

Sharing personal impressions from the UEFA Euro 2008™

A female commander of the Vienna Police Intervention Group and her experiences

The UEFA Euro 2008™ was the biggest sports event that ever took place in Austria and one the greatest challenges for die Austrian Police. At the four performance locations Vienna, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Klagenfurt more than 2,4 million visitors/spectators were counted. Out of this number more than one million guests travelled from abroad.

There was awareness that such a big event will not go completely peaceful but due to the extensive and excellent preparation there were no major incidents. It was a 'one of a kind soccer party'. Of course Austria could benefit from the German experiences at the Soccer World Championship in 2006. These experiences were included in the operational concept but, however, it was a completely different event anyway and nobody could estimate how many fans will travel to Austria and if all of them would party peacefully.

The planning was very important and prudent. Besides human resource concepts and logistics the training of the employed policewomen and –men was crucial.

During the UEFA Euro 2008™ *Bezirksinspektor Kristina Klik* was employed with the Intervention Group in Vienna. In an interview she is sharing her impressions and experiences:

Marlies (interviewer): How did you experience the European soccer championship?

Kristina: It was a very special operation indeed. We didn't know exactly what to expect. Due to the intensive preparation we were prepared for everything. Personally I have gathered many positive impressions. The atmosphere was fantastic, the Austrian and foreign fans were partying cheerfully and mostly peacefully.

Bezirksinspektor Kristina

Klik

Marlies: What was your task within the Intervention Group?

Kristina: I was commander in charge of one group of the 3rd company of the Vienna Police Intervention Group and was responsible for putting our orders into action correctly. Besides this I was responsible for the following documentation. Moreover I was challenged to perceive dangerous situations, to react correspondingly and to set the appropriate steps.

Marlies: How have you been prepared for these tasks?

Kristina: We had to undergo different training phases. Over a more than six month period of time we had both theoretical and practical training elements on regular basis. The police officers of the Intervention Group were step by step prepared for the approaching task. We started with quite easy exercises were we've been practising intervention in peaceful respectively half-peaceful situations. At the end of the training we were confronted with unmerciful situations.

Marlies: What did the training include, what was the content?

Kristina: The theoretical elements covered the legal requirements for intervention, the use of tactical measures and First Aid. The practical elements included more or less the use of new equipment and practical exercises like building up a barrier chain, the rescue of injured persons, and the clearance of certain areas and so on. It was very beneficial that it was practised in the exact same line-up the teams were finally employed during the championship.

Marlies: You had to command a group of men. What was your experience on that?

Kristina: It was no problem at all. We knew each other already from the trainings before. The different tasks were clear and it didn't make any difference that I am a woman.

Marlies: Were there special considerations shown for women police?

Kristina: In an operation it doesn't make any difference if it is a policewoman or –man. Both have to fulfil their tasks. Of course in regards to accommodation there were separate bed- and bathrooms available.

Marlies: Where exactly was your area of operation and what did you do?

Kristina and her team

Kristina: We were employed at the 'hot-spots' all over Vienna. Our task was mainly to be on patrol doing identity and security checks and to observe fan behaviour. On request we supported other units and we had to intervene in unmerciful situations.

Marlies: Have you been facing dangerous situations?

Kristina: Not really. At one occasion we had to rescue the offender from the fan crowd after a bodily injury and arrest him. Otherwise the championship went very calm for us. We have experienced the fans very friendly and were often asked if we would be available for a photo together with them.

Marlies: Thank you for your information and for sharing your impressions from the UEFA Euro 2008™ with us.

Kristina and Marlies Raser-Menhart

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