



24th European Health & Safety Seminar: The Changing Face of European Festivals

After taking the East Hotel by storm the group settled into what proved to be an exciting and stimulating event, so much so that the first session was in danger of taking up the full two days. This session focused on what had happened at members festivals during the summer. Of course, the focus inevitably steered itself towards terrorism, and bad weather although gang development military vs police strategies in Eastern Europe and theft were again prominent. The main discussion focused on the terrorist threat vs the response. In one country, out of the 3.75 Million Euros spend on counter terrorism 73% was spent on control and surveillance, 28% on traffic and flux management and 3% on training. Feeling safe is important as well as being safe but where do we draw the line. There is a tipping from crowd management to securing the event we need to rebalance this. We also spoke about vulture culture and insider threats and was the festival ever secure given how we operate. Can we ever be truly sterile?

The second session was provided by Coralie Bereal who's venue in Belgium was locked down whilst a show with Rudimental was taking place and she after consulting with the police went ahead with the show whilst the police and military formed a ring of steel around it. A brave lady with a great leadership style.

The afternoon session was focused on the Wacken festival and challenges faced by major rock festivals in a changing environment. Jane Struve and Daniel Schlatter talked about how the festival had made huge steps to stop the infield flooding of the past five years by putting in an aquifer and drainage system spending 1000's of Euros to make this work. However, the field still flooded as the water pushed the water table up to above the aquifer capacity and the pumps could not cope with the water. We also looked at the terrorist threat and how Wacken had dealt with this.

The final session ran for over two hours and meant that we did not have time to look at future topics until the end of the second day.

Day two like day one was packed and we ran out of time yet again. Although we had the usual suspects attending we also had some new people most notably from a portable gate company and the Helsinki Fire Service. Their new focus was a breath of fresh air as they added so much to what we do. Morten Therkildsen started off the day looking at new aspects of crowd profiling and how you can know your audience better. He used tried and tested methods with new ideas which was a well-received session.



The final session of the morning was focused on festival evacuation and planning and was taken by Jasper Barendrecht from FKP Scorpio. Jasper talked about the eight evacuations that he had been involved in, lessons learned and good practice identified. This excellent session really made those attending think about advanced preparation, contingencies and key to everything was communication.

Other elements discussed were staff mental health, intelligence vs information, trust, leadership

The final session of the day was working together to identify the sessions for the 25th Silver edition Seminar in Groningen in January at Eurosonic-Noorderslag.

Being a member of the YES Group is an important thing as we all work towards creating safer festivals and events as well as sharing good practice and working together to create new processes and procedures that work. It's like a family and everyone comes away with tools to make festivals and events better.

We are compiling changes in the way European Festivals are approaching terrorism. Could you please fill in a questionnaire about your festival by clicking on the link below?

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DVBMY9>