

AVA Commission Annual Report

20180919-AVA President Dominique Létang

Dear members of the Avalanche Commission

Since our last congress in Andorra, I participated in two Board meetings in Zurich, in January and in August.

During these meetings, we decided and applied a new internal functionality: we set up a technical committee within the Board, comprising the four Presidents. The aim of this new committee is to exchange on our common goals and projects for the ICAR.

Last spring, I was unfortunately not able to personally attend the avalanche working group in Stubai. I asked Fred Jarry to participate in it under the umbrella of the avalanche commission and the ANENA. He gave me good feedbacks regarding the work some of you did during this week and the ongoing progresses of the avalanche knowledge base. You will find a summary about it below.

Everything is ready to welcome you in Chamonix.

As you may be aware, I am totally involved in the organisation of the next congress in Chamonix. I co-chair the organisation committee. I am also in charge of the manufacturers' welcoming (booths selling, etc.). How many times I had to drive to Chamonix? I really do not know, but it is very interesting to set up such an event. However, because of this additional workload, I was not able to devote myself entirely to the Avalanche Commission. I am sorry for that and ask you for a bit of indulgence.

As president of the commission, I am pleased to offer you the editorial I wrote for the next ICAR booklet:

The French Mountain Rescue Group is very happy to host the ICAR congress for its 70th anniversary, here, in Chamonix. I am proud and honoured to receive the members of the avalanche commission at the foot of such a prestigious mountain, the Mont-Blanc.

But, unfortunately, the condition of this mountain - as other mountains over the world - is deteriorating. The main topic of our conference on climate change and the impact it could have on rescue operations, is really timely. Several fatalities, or serious accidents, occurred last summer in this area, due to rockfalls or landslides, reminding us the challenges for the future. The mountain is changing, so we need to change our approach, we must evolve it, in order to improve our own safety.

Everything has been done to offer you a relevant program. I planned some long sessions of exchanges through workshops of reflection in order to elaborate upcoming recommendations.

We will also have a practical day on Friday, with a rotation system between the different workshops, including one of them dedicated to manufacturers.

I would like to thank all the people who have been involved during recent years in the working group: "Best practice in avalanche rescue". This group is now over and I'm counting on you to find together other subjects.

Be assured of my full involvement in our commission.

I wish all of you, the commission members, the organizers, the volunteers, the developers and the manufacturers, a really rich congress".

Dominique Létang - President of the Avalanche Rescue Commission