

## Sebastian en route to Asia

BMW Motorrad's Sebastian Klein has made it to the Black Sea, after having covered 4,200 kilometres of a seven-month enduro trip on an F 800 GS that will see him ride approximately 25,000-kilometres from Munich to Bangkok.

The 27-year-old soccer fan is currently in Varna, Bulgaria, where he has been keeping up to date with the German football team's progress through to the semi-finals of the 2008 European Championships. Since leaving Munich on 17 May, Sebastian has travelled through Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, before arriving for some well earned rest in Bulgaria.



Having initially started his trip with Markus Schultze (a moderator of a music show on German TV) who accompanied him for the first week, Sebastian has since been enjoying life alone on the road, or rather 'off-road', as his travels have already taken him to some amazing places off the beaten track.

"One of the many highlights of the trip so far has been visiting Romania, where I participated in the EnduRomania rally on my BMW F 800 GS," said Sebastian. This rally is designed to promote tourism in Romania and the idea is to just get out there and ride, by visiting a whole series of checkpoints all over the country. This country is a hidden gem for off-road riders – especially in the Carpathian Mountains – where I was treated to some excellent tracks and fantastic scenery. There are no fences and boundaries so you can go just about anywhere you please!

"Elsewhere, I've been enduro riding in the High Tatras in Slovakia on the F 800 GS, and it worked really well, as I even 'held my own' with some guys on motocross bikes! On the road, my visit to Budapest in Hungary was memorable, because I80



Amsterdam (BMW Motorrad's international communications agency) sent me some GPS coordinates that allowed me to follow a certain route across the city. By using the Motorrad Navigator's GPS tracking function I could spell out 'I was here' with GPS drawing, which can be seen on the Google Earth map. We'll show this soon on the <http://gps.bmw-motorrad.com> website, as I think a lot of people will be interested in this function."

So far, Sebastian's F 800 GS has worked perfectly, although his hopes of achieving 10,000 kilometres from a rear tyre look a bit ambitious: "Including my two side boxes, I have my tent and luggage in a storage sack on the back seat, so there's quite a bit of weight carried on the bike. As the roads have been rather variable in quality, I'm not going to take any chances, so I will change my rear tyre in Istanbul, before crossing into the Middle East. I'm also going to be testing out a prototype Öhlins rear suspension unit for this bike, so it will be interesting for me to give my feedback on how it performs with a fully-loaded bike in differing conditions."

Sebastian has been mostly camping out during the early stages of his trip, although the large number of wild dogs in certain areas has occasionally forced him to seek refuge in a hotel for the night. Usually though, he pitches his tent in the gardens of Youth Hostels, as this allows him to use their facilities, but doesn't force him into dormitory accommodation with lots of 'gap-year students'. He now has a couple of weeks to cross Turkey before his Iranian visa allows him passage through that country. There he will visit friends before riding on to Pakistan, India and Nepal.

"It's a case of so far, so good at the moment," said Sebastian. "The bike's running well, the scenery has been incredible and the people I've encountered have been very friendly towards me. Everywhere I go on this bike, I'm always being stopped and everyone is interested about what I'm doing. I'm slightly apprehensive, but at the same time, also rather excited about the next stages of the trip. It's good to challenge yourself in this way – I guess that's what adventure travel is all about."



*Enduro fans will soon be able to follow Sebastian's progress during the next few months on BMW Motorrad's Enduro World website ([www.bmw-motorrad.com/enduroworld](http://www.bmw-motorrad.com/enduroworld)) which will be regularly updated with travelogues and video podcasts. Sebastian has also set up his own website ([www.seppotage.com](http://www.seppotage.com)) which features a regular 'blog and satellite tracking information.*