

Football is for everyone

# The FARE anti-racism programme



**R**acism and discrimination in football has become an increasingly important subject for clubs and associations. In this respect, however, football is not just the »victim«, but also has the inherent power to combat the phenomenon by virtue of its popularity and universal nature. For this reason, the impact and significance of anti-racism initiatives at major football events should not be underestimated.

### The link between fan support and anti-racism

At Euro 2004 in Portugal, the FARE network (Football against Racism in Europe) and the union of European football supporters (FSI), to which the KOS belongs, organised a unified initiative against racism for the first time. The idea was to link the anti-racism message to the fan support services, in order to protect fans from right-wing exploitation, without trivialising the problems of racism and discrimination. These objectives inspired the idea of providing street-kick areas near the embassies, which were intended to facilitate contact between the local population and fans from other nations, as well as giving information on the subject of racism.

The concept for Germany 2006 was based on the successful measures implemented in EURO 2004. These included: anti-racism street-kick events, at least one in every host city, an anti-racism fanzine, an exhibition to accompany the street-kicks, and monitoring for anti-racist activity in

stadiums and cities. Anti-racism played a major part in the KOS concept from the outset; however, our role during the implementation was effectively reduced to that of a consultant and mediator for the OC and FARE. The detailed concept was developed and implemented by FARE, and eventually the OC agreed to a contract. However, the agreement was delayed considerably, and in our opinion, this was not only due to protracted content revisions, but also because the OC didn't really grasp the potential significance and possibilities of such a programme. Hence, FARE was unable to commence with detailed preparations until February 2006. Locations for the street-kicks had to be found and approved at a time when every inch of the cities had already been earmarked for commercial use, and even the fan coordinators had difficulty finding somewhere to put their embassies. In the end, they did manage to organise more or less suitable sites in all the host cities.

### Implementation under difficult circumstances

The FARE concept was implemented by »Dem Ball is' egal, wer ihn tritt« (Gelsenkirchen) and »Football Unites – Racism Divides« (Sheffield). FARE outlined the expected cooperation whilst introducing their plans to the fan embassies and fan-projects in a KOS workshop in April 2006. In view of the tight schedule, the sites found for the street-kicks were acceptable. FARE was generally happy with the programme; however, some of the fan embassy heads and



Spectators at the anti-racist street-kick

fan representatives criticised the cooperation, especially the communication with German FARE partners prior to, and during the street-kicks in their cities.

The declared objective was to employ a »low threshold activity« to unite, predominantly young, fans from participating nations with local youths. Moreover, it was also an attempt to integrate the host cities' immigrant communities. The programme was deliberately located in public spaces in the city centres, in order to document the necessity of spreading the anti-racism agenda beyond the stadium perimeters. In our opinion, which is supported by evidence gathered in the University of Hanover's evaluation, public awareness of the events was less than optimal. Furthermore, the aim of encouraging the various target groups to participate concurrently was not entirely successful.

### Strong presence in the stadium

FARE, which has been an important UEFA partner for a good number of years, embarked on its first cooperation with FIFA just before the start of the World Cup 2006. This cooperation encouraged FIFA to »show their colours« in the stadiums during the World Cup. Each game started with a »Say No to Racism« demonstration at the centre circle. Moreover, the quarter finals were specifically devoted to the anti-racism cause, and each team captain read a statement to that effect. The show of strength inside the grounds, however, was offset by the general disregard for the subject outside – a fact supported by the lack of me-



Presentation of the anti-racist fan guide

dia resonance. In our opinion, it is imperative to sustain the anti-racism and anti-discrimination programme. Our commitment to the campaign will be reflected in our future fan-work in Germany, and should play an increasingly important role at international events – although more planning security and better communication would be desirable in the future.

Stadium and inner-city monitoring revealed only isolated racist incidents during the World Cup. These results form a stark contrast to some of the hysterical reporting, which culminated in a public debate on so-called »no go areas« prior to the event. A more judicious perspective would be desirable in the future, where individual acts of racism and discrimination are kept in proportion, without trivialising any incidents.



Football unites – waiting for the ball together