain. Moreover, we have asked the other regional ICAR members have they seen any activity from the RCS in this domain and the answer was the same. So, the question from our side is, who are the people pertaining to be alpine rescuers and what is their expertise in this area? Because, as of now, we cannot attest to any such expertise from their side.

RCS is not the right fit for ICAR. Unlike some other Red-Cross organizations, RCS has been an organization primarily aimed at disaster relief. Their main area of expertise is food, medicine and cloth distribution where they have a really well played organization that made significant change in a number of occasions (last one being the Syrian immigrant crisis). If ICAR aims at becoming a wider, sort of a UN organization for everybody that has something to do with rescue and disaster relief, then we could have understood their RCS's membership application for ICAR. However, we feel that this is not the case and one of our major benefits from ICAR membership is to be able to discuss the narrow and specific technical rescue topics among the members of the ICAR organization in a focused and undiluted manner. We feel privileged to have earned our ICAR membership and, with our current information, don't think that RCS is a right fit for ICAR.

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If you think that the above does not fully justify our stance to prevent the RCS's application to join ICAR, we can schedule a Skype call or, in the most extreme case, we can visit the ICAR board to provide additional argumentation in person.

On behalf of the Serbian MRS,

Kind regards,

Marko Calija

President

Mountain Rescue Service of Serbia