

KAPFENBERG SPECIAL

Editorial, by the President

The 14th Youth Fire Brigades competitions, organised under the leadership of the CTIF, took place from 20th to 26th July 2003 in Kapfenberg, Austria. The competitions have enjoyed a history of success since the first event was held in 1977 in Ettelbrück (Luxembourg) when nine youth fire brigade delegations, from five countries, came together. This year Kapfenberg was host to 24 nations, represented by more than 40 delegations, totalling more than 600 participants. Also, for the first time ever, an Australian delegation participated in the event. At the CTIF it is our strong wish that these international events - where the most important component is friendship - will become even more successful in the years to come.

François Maurer

Getting ready for the event

Who is behind the scenes of such a huge organisation? A committee that was specifically set up for the competitions, and led with a master's hands by Dietmar Lederhaas, who is in charge of coordinating the youth fire brigades' activities in Austria. The organisation committee was supported by the Styrian region through its representative Mrs Waltraud Klasnic, the Austrian Fire Fighters Federation under the presidency of Manfred Seidl, the City of Kapfenberg led by its mayor Manfred Wegscheider, chief officer Franz Hauptmann and his Styrian fire fighters, and the voluntary fire brigade of Kapfenberg, led by Josef Kleinburger.

The CTIF international youth leaders commission also contributed to the event's success, specifically through Wilfried Weissgärber, Austria, who has been leading the CTIF panel of judges for the youth fire brigades competitions since 1979.

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News from the international youth leaders commission

Alfred Zeilmayr has been chairman of the commission for 12 years. On 25th of July he transferred command to his colleague Jos Tholl, co-ordinator of youth fire brigades activities in Luxembourg and also vice-president of the Luxembourger Fire Fighters Federation.

Further important information to note

- ✓ The statistics on youth fire brigades in the CTIF member countries have been recently updated: in 2002, more than 780,000 members -25% being girls- were registered in the 29 countries known to have created youth fire brigades. There were 729,000 members in 2001.
- ✓ The Youth Fire Brigades Dictionary is now available in German, English, French, Finnish, Italian and Czech. It will be extended to additional languages soon and can now be obtained from the General Secretary (electronic version) on demand.
- ✓ The international competition rules for youth fire brigades have changed slightly. The new version will soon be available on www.ctif.org.
- ✓ The next meeting of the commission will be in Varazdin (Croatia), on 4th October 2003.
- ✓ The 7th youth fire brigades symposium will take place in Birmingham (Great Britain) from 20th to 23rd May 2004.

Important date in September 2003:

"The contacts between youth fire brigades and active fire services"

will be in the foreground at the CTIF workshop on **Saturday, 20th September 2003**, in Budapest, Hungary, where the CTIF also holds its Delegates' Assembly this year.

In the core of the event

The city of Kapfenberg with its 23,000 inhabitants offered ideal conditions for the 14th international youth fire brigades gathering. There are today no less than 30 sports clubs in town with 5000 athletes as members! Kapfenberg, which is famous for its steel works, has a very modern sports centre and is host to numerous sports competitions. It's an excellent sports infrastructure that has also been used for professional training by top international sports clubs.



The opening ceremony

On 23rd July more than 2,500 people had gathered in the stadium to watch the lighting of the olympic flame. Two young people from the youth fire brigades, perched on a fire fighter's ladder, brought the flame up to a giant fire hose where it symbolically burned during the entire event. Then the competitions began on 24th July, in the early morning, after several days of intensive training.

One regret to note: A few delegations, such as Estonia, were forced to cancel their participation at the last minute due to a lack of financial resources. Alfred Zeilmayr, CTIF General Secretary, said the CTIF was suffering from the lack of subsidies from the European Union that could help those countries that are interested in creating youth fire brigades and attending such international events. Until now the CTIF has been unsuccessful in obtaining EU subsidies, however, it continues to make unremitting efforts towards that aim.

Several special personalities attended the event, and all of them pointed out the importance of such meetings as symbols of friendship and solidarity. Youth fire brigades are the future of the fire and rescue services and, as such, will soon bear responsibility for the safety of the citizens in Europe!

The results

Austria was the top winner of the 14th edition of the competitions! The Austrian team of Kürnberg's impressive performance won them first place and achieved the best time in the obstacle competition at 43.7 seconds. The team was also in top form for the relay race, achieving an excellent time of 66.22 seconds. Also, it should be noted that speed is not the only winning criteria; it is also of the utmost importance that the participants perform each evolution correctly, as each fault results in penalties.



The winners in action

The Czech Republic (Team „Tschechien 1“) placed second, with yet another Austrian team taking the third step of the podium. The Russian group that won first place in 2001 in Finland finished fifth.



To find all results and picture highlights:

www.ctif2003.steiermark.at

Please Mark Your Calendars Now!

The 15th international youth fire brigades competitions will take place from

***17th to 24th July 2005
in Varazdin, Croatia***

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