

Press Release

Record coverage for 2008 Men's EHF European Handball Championship

Zug, Switzerland, 11 March 2008 - Viewing figures for the recent 2008 Men's EHF European Handball Championship, which took place from January 17-27 in Norway, indicate that the cumulative television viewing audience for this event topped one billion for the first time.

The magic figure of more than 1.2 billion viewers now stands as the new viewing record for a single EHF EURO event. This figure equals the combined viewing audience from both the men's and the women's tournament in 2006. In 2008, the television audience so far watched more than 1,100 programme hours of European Championship coverage.

This result is based on an independent programme analysis, including information provided by broadcast partners worldwide. The report is seen as a conservative estimate for the event's total coverage as some markets were unable to provide audited audience data to meet the full criteria of the study. It was compiled by the German communication research agency Sport+Markt on behalf of Infront Sports & Media, the exclusive commercial partner for the European Handball Federation's (EHF) premier event.

Extensive Media Interest

This result is based on the successful global distribution of the media rights for the European Championship through Infront and the positive status of the sport of handball on the market. The Swiss-based company concluded broadcast agreements with more than 70 broadcasters, including a record number of almost 20 radio stations. Overall, the tournament was broadcast in 85 territories - particularly in Europe, the Middle East and Asia - and in addition via news (DW-TV and SNTV) world wide. There were 420 representatives from television and radio present on-site in Norway.

Vast increase in viewing in Germany

Overall, there was a large increase in interest, especially in Germany, reflecting the goodwill and momentum carried forward from the staging of the World Handball Championship in Germany in 2007. This has affected the size of the handball audience in Europe's biggest market. Over three times more viewers followed the live transmissions on ARD and ZDF in 2008, in comparison to the 2006 event in Switzerland.

The later - and thus more attractive - timings of the German matches created a substantial increase of the audience: ARD reached 8.02 million viewers (market share of 32.8 percent) with the live transmission of the semi-final Germany vs. Denmark on 26 January 2008 at 18.00 hours. This was the peak. In Denmark, 2,022 million viewers watched the final match itself. TV2 Denmark reached a market share of 86.5 percent with the live transmission.

Strong coverage in non-participating Countries

Another key factor in the success of the event was the high number of matches broadcasted in non-participating countries (the majority live, but also some delayed including re-runs). For example

Portugal (23 matches), Albania (11), Romania (44), Belgium (18), FYR Macedonia (17), Bosnia Herzegovina (13), Estonia (11) and Dubai Sports Channel, which is reaching more than 20 territories in the Middle East/North Africa region (40 matches).

Tor Lian, President of the European Handball Federation, said: "The EHF is delighted with these figures, which are the result of a sustained and consistent media distribution policy over many years. The EHF works intensively with all its partners to further strengthen the EHF EURO Events, these figures speak volumes".

"This event has been the best in the history of all EHF European Championship from the media point of view," said Stephan Herth, Executive Director Summer Sports of Infront. "The pictures delivered by TV2 were impressive, capturing the feeling and emotion of the sport and adding to the understanding of the play. The audience results are the best yet".

Coming up in December: The Women's event in FYR Macedonia

The Infront Group is the EHF's exclusive marketing partner for the bi-annual Men's and Women's European Handball Championships. The EHF and Infront are currently preparing for the Women's European Championship, from 02 - 14 December in Macedonia. The 47 matches will be played in Skopje and Ohrid; the teams of Norway, Russia, France, Germany, Hungary and the host FYR Macedonia are already qualified. The other participating teams will be decided during the play-offs in June 2008. The draw for the final tournament will take place on 20 July 2008 in Ohrid, FYR Macedonia.

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