

# CISA-IKAR

September 22<sup>nd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> 1999  
Sonthofen - Germany

## Avalanche sub-committee report

In 1999, the delegate annual meeting was held from September 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, in Sonthofen, Germany. On this occasion and as every year, the CISA-IKAR Avalanche Sub-committee met in a plenary meeting, on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> (morning), Friday 24<sup>th</sup> (all day long) and on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> (morning).

More than thirty persons representing more than twenty entities, had a share in the sub-committee discussions. Thirteen countries were represented : Germany, Austria, The United States, France, Italy, The Liechtenstein, Norway, Poland, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland.

In the absence of the Sub-committee President, François Valla, who attended a scientific congress, François Sivardière, ANENA Manager, animated the Sub-committee debates and discussions.

The Sub-Committee begins with a sad news : the death on July 12<sup>th</sup> 1999, of our friend and translator Hendrik Van den Driesch, whose work and availability have been very much appreciated during his several years of participation to the meetings of the Avalanche Sub-committee. Peter Ogi, from the Swiss Alpine Club, who presided over the Avalanche Dog Group ceases his activities among the CISA-IKAR. We thank him very much for his action among the Avalanche Sub-committee. He is replaced by Axel Budde, coming from the Swiss Alpine Club as well.

### 1. Annual reckoning up of deaths due to avalanche accidents.

The total number of deaths due to avalanche accidents which happened in the countries represented in the CISA-IKAR, amounts to 209. It is thus much higher than the previous years. The reason is simple : it is due to the fatal accidents which stroke dwellings during the 1998-99 winter, particularly in February 1999 in the North Austrian, French and Swiss Alpes. It is the third time since 1975 that this (poor) reckoning up supersedes 200 (1984 - 85 : 224 deaths, 1985 - 86 : 204).

The graphical illustrations of this reckoning up are attached to this report.

Data from Spain have not been obtained, but they should neither modify this reckoning up in a significant way nor the fact that the 1998 - 99 winter has been the second most murderous one since 1975, compared to the whole countries of the CISA-IKAR, more especially as the figures of the 1998 - 99 winter include 3 victims dead in Andorra, a country where victims had not been taken into account up till now.

## **2. Presenting special avalanche accidents.**

F. Tchirky, from the EISLF - IFENA (CH), presents a more detailed analysis of fatal avalanche accidents which occurred in Switzerland during the 1998 - 99 winter, as well as an interesting comparison of these figures with the average figures over the last fourteen years.

D. Atkins, from the CAIC (USA), also presents an analysis of avalanche accidents which occurred in the United States in 1998 - 1999, as well as a statistical study on the fatal avalanche accidents during the 90's.

P. Lambert (Liechtenstein), T. Lager (Switzerland) and the Austrian representative make then interesting presentations on special avalanche situations they lived in their region in February 1999, with very conclusive slides.

M. Swangard (Canada) briefly presents and distributes an article by Jamieson and Geldstzer (Calgary University, Canada) about the circumstances of the triggering of fatal avalanche accidents in Canada (Meteo conditions, slope surface, snow quality). This article was published in "Avalanche News", in Summer 1999 from the Canadian Avalanche Association.

Thank you to every one for these interventions which have been very much appreciated.

## **3. Report of the Avalanche Dog Group meeting.**

See the Peter Ogi's letter attached to this report.

## **4. Report of the Prevention Group meeting.**

J. P. Zuanon presents the meeting which was held from April 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> in the Tour village, in Haute-Savoie, near Chamonix. It allowed everyone to present ones' activities and documents used in the avalanche accident prevention sector. A deception : the number of attending persons was relatively small (less than 10).

On this occasion, a conference project has been set up and J. P. Zuanon explains it again. It aims at gathering a few persons by country to exchange opinions, experiences, techniques, etc. about training, teaching in snow sciences, evaluating risks and rescue. Statements of 10 minutes would allow to enhance a particular aspect, and round-table discussions would allow every one to express oneself.

However, this conference needs an organisation that a limited number of persons is ready to do, and this is possible only if interested participants are sufficiently motivated to prepare a statement and in sufficient number.

A letter will then be sent to persons who expressed their desire to have a share in this conference to J. P. Zuanon during the Avalanche Sub-committee, to know whether the expected number of persons is sufficient or not to begin organising this conference which could be held around May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000.

## 5. Present situation on ABS balloon by P. Aschauer.

P. Aschauer presents the improvements brought to the ABS balloon.

Accidents by avalanche concerning persons equipped with an ABS balloon, statistics held by F. Tschirky (EISLF, Davos, CH), show that among persons taken in an avalanche and who succeeded to inflate their balloon, none was totally buried, that means that all were visible from the surface (personally or the balloon was above the surface of the avalanche deposit).

This is very interesting because the accidents data show that chances of survival of an avalanche victim are much more important if the victim is not totally buried and that it can be localised thanks to a surface visual index (in the case of the ABS balloon, it concerns the victim or the balloon).

However, 2 or 3 avalanche accidents implying persons who had an ABS balloon on them but who did not use it, in spite of the avalanche, seem to show that the active participation of the victim (to pull the handle) is not as obvious or easy as it could appear at first glance.

## 6. ARVA 2000 tests.

Further to a long discussion, first oriented on the ARVA feature definition, especially about their range, but which found no conclusion, it has been decided to make tests again on the ARVAs during the 1999 - 2000 winter, to take new devices and modifications which happened on the tested devices in 1998 into account.

The test co-ordination is attributed to F. Sivardière who accepts it provided that every entity participant invests himself in this task. F. Sivardière points out the important work made by the EISLF from Davos to co-ordinate the ARVA 98 tests. The ANENA, managed by F. Sivardière has not the same human and financial means as the EISLF. Consequently, it will not be able to furnish an equivalent work, which must be thus a genuine international co-operation work.

This will begin on Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999, in Chamonix, date on which must be held the first ARVA 2000 test preparation meeting, with the objective to define what has to be tested and how it must be done.

Mr Sivardière informs also of the ANENA initiative to ask the European Commission to reduce the VAT rate for the beacons, shovels and probes so that the price of these products are lower, which could facilitate their purchase by the winter sports adepts. He asks every entity implied in avalanche rescue in Europe to support this request to give it much more weight and strength to be successful.

To close a nascent polemic, the Avalanche Sub-Committee is willing to express itself very clearly on the following points :

- It considers valid the 98 test results and approves the conclusions of the report written by the EISLF from Davos (CH),
- However, the ARVA 98 tests must not be considered as final ones and new tests must be performed,



- It thanks the EISLF for the important work it has furnished on this occasion as well as all the entities which have had a share in these tests,
- It expresses its confidence in the EISLF and wishes it joins all the other partners to perform the ARVA 2000 tests.

## 7. Resolution.

*"Confronted with the permanent and increasing development of the avalanche devices to the avalanche victims, the Avalanche Sub-committee of the CISA-IKAR wants to remind of, enhance and insist on the following points :*

- ❖ *Most of the avalanches are triggered by the victims themselves. Death can be the result. The best way not to be carried away by an avalanche is thus not to trigger it.*

*Moreover, no system guarantees against either injuries, or death of avalanche victims.*

*Consequently, the best prevention of avalanche accidents includes information (particularly the avalanche risks evaluation bulletin), knowledge, experience, awareness and caution.*

- ❖ *But if a person is carried away by an avalanche, he (she) has the maximum chances of survival if he (she) is not buried.*

*Presently, a unique system allows not to be buried : the ABS balloon.*

- ❖ *In case of burial, the quickness of searches is vital. The ARVAs used by the rescued fellows of the victim and associated with shovels and probes, constitute the most efficient system to retrieve a person buried under snow alive.*

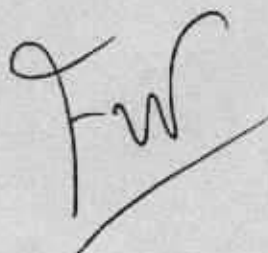
*good But, for professional rescuers and near developed ski-resorts, the Recco system is a technical solution to localise buried persons not equipped with beacons.*


- ❖ *Warning : beacons whatever they are and the ABS balloon require knowledge and an active participation to use them".*

Grenoble, November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1999  
 François SIVARDIERE,  
 ANENA Manager,  
 Meeting Secretary.



François VALLA  
 President of the Avalanche  
 Sub-Committee of the CISA

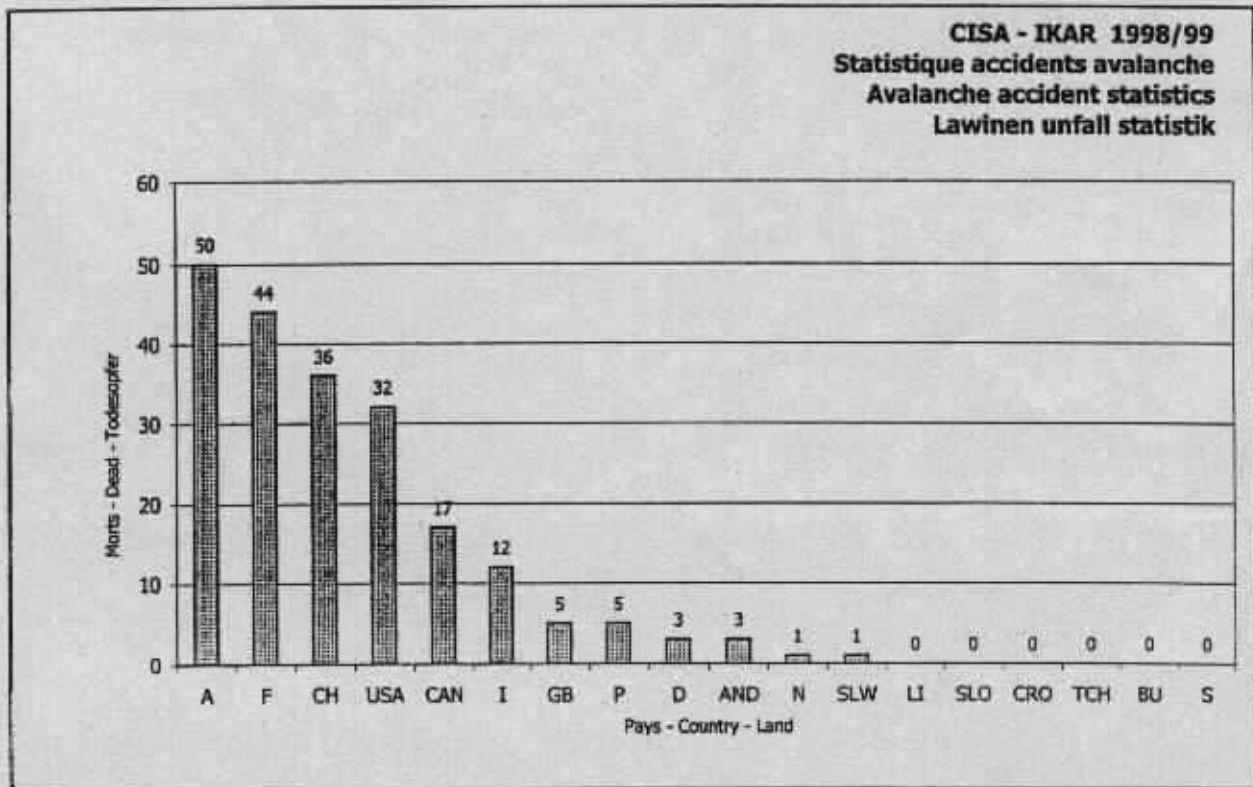


 Pays Country Land	Ski de Montagne Mountain ski Auf skitouren	Ski hors piste Off piste skiing Abseits der pisten	Ski de piste Alpine skiing Auf offener piste	Alpinisme Mountaineers Bergsteiger ohne ski	Habitations Houses In gebauden	Voies d'accès Roads Verkehrswege	Scooter à neige Snowmobiles	Divers Miscellaneous Sonstige	Total des morts Number of killed Anzahl todesopfer	Chien Avalanche Avalanche dogs Lawinenhunde
	CH	7	7	0	5	11	6	0	0	36
F	9	21	1	1	12	0	0	0	44	150
A	5	1	2	0	41	0	0	1	50	215
I	7	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	12	180
D	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	43
LI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
SLO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40
CRO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
ESP	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
AND	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9
GB	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	
N	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	163
P	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5	15
TCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
SLW	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	16
BU	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
CAN	2	1	0	0	9	0	0	5	17	
USA	8	5	0	1	0	0	13	5	32	75
S	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>1279</b>
%	20,10%	18,18%	1,44%	10,53%	35,41%	2,87%	6,22%	5,26%	100,00%	

COMMISSION AVALANCHE

AVALANCHE COMMISSION

LAWINEN KOMMISSION



COMMISSION AVALANCHE

AVALANCHE COMMISSION

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Schweizer Alpen-Club  
Club Alpin Suisse  
Club Alpino Svizzero  
Club Alpin Svizzer

Alpiner Rettungsdienst  
Secours en montagne  
Soccorso in montagna



Peter Ogi  
Steinerenstrasse 1 A  
3770 Zweisimmen

3770 Zweisimmen, September 1999

### Schlussbericht IKAR-Veranstaltung Untergruppe Lawinenhunde

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Unter dem Thema „Vermisstensuche im alpinen Gelände“ trafen sich Lawinen- und Rettungshundeführer mehrerer IKAR-Länder vom Freitag, 14. Mai - Sonntag, 16. Mai 1999 in St. Jakob-Pfisch (Sterzing-Südtirol). In Zusammenarbeit mit Sepp Hölzl und Karl Niedermair des Bergrettungsdienstes AVSüdtirol wurde diese Veranstaltung organisiert. Sämtlichen IKAR-Ländern wurde das Programm frühzeitig zugestellt. Insgesamt 54 Teilnehmer nahmen an dieser Veranstaltung teil. (Siehe gemäss Teilnehmerliste)

Das vorgesehene Programm konnte vollumfänglich durchgeführt werden. Bezüglich der Einzelheiten verweise ich auf das beiliegende Detailprogramm.

Interessante Vorträge wurden an den Theorien geboten und die praktischen Vorführungen regten zu intensiven Gesprächen unter den Teilnehmern aus den verschiedenen Ländern an. Vorallem war man sich am Schluss der Veranstaltung einig, dass solche Zusammenkünfte unbedingt weitergeführt werden müssen. Es kam zum Ausdruck, dass vorallem in Italien / Südtirol das Hundewesen der Bergrettung vom Staat ungenügend geschützt wird. Sepp Hölzl ist gefordert via IKAR die Regierung in Italien über die Missstände zu informieren.

Es ist vorgesehen die nächste Veranstaltung im Jahr 2001 im Winter in der Schweiz durchzuführen.

Zum Schluss möchte ich den Organisatoren im Südtirol unter der Leitung von Sepp Hölzl und Karl Niedermair im Namen aller Beteiligten für ihre Bemühungen bestens danken. Die Organisation klappte sehr gut und die Unterkunft und Verpflegung war ebenfalls hervorragend.

Betreffend meiner Person teile ich mit, dass ich mein Amt als Chef Lawinenhundeführer der Schweiz demnächst dem an der Zonenvertretertagung des SAC gewählten Axel Budde übergeben werde, welcher mich meinem Wunsch entsprechend bereits an der IKAR-Tagung in Sonthofen vertreten wird. Ich wünsche der IKAR-Tagung viel Erfolg. Der Untergruppe Lawinen- und Rettungshundeführer wünsche ich unter neuer Führung ebenfalls alles Gute und viel Erfolg!

*Peter Ogi*  
Peter Ogi