

A smashing success

26. August 2009

Copenhagen World Outgames 2009 lived up to its promise and left the more than 5,500 participants from 92 countries, and the more than 200,000 tourists and Copenhageners who also took part, with praise and admiration for the week long festival of sports, culture and human rights.

From the opening ceremony at City Hall square - where participants were greeted with cheers and applause from more than 25,000 spectators - to the emotional closing at the same square, where at least 40,000 were on hand to celebrate Copenhagen Pride, World Outgames 2009 delivered more than 2200 program activities that inspired, entertained and left nearly everyone feeling happy to have been a part of it.

“Everything was absolutely fantastic,” said GLISA co-president Julia Applegate in an email to organizers after the event.

“I saw opera from Mexico City, dance from Tel Aviv, disco from Antwerp, feminist rock from Melbourne, drag king theatre from Copenhagen. I attended a world class human rights conference with leading academics, activists and agitators from all corners of the world. I participated in an extremely well run swim meet...I had a blast and I am honored to have been part of it,” wrote Julia Applegate.

World Outgames week was not without unfortunate incident. There were isolated attacks on several participants registered as hate crimes. But nobody was seriously injured and the suspects were immediately arrested, charged and jailed by the police.

“The hateful attacks on our peaceful participants during this happy celebration of diversity only served to highlight the importance of events like World Outgames,” said director of World Outgames 2009, Uffe Elbæk.

“There is still a lot of homophobia around the globe and the best way to combat that is to bring people together in forums like World Outgames that promote understanding and tolerance,” said Uffe Elbæk.

Overall, World Outgames 2009 was a smashing success socially, politically and economically. Organizers did not exceed the budget and the final report is expected to end with a neutral result or a small plus.

Key figures for World Outgames 2009:

Participants:

- 5.518 participants from 92 countries.
- The five largest national delegations excluding Denmark were:
 - Germany (632)
 - USA (631)

- Canada (499)
- Holland (495)
- England (413)

Specific foreign LGBT-tourists (estimate):

- 7.500 (Atlantis gay cruise ship alone brought 2.600 international LGBT tourists)

Average length of participant stay in Copenhagen:

- 8.05 day (expected 5.5 days)

Program-aktivities:

- More than 2200 program-aktivities during WO:
- 34 sports disciplines with 1.800 competitive events. In addition 43 free workshops.
- 303 scheduled cultural events
- 24 keynote speakers and 110 workshops at the human rights conference

Copenhagener's participation:

- More than 200.000 Copenhageners and tourists participated in the many free events during WO (primarily in connection with the opening and closing ceremonies and the OutCities cultural program, but also in the Run for Love and the many free sports workshops).
- 90% of Copenhageners knew about Outgames
- Between 6 – 15 % indicated that they would actively participate in WO.
- Among those who indicated that they would participate, the cultural events were most popular with 48% followed by Pride with 29% and sports with 25%.
- 58% had a positive attitude towards WO, 31% had a neutral attitude and 9 % were negative or very negative about WO.
- 90% agree/totally agree "That it is important for Copenhagen to profile itself internationally by attracting and holding large cultural events."

The figures above are from a survey conducted by Capacent Research for Wonderful Copenhagen and VisitDenmark.

Media coverage:

- Accredited journalists: 327 (127 foreign og 200 Danish).
- The journalists represented 24 different countries, primarily Europe and North America, but also Israel, Mexico, Croatia, Namibia and Australia.
- 435 international articles online from July 1 to August 10.*
- A summary of Danish media coverage is being prepared by Primetime Kommunikation and will be available at the end of August 2009.

* Source: Meltwater News online coverage.

In addition, there was radio coverage from: NRK (Norway), Swedish Radio, German Radio, Canadian Radio, Mexican Radio (daily coverage), American and Australian Radio.

TV crews from the Czech Republic, France, Canada and the USA were also on hand for documentary and special programming.

Economy:

- WO did not exceed the budget and we expect to end with either a neutral result or a small plus (the final report is expected to be published at the end of November).
- Participants and specific tourists at World Outgames are estimated to have spent between 50 – 60 million kroner on accommodations, transportation and general consumption (Wonderful Copenhagen estimate).

Volunteers:

- 1800 volunteers (1500 Danish and 300 foreign).

Secretariat:

- All employees stop August 31 (except the CFO who continues through to December 31).

Evaluation and documentation:

- Final internal status report (February 2007 – July 2009) in Danish and English completed July 2009.
- Internal report on the value of the event for Copenhagen completed August 2009.
- Danish media report prepared by Primetime Kommunikation expected week 35.
- WoCo scanning international online coverage completed week 34.
- Analysis of Copenhageners' event awareness and participation completed week 34.
- Internal media analysis expected week 35.