

On August 15th last, deep in the heart of the Alps, the Irish Garda Triathlon Team represented Ireland in the USPE European Triathlon Championships in Kitzbuhl, Austria. Included in the team was Tralee based Garda Patricia Fitzpatrick and Glenbeigh native, Garda Sheila Griffin. The Irish Garda Team arrived in Kitzbuhl early on Friday for registration and spent the rest of Friday evening and all day Saturday studying and training on the triathlon course that awaited them on Sunday morning. The course consisted of 2 laps of a 750m swim in Lake Schwarszee on the outskirts of Kitzbuhl town, the bike course was made up of 9 laps of a 4.4km circuit and the run course was 4 laps of a 2.5km circuit. Sunday morning began with a torrential downpour one hour prior to race start that made for treacherous surfaces out on the bike course. The men's race got under way at 10am with the Women's race start following 5 minutes later. By the end of the 1500m swim leg, the weather had changed from heavy rain before the start to oppressive heat out on the bike and run legs. Water was in high demand as the triathletes out on course struggled to prevent their bodies over-heating. The Irish representatives battled hard but the Ukrainian National Team was too strong on the day. Members of the Ukrainian team filled the men's podium and occupied first and third on the women's podium. All members of the Irish team completed the triathlon within the time limit and were glad to find shade from the sun in the post race tents. The event was superbly organised and marshalled by the Austria Polizei and ITU Triathlon delegates and all members of Irish Garda Team can be proud of the way the represented their country.