

FEDME General Congress

Cáceres, 14th May 1995

The Spanish Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (FEDME), together with all the regional mountaineering federations, expresses its concern about the way protection measures with respect to mountain regions are often dictated in our country. We are becoming more and more concerned about how all too often indiscriminate and arbitrary bans seem to take precedence over the necessary regulations on control, rationalisation and supervision, along with their budgets both in terms of human resource and materials, thereby hindering and even preventing the general public from exercising their legal and desirable right to access, use and enjoy our mountains. We are afraid that this is primarily because it is much cheaper to prohibit than to effectively control and supervise natural areas without them necessarily becoming private reserves or outdoor museums.

Mountaineering and climbing are sports activities that develop a large number of human and cultural interests, closely linked to the natural environment and in perfect harmony with the laws of nature. These activities were first practised in our country in 1876, and participants, grouped together in mountain clubs and federations, have been and still are great defenders not only of the need for legislation that fosters conservation of natural areas without any transformation but that will also improve and boost the standard of living in mountain villages, which, as we understand it, are the true and most important guarantors of what real and effective conservation is all about.

As mountaineers educated to respect nature and fight for its preservation in our mountaineering associations, we cannot accept the growing restriction of our access to the mountain area, where we engage in sports and cultural activities that are really traditional and in no way harmful to the environment or animals that live there. We neither form part of groups nor condone actions that actually damage the natural environment: the uncontrolled deviation of mass tourism to the mountains once our coasts have been destroyed; the permissive attitude in clearing forest routes providing access to all kinds of motorised vehicles; the excessive proliferation of real estate offered at high altitudes, which have a very negative impact; the deficient organisation of rubbish and waste collection resulting in polluted mountain streams and waterways; the absence of regulation concerning the development of so-called adventure sports; the low levels of environmental education, etc. We understand that these are examples of problems that should really be of concern to the responsible legislator.

As mountaineers belonging to the various affiliated mountain clubs, we thus demand free access to the mountains to be able to continue practising our sports activities in a responsible way as we have always done in keeping with the guidelines provided by the UIAA (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation).