Ideal teamwork

Behind the scenes at the SPIE Football Cup in Vienna

Actually, Michael Grafl is Special Project Manager at SPIE CEMA, a unit of SPIE Deutschland & Zentraleuropa in Austria, where in addition to his duties as CSR Manager for the Austria Region, alongside local management he heads strategic and organisational projects. But in the past few weeks, he was very busy with football. As the on-site project manager, Michael made sure everything went smoothly at the SPIE Football Cup in Vienna.

Michael, how did you come to be responsible for the Football Cup preparations?

Gerald Edler, Managing Director of SPIE CEMA, knew that I love football and have a good contact at SK Rapid Vienna (winner of the most Austrian Bundesliga titles) because I did an internship for a few months there. So once it was decided that Vienna would host the Football Cup this year, for me it was a point of honour to manage the project. Of course I couldn't have done it alone. I had a great organisation team in Vienna and with Stefanie Krecht and Helen Falke from the SPIE Deutschland & Zentraleuropa communications team, I had two seasoned events specialists at my side.

What was the biggest challenge in planning the event?

The biggest and most important challenge was finding locations with a bit of Austrian flair and good food that weren't too far apart – from the pitch and the right infrastructure to the evening venue and a single hotel for all the players so they could also network away from the pitch. After all, there were people from every country in the Group at the Football Cup. And we tried to arrange for a super-smooth event by providing clear directions and schedules for the 400 or so participants, to make the days in Vienna as pleasant as possible for everybody.

What makes the Cup a success for you?

If the weather cooperated and everybody had fun, felt welcome in Vienna, and enjoyed the combination of sport, culture and good Austrian cuisine, I would consider that a success. If it all came together like that, I'm satisfied.

Did you learn anything during the preparations?

I didn't really know how much fun I'd have organising an event of this size. Thinking about where the best location would be, how the logistics could work best, agreeing things in the team and coordinating all the service providers – I enjoyed all that a lot. I'd be happy to do it more often in the future.

Now the Football Cup is over. What's next for you? Sit back and relax?

Unfortunately, there's no time to relax. Right after the Cup there's the relocation project for SPIE CEMA, which I've been heading in parallel with the football tournament. That will last until the end of July. Then I'll be on holiday in August. I'm really looking forward to the time off, but I'm sure I'll also be looking back fondly on the Football Cup in Vienna.



The team headed by (from left) Vilma Kulheku, Claudia Bulla, Michael Grafl and Steffi Krecht made sure everything went smoothly at the SPIE Football Cup 2023 in Vienna.