



UIAA Mountaineering Commission meets in Chamonix



Delegates of the UIAA Mountaineering Commission

The UIAA Mountaineering Commission met in Chamonix, France, in April. The meeting was hosted by the Fédération Française des Clubs Alpins et de Montagne (FFCAM) and was very well attended by delegates and guests from 17 different countries, highlighting the strength and value of the Commission's work on a global scale. The Commission was pleased to welcome new delegates from Spain, Turkey, and Japan, and guests from Chile and Russia.

UIAA President Mike Mortimer and Treasurer Jan Bønding attended to hear about, and to discuss with delegates, the work carried out by the Mountaineering Commission and its two working groups, the Training standards Working Group and the Legal Experts Working Group. They also discussed the future policy of the UIAA and the role of the Commissions.



The new members and guests of the UIAA Mountaineering Commission.

The Mountaineering Commission has recently undertaken collaborative work with the Petzl Foundation to assist developing countries to establish their own national leader training programmes. Jean-Jacques Elouet, General Secretary of the Petzl Foundation, described recent work carried out in Nepal and future work planned in India, as well as the production of a training manual to assist those countries that are currently unable to produce their own training material.

Guests from the Russian School of Guides gave an overview of the Russian Mountaineering Federation's training and qualifications, and described their competitions and training centre in the Caucasus. The UIAA Mountaineering Commission is helping the RMF to accredit its training scheme to the UIAA standards.

At present there is no method of comparing climbing-related accidents between different countries. Such comparisons have value for those who teach mountaineering to help identify areas in which further teaching and education may require additional focus, and to help insurance companies understand the real risks associated with such activities. The Mountaineering Commission is investigating this subject and were pleased to welcome, and listen to a presentation, by Chiaki Aoyama from Japan, who has published papers and articles about mountaineering accidents in Japan and abroad, and who will be co-ordinating this project.

The Mountaineering Commission discussed the issue of traditional values and bolting in climbing. Although this varies between different countries and regions, and as such the UIAA should not define any global policy, it is well placed to assist those countries that do not have such policies. There have recently been a number of cases in which climbers have acted inappropriately in foreign countries with disregard for that country's traditions. The UIAA is looking at how it can provide guidance for climbers operating away from their own country.

The Legal Experts Working Group reviewed a number of recent climbing-related cases from around the world and has provided advice and assistance to the UIAA Executive Board on several issues. The group is currently compiling a database of leading cases and it is hoped that this will make it easier for people to access this valuable information.

Several countries are experiencing difficulties regarding restrictions, and sometimes the banning of climbing in areas in which there are conservation issues or a conflict of interest with other groups. Such cases are often brought to the attention of the UIAA, which is providing advice and support to try to resolve such conflicts fairly and amicably.

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Georges Elzière (FFCAM President) welcomes Pierre Humblet (Mountaineering Commission President) to Chamonix.

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Chiaki Aoyama discussing climbing accident statistics.