

Early Bird 18 – 24 August 2012

SECURITY/SAFETY

Demonstrators are allowed to show Mohammed cartoons (Aug. 14)

Right-wing populist group “Pro Deutschland” targeted provocations during demonstrations in Berlin. The administrative appeals tribunal ruled that, in accordance with the criminal code, showing “Mohammed cartoons” in a public gathering is no “insult” in the sense of slurring religious confessions. Furthermore the complainants did not consider that “freedom of the art” paragraph in the basic law applies to cartoons also. “Pro Deutschland” had planned several demonstrations in front of Islamic mosques and installations in Berlin. Political parties, labor unions and left-wing groups are planning to have counter demonstrations.

Disaster protection units exercised in Bonnland (Aug. 24)

60 auxiliaries from the federal agency of technical relief (THW), volunteer fire departments and the Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB auxiliary service) practiced rescue missions as close to reality as possible. The training included the deployment of a complete task force as well as establishing accommodations and self-sufficient logistic structures. Prior to the beginning of the exercise the participants were instructed on how to use digital mobile radios since the Volunteer Fire Department of the City of Schweinfurt recently had signed an agreement with the State of Bavaria to begin with extended test operations with digital radios in 2014. The exercise began before dawn in a village which has been used as local training area for urban fighting since 1956. After smaller fire and assistance missions an unknown location had to be found at night using coordinates –at the scene several persons were entombed and to be freed using illuminators and heavy rescue equipment. The next training day included different scenarios ranging from securing suspected items to rescue missions after an earth quake.

Answering machine causes bomb alarm (Aug. 22)

Because of a suspicious package, a bomb alarm was prompted at the justice center in Würzburg on Tuesday morning. Explosives experts gave the all-clear signal. A package the size of a shoe box was thoroughly examined in the mail room. The x-rays showed that there were wires inside the package and, as a precaution, the building was evacuated. After the police determined that there was no danger in transporting the package, since it had been transported before, police officers carried the package out of the building and at approximately 9:45 a.m. the 80 persons who had left the building were able to return. At 11:50 a.m. the specialists from the State Office of Criminal Investigations Munich arrived and determined that the package contained an answering machine including connection cables. According to the police it was not a delivery of ordered goods – there was no clue in regard to the sender.

Traffic light out of order caused accident, €6,000 damage (Aug. 22)

On Monday a collision at the intersection of Niederwerrner Strasse/Richard-Wagner-Strasse caused €6,000 in damage. Nobody got hurt. A 43-year old female driver was travelling on Niederwerrn Strasse. When she reached the traffic light, the light above her lane was not working. However, the traffic light on the second lane was red. In spite of that, the woman continued driving and collided with a car coming from Richard-Wagner-Strasse. The driver of that car had a green light when making the left turn into Niederwerrner Strasse.

13-year old boy suffers second degree burns on his feet (Aug. 20)

On Friday a 13-year old boy sustained second degree burns on his feet when he walked on a freshly asphalted walk-way in Lohr. According to the police the road construction company failed to put up warning signs. The police are investigating and the company may be charged with physical injuries due to negligence.

Three people seriously injured in head-on collision (Aug. 20)

According to a police report, an unidentified driver of an automobile had caused a serious accident near Bad Neustadt last Friday. During the head-on collision three people sustained serious injuries. In spite of oncoming traffic, the unknown driver passed a convoy on the road between Leutershausen and Brendlorenzen. To avoid the collision a 19-year old driver swerved and got into the lane of the oncoming traffic where he collided with the vehicle of a 48-year old female driver. The 19-year old driver and a 75-year old front seat passenger in the other car sustained serious injuries. They had to be rescued out of their vehicles by the fire department and were flown to nearby hospitals by helicopters. So far there is no clue in regards to the driver causing the accident. The road was closed for several hours because of rescue operations.

German Constitutional Court draws tight lines for Bundeswehr on terrorism (Aug. 18)

In the future the Bundeswehr will be allowed to use military means to defend against terrorism, but only in exceptional cases. This was a decision of the constitutional court last Friday. However, the shooting down of kidnapped passenger aircrafts still remains prohibited. Also using German soldiers against demonstrators is excluded. The plenum of both senates of the court in Karlsruhe decided that Bundeswehr soldiers would only be used in case of disasters, which basically include terror attacks as well. However, strict conditions must be met. The precondition is that the incident has catastrophic dimensions. Not every dangerous situation that a federal state cannot handle with its police force justifies a Bundeswehr mission.

LEADERS/POLITICS

Last year 78 sexual offenses reported in the Bundeswehr (Aug. 23)

In connection with the rape of a female soldier, Hellmut Königshaus, Parliamentary Commissioner for the Bundeswehr stated that he has no reason to assume that sexual harassment occurs to a larger extent in the Bundeswehr. In 2012, 78 cases of sexual harassment and assaults were reported.

Project in Chicago has sexual abuse in the U.S. Army as theme (Aug. 23)

The U.S. Army estimates that there are thousands of sexual assault cases among Soldiers. An art project in Chicago is aimed to help traumatized female Soldiers. The concept of the program was originated by a former female U.S. Marine who was also a rape victim. According to a study in 2003, one of three female Soldiers suffer the consequences of sexual assault during their term of duty. In 2010 there were 3,158 sexual assaults reported in the U.S. Army. However, the Pentagon assumes that the number of unreported cases is probably 19,000. Men are also victims. Only 21 percent of the reported cases were tried in military court. 53 percent of the trials ended with a sentence.

City Festival in Schweinfurt (Aug. 23)

On Friday and Saturday Schweinfurt will celebrate its third city festival. There will be a dozen places with different scenes, such as wine land along the city wall, place of cultures on Wichtermann Platz or place of industry on the market square. 50 groups and bands will provide 80 hours of live shows and music. There will be no admission fees. The stores will have extended opening hours both days. Another highlight is the new Schweinfurt-Image movie which will be shown several times on Saturday between 2:15 and 4:15 p.m. in the movie theater "Filmwelt" at no cost. The following streets will be closed for traffic: Manggasse, Bauerngasse between Zeughaus and Graben, Lange Zehntstrasse and Market Square, beginning at 0700 on Friday.

Record visitor number at the Silvana (Aug. 22)

On Sunday with temperatures up to 36 degrees Celsius (97 degrees Fahrenheit) 6,607 people visited the Silvana outdoor/indoor pools in Schweinfurt, according to the operators, which is a record number for this year. Last year the Silvana had 66,000 visitors by the end of August. This year, including last Sunday the number was up to 70,000. On Monday another 3,725 visitors were counted increasing the numbers compared to last year even more.

Many runners – one goal: To break the marathon world record (Aug. 22)

On Sept. 17 a charity run "Schweinfurt helps Schweinfurt" will start at the Willy-Sachs-Stadium. The charity relay-run was organized by the city utilities company and the health insurance AOK for the charity "Schweinfurt helps Schweinfurt." At 6:15 p.m. the warm-up phase will start with the Olympic medal winner Nils Schumann. Last year 211 runners ran 1:49:52 hours and broke the world record, by 14 minutes – faster than the world record holder Patrick Makau from Kenya. Team spirit, a sense of companionship and solidarity are essential aspects in this challenge. Companies, public authorities, doctors, nurses, hobby sportsmen, schools and a team of this newspaper participated. Again this year Nils Schumann, Olympic medal winner will run the first 200 meters at Willy-Sachs-Stadium. To participate, [read more here](#).

Schweinfurt investigators arrested 42-year old drug dealer (Aug. 21)

The drug dealer, a 42-year old man from Kosovo, made a deal with an undercover criminal police investigator. The dealer sold the undercover agent 3 kilograms of heroin. Shortly after the deal, at the end of Sept. 2011, he was arrested in Poppenhausen. Last Monday he was sentenced to nine years in prison by the district court Schweinfurt for drug dealing. He had confessed the purchase of 5 and the sale of 3 kilograms of heroin.

City fines' catalogue has 119 violation (Aug. 21)

The city's catalogue contains 119 different types of violations that will be fined – ranging from noise annoyance caused by playing music too loud to parking in a fire access route, persistent begging or urinating in public parks which is fined with €50, if the person hides behind a tree or bush. It will get more expensive for a person who urinates in front of a public building. There is also a €80 fine for feeding pigeons. Putting up posters without prior approval by the city is even more expensive – there was one case this year where the fine was €500. A dog owner was fined €100 for being cruel to his dog. Last year the city initiated 578 charges for such violations. This year there will be considerably more since by the end of July there were already 404 violations

reported. The reason for the increase is mainly due to increased controls performed by the city and the police.

Prominent citizens go on a bike tour “Tour of Hope” (Aug. 18)

Britta Unsleber, ex-national player in the German women’s soccer league, knows quite well why she is participating in the tour, during which prominent citizens and sportsmen collect donations for children who have been diagnosed with cancer. Five years ago she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. She has been healed but she still remembers the shock of the diagnosis and chemotherapy and she is participating in the tour “to give something back” she said. 185 men and women, about as many as participate in the Tour de France will participate in the “tour of hope” this year. So far the bike riders collected 400,000 Euro from large companies, cities and communities along their way. The goal by the end of the tour on 19 August is to collect more than one million Euros which will benefit several clinics, located along their route, one of them the pediatric clinic of the University Clinic in Würzburg.

ECONOMY

Germany achieved a surplus in billions in public funds (Aug. 24)

Good news for Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble: The good economy increased tax revenue and for the first time since 2008 a surplus in public funds. According to a release of the Federal Office of Statistics, the government achieved a surplus of €8.3 billion. This is only the second time since the introduction of the Euro that Germany had a surplus. This was achieved mainly by a surplus in social security of €11.6 billion minus a deficit in the public budget of €3.3 billion.

Thousands of workers at Opel are forced to work short hours (Aug. 24)

The decreasing work load and slump in sales forced the management of Adam Opel AG to cut employees’ working hours in agreement with the works council and trade union for metal workers “IG Metall” beginning in September 2012 – agreed upon were 20 days in the period September – December. In Rüsselsheim 3,500 workers and 3,300 office employees will be affected in Kaiserslautern 2,500. Chairman of the works council, Wolfgang Schäfer-Klug emphasized that “reducing work hours saves jobs”. In the production sector the reduced work hours will go into effect in September for administration and service personnel in October. The same as other carmakers, whose sales are mainly in the European market, the sovereign debt crisis burdens also the Opel AG considerably.

Lufthansa passengers: No compensations for flight cancellations (Aug. 22)

A strike of air traffic personnel is expensive – and it could have gotten even more expensive for the airlines. On Tuesday the judges at the Federal Supreme Court in Karlsruhe ruled that passengers will not be compensated up to €600 in case their plane cannot start due to a strike of pilots of flight attendants since this would fall under “exceptional circumstances.” According to the European ordinance for flight passengers, passengers will receive up to a lump sum of €600 if their flight was cancelled, except if the cancellation is in regards to “exceptional circumstances” which apply to strikes of air traffic personnel, including strikes of pilots and flight attendants as well as airport personnel under the condition that the airlines do everything possible to provide transportation for the passengers.

HEALTH/WELLNESS

Public Health Department: Ban on showers in a high rise apartments (Aug. 24)

It could not have been worse for the tenants of an apartment building in Rottendorf: Of all times, right at the beginning of the heat wave in Germany the public health department in Würzburg imposed a ban on taking showers because of a very high concentration of legionella bacteria. The building administration immediately contracted a company to take disinfection measures. It can be several more weeks until the tenants can take showers again. Baths can be taken because an infection with the bacteria is only possible when water is atomized or turns into fog. The dangerous bacteria develop in water pipes, mainly hot water pipes and are often contracted in showers and whirlpools. Each year there are about 15,000 – 35,000 cases of the legionnaires disease Germany wide. Not everyone gets infected mainly old people and people whose immune system is weakened. The harmless version of the disease is similar to the flu. In severe cases patients suffer Pontiac-fever, pneumonia, hypoxia as well as unconsciousness. As of October 2011 proprietors of swimming pools, schools and hospitals are required to have legionella tests done. Private houses are not required to have the tests done but owners should flush their radiators and hot water pipes frequently.