

Study Visit at the Regional Government of Styria/ Department of Sports and Caritas Styria in the Frame of “Creating a Level Playing Field”

Visiting Partners

- German Olympic Sports Confederation

Date and Place

- 2 to 6 March 2012
- Graz, Austria

Participants

<i>Surname</i>	<i>First Name</i>	<i>Organisation</i>
Axmann	Gitta	German Olympic Sports Confederation
Hirschböck	Thomas	Regional Government of Styria – Depart. of Sports
Jaeger	Thomas	Caritas Styria
Matouschek	Stephanie	Regional Government of Styria – Depart. of Sports
Nanhofer	Elisabeth	Caritas Styria
Strauch	Melanie	ENGSO
Teichmann	Michael	Caritas Styria
Vogl	Stephan	German Olympic Sports Confederation

Further participants from local and regional sports organizations joined the meeting in different sessions

I. STUDY VISIT SUMMARY

The Regional Government and the Caritas of Styria have hosted the German CLPF partners for a study visit throughout 2 to 6 March 2012.

- **2 and 3 March 2012**

On 2 and 3 March 2012, the activity commenced with a practical field example of social inclusion in sports. In this initiative, children from migrant families in Graz and its surrounding areas were taken to a snow camp at the Austrian mountains. Twice a year, the Caritas Styria is conducting this initiative to bring children from foreign and socially weak backgrounds to the snow. In the event, the German delegation took active part in teaching migrant children to develop skiing and snowboarding skills.

- **4 March 2012**

Following the practical field visit, the Austrian Caritas organised a guided tour of its facilities in Graz and provided insight to the various initiatives it is running in the field of social inclusion in sports. These include football training, participation in team sports events such as the Graz nightly marathon or a self-founded cricket club for young migrant boys. For the German delegation, it was particularly interesting to find out, how children from the snow camp are involved in further Caritas sports initiatives to achieve positive long-term personal development and facilitate integration with society.

In a four-hour workshop in the afternoon, more than 20 participants from Styrian sports organisations and the Department of Sports of the Styrian Regional Government were provided with practical intercultural training. "Sports intercultural" is a central tool of the "Integration through Sports" initiative conducted by the German Olympic Sports Confederation. With the aim to sensitize actors in sports for intercultural differences, this concept has seen rising interest within the past years in Germany. In more detail, it provides individuals involved in organised sports on local, regional and national levels with practical training and theoretical explanations about the challenges of intercultural collaboration and focuses on a better understanding of "the other".

- **5 March 2012**

On the final day, a seminar at the Department of Sports of the Regional Government of Styria, has allowed an insight into sports structures of both, the Styrian region and Austrian nation. In particular, there is a high number of EU initiatives, the region of Styria is involved in, with regards to the topic of sports.

II. CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATION

The study visit conducted in Graz, Styria has been valued of great significance by both partners. Not only the programme combining both, practical and theoretical elements has contributed to the success, but also the involvement of diverse actors of Styrian sports. With the large group, concrete possibilities for the exchange of information on sports structures

and social inclusion initiatives in both countries were given. The German delegation especially valued the participation in the practical field visit. Next to bringing migrant children to the snow and facilitate their integration through sports, also the challenges of such a project could be encountered. This refers to a limited budget, as well as intercultural communication difficulties among the children from different nations. Through the experience from national programmes, the German Olympic Sports Confederation could contribute in providing advice about examples from local initiatives and how they tackled such issues. To resolve financial difficulties, it could apply for a grant with the National Ski Association, for example.

Following the study visit, mutual exchange between both project partners has been enforced and deepened. The German delegation was able to consult on an Austrian project about intercultural learning and the Austrian Caritas partners have assisted to create a brochure for involving migrant girls in sports. The network seems to be continued and will involve further actors from both countries in future.

Person in charge of the report: Melanie Strauch