



THE INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAINEERING AND CLIMBING FEDERATION
UNION INTERNATIONALE DES ASSOCIATIONS D'ALPINISME

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ELBRUS – 2007

International Youth Expedition to Mt.Elbrus under YC UIAA Programme (8.07.2007 – 18.07.2007)

That was a wonderful adventure!

The most important was that a great team gathered: climbers from Germany, Spain, Sweden, two sisters from Austria (looked after by their father), climbers from America (California) and Ukrainian climbers from Kiev, Dnepropetrovsk and Cherkassy. All are in love with mountains and the majority came for the first time to the Caucasus. However, everybody could boast of his or her adventures in the Alps, Pyrenees, Dolomites or any other mountain regions, show climbing equipment and look at the equipment brought from the other countries, taste local beverages and talk about life and interesting routes...

The Caucasus Mountains are astonishing! They are more grandiose than the Alps or other European Mountain ranges. The place for a basic camp was selected carefully. It was right in the heart of the Caucasus Mountains close to a source of the Adylsu river that starts in the glaciers. Our tents stood between pine trees and in the morning we went to wash ourselves in the clean mountain spring... The basic camp has a name "OCHAG" that stands for "Shelter for travelers". The owner of the camp is Ahiya Sottayev. He is balkarian. Balkarian people live in the area of Mt. Elbrus. Ahiya did his best to satisfy the participants of the expedition. One day, he made a show for us. He brought a sheep. According to tradition the sheep was killed, cut, cooked and was served up for dinner...

The first training on ice was made on the glacier Kashka-tash. The participants had to climb the steep ice stairs of a glacier, jump over the cracks or go over through ice bridges. Indeed, to use crampons in the mountains – it is a real art!

However, ice training on a glacier is not enough for acclimatization before ascent of Mt.Elbrus. And we started an ascent to Mt. Kurumchi which is 4050m high. To climb the rock ridge was not so difficult. However, it was difficult to breathe and keep pace at such altitude... The panorama that we observed from the top made us forget about all difficulties of the ascent. We saw immense and gorgeous tops of the Main Caucasus Range, tongues of glaciers scrambling down from canyons and the majestic Mt.Elbrus towering above mountain range... Looking at this mountain giant we were thinking if we have enough strength to climb it.

...We settled down the altitude camp on the slopes of Mt.Elbrus at 4200 meters height. The ascent was started at 2 o'clock in the morning. Dark. Wind. The snow powder is flying into our faces. Cold... We seemed to be small motes in this vast night space... The group was climbing up and everyone had to make step after step... The time hanged heavy, and suddenly we realized that it is not so dark around already and we can see silhouettes of persons walking in front. The main thing is not to throw your breathing out of time... Of course! There is twice less oxygen at this altitude than in the valley...! While we were forcing ourselves to make another step, the world around was becoming fantastic! The rays of the sun colored tops of the mountains in scarlet, a blue dome of Mt.Elbrus became pink, then red, then golden... The pocket lighters were switched off and we put on the sunglasses.

5642 m above sea level... The highest peak in Europe... We climbed it!



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Thank God for giving us strengths to do it, thank to Anatoliy and Valeriy, our Ukrainian guides!
Thank to all who made this expedition possible!

...All 11 young climbers from Austria, Germany, Spain and Sweden made successful ascent to western top of Mt.Elbrus and returned to the basic camp. Johan Siller with two daughters, Katharina and Christina, descended Mt.Elbrus on ski.

Alexander Zaidler

Leader of the Expedition "ELBRUS - 2007"
Member of YC UIAA