



## **10th IRO – Rescue Dog World Championship Wittstock, Germany 2004**

On the first weekend of July 2004 the 10th IRO Rescue Dog World Championship took place in Wittstock in Germany.

Wittstock, which is a small town with approximately 14.000 inhabitants, is located in the north of the federal state of Brandenburg. It developed out of a Slavic settlement that was situated at the confluence of the rivers Dosse and Glinze. Today the city can look back on a more than 1000year old history and is one of the few cities in the new federal states that has an old-town which is surrounded by an ancient and completely preserved city wall.

The IRO member organisation Bundesverband Rettungshunde (BRH) did all preparation work very well and was anxious to present an unforgettable World Championship to the 102 participants and functionaries. A total of 10 rescue dog teams participated in the tracking search, 39 rescue dog teams in the area search and 53 rescue dog teams in the rubble search. At the team score there were 12 member organisations from 8 nations participating.

The dog work was judged by an experienced international IRO jury: Mr. Otto Lanz (CH) functioned as head judge. The judges in the various branches were the following: Daniel Sedlak (CZ) – dexterity, Kurt Joss (CH) – obedience, Vladimir Kuchta (CZ) – rubble search, Josef Ledergerber (CH) – area search and Gerd Thanner (A) – tracking search. Mr. Horst Feichtner (A) was in charge of track control.

As there is no need for a pedigree in order to participate at the IRO World Championships there was a high diversity of races that could be seen. Amongst the participants were German shepherd dogs, Belgian shepherd dogs, Bernese Mountain Dogs, all kinds of Retrievers, Rottweilers, Boxers, Giant Schnauzers, various Terriers, Pudelpointers, Border Collies, Beaucerons, American Cocker Spaniels and of course cross breeds.

At the award ceremony we were unlucky as the participants had to march in under really heavy rainfall. In tracking search the world champion of 2002 Thomas Strouhal (CZ) was able to win the championship again. He did so with a winning margin of 36 points to Margareth v. d. Weide (NL) who came in second. Unfortunately the other participants could not fulfil the requirements in the extremely difficult terrain.

In area search Johan Hol (NL) was able to win back his champion title in the absence of last years winner. Corinna von Löchtern reached rank 2 at her first start at world championships and Vilem Babicka an old hand came in third. A total of 25 teams were able to complete the championships positively.

In rubble search the decision was really close. Rank 1 and 2 were tied and rank 3 and 4 were 1 point behind and also tied! Winner was Erwin Payreder (A), runner-up Hana

Hluskova (CZ) and Christel Rosenblatt (D) came in third. Mrs. Rosenblatt was under big pressure as she was the local hero and already had invested a lot of time and work in the organisation of the event.

The team score brought a clear victory for the Czech Republic: the organisation SZBK won 1 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze medal and so won the team score with a winning margin of 9 points to the host BRH. The team score bronze medal was won by the Netherlands.