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EHF President Wiederer about EHF F4 in Cologne: We have overcome Local Colour

EHF President Michael Wiederer praises the development of the EHF Final4, the final tournament of the Velux EHF Champions League in Cologne (Germany). "It is really the top event of EHF, in many ways," Wiederer said. "When you bear in mind that we are able to sell out the following Final4 at the tournament's weekend – without knowing, who will be playing there, you can perceive how strong Cologne is."

Since 2010, the final tournament of the Champions League takes place in Cologne and four times, the winner has come from Germany. The THW Kiel was the title holder in 2010 and 2012, the HSV Hamburg was crowned in 2011 and Flensburg won the massive trophy in 2014. But the alleged home field advantage of German teams is not important for Wiederer. He emphasizes the international handball enthusiasm as the crucial factor for the success of the event in Cologne.

'One of the most touching moments, for me personally, took place during the second edition in Cologne. In the final, there was a clash between FC Barcelona and Ciudad Real, and one minute before the final whistle, 19.600 people stood and gave standing ovations to Barcelona,' the EHF President remembers. 'This has shown that we have overcome local colour, which is known as very strong in handball, and that we have created an event of international calibre – and that the audience does reward this fact.'

'The fans do not leave, when their team does not play, even if it might be convenient to travel homeward early on Sunday evening. And they keep on buying tickets for the following year's edition. That is to say, it is a unique event', Wiederer added.

Also in other sports, the word of the EHF Final4's success has spread. Michael Wiederer told that the European Football Federation (UEFA) is in continuous close contact with EHF about Cologne. 'Especially considering their indoor events, Futsal, we are on a regular base asked to present our event concepts,' is Wiederer happy and underlines: 'I put heart and soul into our event in Cologne, also in order to discuss innovative agendas. Cologne is always a pleasure for me. It is not a work order but a pleasure.'

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