



# *SPÉLÉO-FÉMININ 3*

## INTERNATIONAL FEMALE CAVING SCHOOL

### 2012

EuroSpeleo Project FSE

### **Project Report**



FEDERAȚIA ROMÂNĂ DE  
SPEOLOGIE



## <sup>1</sup>Historical introduction

The event was inspired by two previous female cavers meetings: the first International female cavers meeting “[SpéléO-féminin](#)” held in France in 2010, and the subsequent [International female caving school](#) in Romania in 2011. The organizers of these two meetings, together with the cavers from Serbia, decided to keep the tradition and continue with the events which particularly focus on female cavers and their technical caving improvement.

The primary aim of the event was to promote caving among women by getting to know each other and thus encouraging their caving activity. “SpéléO-féminin 3” was a contribution to the process of balancing the gender proportions in caving, especially its technical part. It is a generally known tendency, at least in the SEE region, that female cavers are more likely to be oriented to mapping, protection, or general organizational issues, but it is good to encourage them to work also on their technical skills and thus progress in rigging, team-leading, etc.

### Date and venue:

September 2<sup>nd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> 2012

Lelić karst, south-west of the town of Valjevo in western Serbia (100 km from Belgrade).

### Organizers and partners

Overall organizers of the event were four national organizations in speleology<sup>2</sup>:

- [Ecole française de spéléologie](#) (EFS);
- [Scoala Romana de Speologie](#) (Romanian Speleological School)
- Savez speleoloških organizacija Srbije (SSOS; [Federation of Speleological Organizations of Serbia](#))
- Jamarska zveza Slovenije ([Speleological Association of Slovenia](#)).

Organizations and institutions that supported the idea were:

- [FSE](#) - European Speleological Federation | [Fédération Spéléologique Européenne](#), which assigned the status of EuroSpeleo Project FSE
- [Fédération Française de Spéléologie](#)
- [Federatia Română de Speologie](#) ([Romanian Speleological Federation](#))
- [Comité Spéléologique Régional de Rhône-Alpes](#) (CSRRA);
- [Asociația Română de Educație Speologică](#) (ARES);
- Région Rhône-Alpes;

The School was held under the auspices of the Department of Education and Teaching of the International Union of Speleology (UIS).

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<sup>2</sup> order by chronology of involvement into the idea of female cavers gatherings

## School details

The School had two levels:

- **beginners** level: equivalent to the Stage decouverte of the French caving school (EFS) and the Romanian caving school level TSA 1, which provide the ability to progress autonomously in a vertical cave;
- **advanced** level: equivalent to the Stage perf of the EFS and the Romanian level TSA 2, which provide the ability to lead a team in a vertical cave.

Teaching was done by certified caving teachers who obtained a formal degree in caving education either by the French caving school (EFS) and the Romanian caving school at the levels Initiator, Monitor and Instructor.

## Pre-activity advertising

Advertising of the event was focussed mainly to the announcements spread through the Internet. A web page in a form of a blog was created: <http://speleofeminin3.blogspot.com/>, as well as the e-mail address: [speleofeminin3@gmail.com](mailto:speleofeminin3@gmail.com)

The information was spread through mailing lists, forums, as a link on speleological web pages, as well as through direct correspondence.

The school was formally announced as the “Stage Perfectionnement à l'équipement” in the FFS Calendar (page 5).

There were plans to announce the school through the mailing list of all FSE delegates, but due to a misunderstanding in the correspondence, this unfortunately was not carried out.

## Location description; meetings and hosting facilities

The school was held in the area of Lelić karst, south-west of the town of Valjevo in western Serbia. Teaching was done in 5 vertical caves in the area (up to 183 m deep): Dragov Ponor, Lenčina Pećina, Vrančev Ponor, Filipov Ponor and Degurićka Pećina, as well as on the surface limestone rock face Šareno Platno, in the canyon of the Gradac River.

Accommodation was organized on two locations, in two mountain huts: Šareno Platno, in the canyon of the Gradac River (next to the rock face used for teaching during the first 3 days), and Rastilo hut, in the village of Donje Leskovice, 25 km from Valjevo (during the remaining 4 days). Presentations and projections took place in the meeting rooms in the huts, while the lectures not requiring electricity were held outside.

In the Rastilo mountain hut, two accommodation options were possible: lodging in rooms (with sleeping bags) or camping (sleeping in tents). The persons involved in organization prepared the meals for the participants. All the dinners were cooked (hot) meals.

## Budget

The complete list of incomes and expenses is given in the attached table.

Initially, the cost per participant (inscription fee) with accommodation in tent was supposed to be 140 eur, and the fee with accommodation in rooms was estimated at 150 eur. The teachers were free of the inscription fee, and the costs of their stay were transferred to students. After receiving the information about obtaining the status EuroSpeleo Project FSE, with a financial

grant of 400 eur, the taxes were reduced by 10 eur (considering that for max 30 participants, the grant will be sufficient to cover the discount).

Although we opted for a financial grant in the ESP application, we received an AV equipment pack. The equipment consisted only of personal gear (harnesses, bags), already provided by the individual participants, so the donated equipment was not used during the course.

| Description   | Amount per unit | Quantity | Income      | Expense     |
|---|-----------------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| Participation fee (room)                                  | 140             | 10       | 1400        |             |
| Participation fee (tent)                                  | 130             | 3        | 390         |             |
| Food  |                 |          |             | 860         |
| Petrol for local transport (before and during the school) |                 |          |             | 120         |
| Petrol for teachers (to come to Serbia)                   |                 |          |             | 180         |
| Local transport of equipment (rent a car)                 |                 |          |             | 40          |
| Mountain hut rent   |                 |          |             | 150         |
| Banner  | 50              | 1        |             | 50          |
| T-shirts  | 5               | 40       |             | 200         |
| Mobile phone costs for the organizer                      |                 |          |             | 60          |
| Other costs (cleaning, dishes, party, etc)                |                 |          |             | 180         |
| Debt for petrol (to M.Manisor and P.Y.Balette)            |                 |          |             | 130         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |                 |          | <b>1790</b> | <b>1970</b> |
| difference (loss)   |                 |          |             | -180        |

FFS provided most of the common equipment, as well as travel costs for one car from France. Pierre-Yves Balette provided a part of common equipment from his personal sources.

## Multi-languages facilities

Official languages of the event were English and French. All the participants spoke one or both of these languages. There was no need for additional translations.

## Activities

### *Saturday, September 1st*

During the afternoon, meeting of the participants in Valjevo. Transport to the first camping location - Šareno Platno, where the team will spend three days, practising on the rock face (falaise).

### *Sunday, September 2nd*

During the morning, the teachers rigged the system on the rock, to carry out the entrance test for the advanced course. The test took place from 12 to 15 h. After the lunch, all the team practised the techniques on the ropes. The introductory lectures for both courses took place.

### *Monday, September 3rd*

Continuation of practical exercises on the rock face, as well as on the trees. Lectures about the main elements of the rigged system - equipment, knots, rebelay, placing spits... Each advanced student rigged their own system, which had to include the "main courante", the vertical, rebelay and deviation. After the lunch, some new systems were rigged on the rock. Continuation of the lecture about the equipment, for the advanced students. During that time, the beginners are practising with their teachers on the system which was rigged the first day.

### *Tuesday, September 4th*

In the morning, the lecture on making a technical (rigging) map. Practising the techniques for removing a victim from the rope (footloop/croll method, counterweight on long cowstail, croll/croll method). After the lunch, all the systems were derigged. Packing and transfer to the other camping location - Rastilo.

### *Wednesday, September 5th*

After the breakfast, a lecture about the first aid. Afterwards, the participants of the advanced course split to two teams. One team packed the equipment for the cave Vrančev Ponor, and the other for the cave Filipov Ponor. In the caves, the students rig the verticals, supervised by the teachers. Practising the techniques for removing a victim from the rope. Making a bivouac, warming a victim. Derigging. In the evening, Dušica Trnavac (geographer) made a lecture about Serbian karst.

### *Thursday, September 6th*

Two advanced teams switched the caves from the previous day, Vrančev and Filipov Ponor. Rigging with teachers' supervision. This time, the students of the beginners course joined them in the caves. Field repairs or replacements of lost or damaged pieces of personal equipment (the garda hitch, the prussik knot, etc).

### *Friday, September 7th*

One team packs the equipment for the cave Lenčina Pečina, and the other for the Dragov Ponor. The students rig the systems with teachers' supervision. Practising the techniques for removing a victim from the rope. Derigging.

### *Saturday, September 8th*

Cleaning all the equipment on the Gradac River. Afterwards, the final exam for the students. Additional practising on the trees (tyrolean, removing a victim from the rope, transport of ropes through a cave, etc.). Visiting the entrance part of the cave Degurička Pečina. Farewell party in the Rastilo hut.

### *Sunday, September 9th*

Packing and leaving the camp. Lunch in front of the cave Petnička Pečina. In the afternoon, departure of participants.

## Participants

|     | <u>Name and Surname</u> | <u>Country</u> | <u>Level</u>      |
|-----|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 1.  | Iva Vukovic             | Serbia         | advanced          |
| 2.  | Adrian Albuica          | Romania        | advanced          |
| 3.  | Tudor Isoc              | Romania        | advanced          |
| 4.  | Marie Ferragne          | France         | advanced          |
| 5.  | Thierry Sibellas        | France         | advanced          |
| 6.  | Andrea Peter            | Romania        | advanced          |
| 7.  | Octavian Voda           | Romania        | advanced          |
| 8.  | Sophie Delair           | France         | advanced          |
| 9.  | Veronique Hubert        | France         | beginner          |
| 10. | Genevieve Daller        | France         | beginner          |
| 11. | Roxana Matyas           | Romania        | beginner          |
| 12. | Tudor Dezmarean         | Romania        | beginner          |
| 13. | Marcel Meysonnier       | France         | teacher           |
| 14. | Vladimir Rankovic       | Serbia         | teacher           |
| 15. | Adina Micula            | Romania        | teacher           |
| 16. | Mihaela Manisor         | Romania        | teacher           |
| 17. | Pierre-Yves Balette     | France         | teacher           |
| 18. | Sandra Roulet           | France         | assisting-teacher |
| 19. | Magali Brun             | France         | assisting-teacher |
| 20. | Milica Madzarevic       | Serbia         | organisation      |

Due to unexpected circumstances within the federation, the registered participants from the Speleological Association of Slovenia cancelled the participation two days before the event. The contact person from Slovenia, Marko Zakrajšek, is supposed to officially inform the FSE about the reasons for the absence of Slovenian participants. Nonetheless, the Speleological Association of Slovenia took part in the preparation period and thus contributed to the successful completion of the School.

## Outcomes of the project and further considerations

The overall impression of both organizers and participants of the “SpéléO-féminin 3” is that the whole event was successful and a good opportunity for the cavers to meet, share experiences and learn the main principles of rigging and other technical caving skills. All candidates have passed the exam and subsequently got the diplomas by the Romanian caving school.

The gender balance was appropriate and completely in accordance with the type of the event - out of 12 participants (students), there were 7 girls, while in the total number of participants, the female part was 12 in 20.

Regarding the continuation of the tradition of female cavers gatherings, the opinion is that this kind of events should be maintained, with a dual programme - both the technical caving school and a non-conventional gathering oriented to exchange of experiences and ideas, networking, and visits to local caves.



Official T-shirt of the “SpéléO-féminin 3” (design: Selena Blagojević)



Participants of the “SpéléO-féminin 3” on return from the cave (photo: Adina Micula)