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SPÖ and ÖVP agreed on grand coalition

The SPÖ and the ÖVP definitely agreed to form a grand coalition on 8 January 2007. This was announced by the leader of the Social Democrats (SPÖ) Alfred Gusenbauer and the party chairman of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel in a joint press conference. Together with the ÖVP a "very comprehensive working programme" of about 180 pages had been developed for the next four years, said Gusenbauer. Additional financial resources would mainly be allocated to growth, employment and education.

The new government consists in a 20-member cabinet. The SPÖ will hold the Chancellorship and get the Ministries for Social Affairs, Infrastructure, Defence, Education and Art, Women's Affairs and Justice. The ÖVP will be responsible for the Ministries of the Interior, Finance, Science, Health, Agriculture/Environment, Economy and Foreign Affairs. Each party will have three secretaries of state.

An agreement has finally been reached regarding university fees and childcare benefits. Students will be given facilitated access to scholarships and loans. Moreover, students doing social work (e.g. hospice movement) will not have to pay the university fee of 363 euro per term. In the future parents receiving childcare benefits can choose between receiving 436 euro during 36 months as in the past or 800 euro in a period of up to 18 months.

The negotiations on the Eurofighter military jets are to be resumed to reach a more cost-favourable solution. Gusenbauer was highly pleased about the coalition agreement. The outgoing Federal Chancellor seemed to be relieved that many policies remained intact, e.g. the "first-rate conditions" for the tax system. The new government will be sworn in by Federal President Heinz Fischer on 11 January 2007. ■

Austria mourns for Minister of the Interior Liese Prokop

Austrian Minister of the Interior Liese Prokop (aged 65) deceased on New Year's Eve. The politician of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and former top athlete died from a ruptured aorta near the heart while being rushed in an

ambulance to the hospital in St. Pölten. Prokop's sudden death shocked and deeply affected everyone across the political spectrum. She was paid tribute to as a sympathetic and sensitive person with a great heart.

The official memorial ceremony of the federal government and the regional government of Lower Austria will take place in St. Pölten on 9 January 2007, with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn celebrating the requiem in the Dome. Among the guests are Federal President Heinz Fischer as well as numerous ministers from abroad. The funeral will take place within the close family circle on 10 January 2007.

Liese Prokop was born in Vienna on 27 March 1941. She spent her childhood in Korneuburg and Tulln. Austria's first female minister of the interior started her political career in 1969 as a member of the regional government of Lower Austria. From 1981 to 1992 she was active as a regional councillor and then became Deputy Governor of Lower Austria. In December 2004 she took over the Ministry of the Interior.

Before going into politics, Prokop had crowned her sports career with a silver medal in the pentathlon at the Olympics in Mexico in 1968. In 1969 the European champion broke the world record in the pentathlon.

Prokop was married to her coach Gunnar Prokop. The woman from Lower Austria was the mother of three children.

As a Minister of the Interior Prokop implemented the police reform, new legislation on foreigners, the reduction of alternative civilian service and the new citizenship law.

Representatives of politics, sports and the religious communities were deeply affected by Prokop's death:

Federal President Heinz Fischer praised the ministers as a "warm-hearted human being" and referred to a "great blow to the Republic of Austria". "Her sudden death shocked everybody", the Federal Chancellor was deeply moved. Governor of Lower Austria Erwin Pröll described her death as a "severe blow into the heart of Lower Austria". Secretary of State for Sport Karl Schweitzer stated that Austria lost a "politician with heart and soul and Austrian sport one of its most ardent advocates". SPÖ chief Alfred Gusenbauer described Prokop as a "great woman with political circumspection". ■

Federal President Fischer: "With Liese Prokop Austria lost a committed and considerate member of government who was appreciated across the political spectrum."

Chancellor Schüssel: "As a politician Liese Prokop combined great social awareness with consistent practical implementation geared towards the needs of the citizen. As a human being she was a model of warm-heartedness, devotion, with the ability to listen and to make decisions."

Austria “deeply affected” by death of Teddy Kollek

The legendary former mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, died at 95 in Jerusalem on 2 January 2007. The Old Austrian born in Hungary and raised in Vienna occupied the city’s top position for almost thirty years (1965 to 1993). He had been re-elected six times. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert hailed Kollek as the “builder of modern Jerusalem“. One of his main concerns had been to promote the peaceful coexistence of Jews and Arabs in the city. This was also the mission of the “Jerusalem Foundation“ founded by him.

Kollek was laid to rest in a state funeral on Herzlberg in Jerusalem on 4 January 2007. Besides Kollek’s family and thousands of mourners from Israel and all over the world, President Moshe Katzav, Prime Minister Olmert as well as numerous ministers participated in the ceremony. Austria was represented by Secretary of State for Art and Media Franz Morak.

Teddy Kollek was born as the son of a banker in the village Nagyvaszony near Budapest on 27 May 1911. His father named him after the founder of Zionism Theodor Herzl. He spent his childhood and youth in Vienna, where he soon joined the Zionist youth group “Blau-Weiß“. In 1935, three years before the “annexation” of Austria to Nazi Germany, he emigrated with his family to Palestine, which at the time was under a British mandate. During WWII, Kollek was performing intelligence missions in Europe to save Jews from NS annihilation. In 1965 the Social Democrat became mayor of Jerusalem for 28 years, whose eastern part, including the historic city centre, was conquered by Israel in the Six-Day War in 1967. His right-wing Conservative opponent Olmert succeeded him in this office in 1993. In the same year Kollek was awarded a honorary doctorate of the University of Vienna, in 2001 the City of Vienna granted him the honorary citizenship.

Austria reacted deeply affected to Kollek’s death. In his words of condolence to Kollek’s family Federal Chancellor Schüssel expressed “deep mourning and respect” for the deceased. “With Teddy Kollek’s death not only the life of an extraordinary person and politician has come to an end but also part of the Israeli-Austrian history. Unlike any other, Kollek symbolised the

eventful past of the two countries as well as the unsparring efforts to achieve understanding and reconciliation”, Schüssel reminded of the commitment of Kollek, who had been born in Old Austria. Secretary of State Morak described Kollek as “an important and eminent politician and bridge builder. Teddy Kollek has rendered a great service by establishing relations between Austria and Israel“, said Morak. Kollek had always stayed in contact with his former home country. In the past few years cultural cooperation had been intensified, e.g. in the context of the Chamber Music Festival or the Herzl Museum. Cardinal Christoph Schönborn praised the meritorious service of Kollek to exchanges between Christians and Jews and reminded of the fact that the restitution of the Austrian Hospice to the Catholic Church was “mainly an achievement of Kollek“. Deep mourning was also expressed by the Jewish Religious Communities in Austria.

“He was a great man, a great conciliator, somebody who did not know hatred“, Vienna’s ex-mayor Helmut Zilk paid homage to his deceased former counterpart. He was proud to have succeeded in reconciling Kollek with Vienna and to have been his friend. Kollek had paid several visits to Vienna and had been a honorary citizen of the federal capital. In 2006 Zilk received the Teddy Kollek Prize for meritorious service to the City of Jerusalem. Vienna’s incumbent Mayor Michael Häupl and SPÖ leader Alfred Gusenbauer were also deeply shocked by his death. With Teddy Kollek the world lost a “truly great human being and exemplary politician who had made untiring efforts to bring about peace between the Jews and Arabs“, said Häupl. As a “great humanist“, Kollek had stood for credibility, solidarity and justice, emphasised Gusenbauer. ■

Ursula Plassnik welcomed EU accession of Romania and Bulgaria

The EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania was above all “a visible recognition of the tremendous reform process” in the two countries, explained Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. At the same time she urged to carry on the reforms in the areas of justice and the combat against corruption. ■

Chancellor Schüssel: “Our respect for Teddy Kollek is expressed by commemorating and courageously continuing his work characterised by tolerance, conciliation and closeness to real life – in the Middle East peace process – as well as in promoting the Austro-Israeli relations.“

Secretary of State Morak: “Kollek’s name and his legacy will live on in the committed work of the Jerusalem Foundation.“

Ex-Mayor Zilk: “What Jerusalem is today, is Teddy Kollek.“

SPÖ Party Chairman Gusenbauer: “We and all the future generations will remember Kollek as the warning conscience – and a great model for all people with a responsibility for history.“

Labour Minister Bartenstein: "the number of unemployed is plummeting"

"The number of unemployed is plummeting" and the favourable trend reversal had been consolidated, explained Minister for Economics and Labour Martin Bartenstein on 2 January 2007 at the presentation of the labour market data for December. There was a trend "towards full employment", which should become possible by 2010, stated Bartenstein.

The labour market had benefited mainly from the favourable cyclical development. The economic growth between 3.0 to 3.1% of the GDP (gross domestic product) exceeded the rates registered in the euro-zone, Japan and the USA. Three quarters of the total decline of unemployment were attributable to the strong growth, while the so far most intensive labour force qualification campaign of the Public Employment Agency (AMS) accounted for 20 to 25% of the reduction, stressed the Minister for Economics. The recovery of the labour market was primarily due to booming exports. Registering a plus of 12.3%, the threshold of 100 billion euro had been surpassed. Thus every second job had been safeguarded by goods and services exports.

The favourable labour market situation also contributed to a favourable starting position for 2007. The economic prospects were bright, a growth rate of 3% should be achieved, stated Bartenstein optimistically.

According to preliminary data of the AMS, the number of unemployed dropped by 9.2% (or 28,173 persons) to 279,109 in December, while employment in Austria increased by 2.0% to 3,264,900 persons. Youth unemployment (15 to 24 years) declined sharply in December: by 12.0% or 5,913 persons to 43,511 unemployed young people. Unemployment in the group of older workers (50 plus) decreased by 7% to 51,119 persons. The number of long-term unemployed (more than 12 months) was reduced by 28.4% to 7,405. The AMS registered a decline of young people looking for apprenticeship places by 2.7% to 5,148 persons. The number of registered vacancies was 2,746 (minus 5.2%).

With an unemployment rate of 4.7% and ranked fifth behind Denmark, the Netherlands, Estonia and Ireland, Austria holds a good position in

international comparisons. In December the average unemployment rate was 7.3% in the EU-15 and 7.9% in the EU-25. Unemployment decreased by 5.3% to 239,174 jobseekers on annual average in 2006. The annual average employment climbed by 1.6% or about 50,000 persons to a total of 3,281,386 dependent employees (2005: 3,230,286). ■

Wifo/IHS forecasts 2007 to 2008: dynamic trend continues

The current recovery will slow down to some extent in 2007 but growth could reach the 3-percent threshold. The Institute of Economic Research (Wifo) and the Institute of Advanced Studies (IHS) revised their growth forecasts for 2007 by three tenth of a percentage point on 21 December 2006. For this year Wifo predicts a real economic growth of 2.7%, while the IHS expects a plus of 2.6%. An appeal was launched to the future government to continue the austerity efforts, especially in view of the boom.

With the growth rates forecast by the institutes, Austria would grow more strongly than the remaining euro-zone also in 2007. For 2006 the experts agreed on an estimated growth of 3.2%. For 2008 Wifo and IHS forecast a growth of the national economy of 2.3% and 2.4%, respectively. Exports remain the growth engine. Both institutes warn that exports might be jeopardised by a weaker dollar and a stronger euro. ■

BAWAG sale contractually fixed

The sale of the trade union bank BAWAG P.S.K. to the Americans was contractually fixed on 30 December 2006. In April or May of this year, the Austrian bank will go to a syndicate led by US investor Cerberus. The purchase price is 3.2 billion euro. On 14 December 2006 Cerberus had been awarded the bid for Austria's fifth largest bank. ■

Austria successful in gene ban

Austria emerged as the winner of the dispute over the European Commission's request to lift its ban on gene-modified food. On 19 December 2006 the EU ministers of the environment voted in favour of maintaining the import ban on gene-modified maize. ■

Labour Minister Bartenstein: "The labour market is developing excellently, the trend reversal has been consolidated in December."

Wifo/IHS: the Austrian economy will grow more strongly than the remaining euro-zone also in 2007.

EU ratified UNESCO Convention on cultural diversity

To celebrate the ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions by the EU, a ceremony was held at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels, which was attended by President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura and the ministers for culture of the Member States as well as representatives of the political and cultural arenas.

Austria was represented by Secretary of State for Art and Media Franz Morak. He stressed that the Convention had been drafted “at the right time” and “with the right content”. Especially, the “incorporation of public cultural promotion and of the right to independent cultural policy as well as the legitimisation of national tools of governance and the creation of a safe basis for public broadcasting make this Convention a crucial international instrument”. At a round table discussion of representatives of culture and politics about the importance of the UNESCO Convention, Peter Paul Skrepek, musical creator and chairman of the Culture Trade Union stressed that “this Convention was vital to the survival of all cultural players“. The fact that the Council of Europe, the OECD, but also the national UNESCO Commissions were already working on action programmes was another proof of the “significance of this Convention for international cooperation”, Morak concluded. ■

Croatia pays tribute to Secretary of State and Media Franz Morak

Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader awarded the highest Croatian distinction, the Order of the Prince of Branimir with Ribbon, to Austrian Secretary of State for Art and Media Franz Morak for his extraordinary contributions to the relations between the Republic of Croatia and Austria, in particular in the cultural field, in Zagreb on 20 December 2006.

In his thank-you statement Morak underlined the importance of cultural exchange for the mutual conception of neighbourhood. This was “a conception going far beyond the mere existence of a common border. I consider the award a great honour and at the same time a symbol of the

joint efforts to intensify the relations between our two countries”. He also reminded of the different cultural programmes Austria conducted with the countries of South Eastern Europe. In the framework of the Central Eastern European music theatre programme launched together with Deutsche Bank several cooperation projects had for example been realised. Under this programme four scholarships at the Zagreb opera house are financed. Moreover, Austria also supported Croatia in the context of the EU cultural contact points. An agreement had been reached with Croatian Minister of Culture Bozo Biskopic to widen the range of the “Artists in Residence“ programme between Austria and Croatia. The spotlight of the programme was on contemporary art. Morak described Croatia as a model and pioneer in the entire region and assured that Austria would continue to advocate Croatia’s EU membership. “It is the task of cultural policy to bring the people closer to one another. Especially in the context of the EU enlargement process, cultural contacts are important. To devote our attention to our neighbouring countries in South Eastern Europe – a region that has enriched us over the centuries – finally means to examine our identity, to deal with ourselves“. ■

OsterKlang Wien Festival 2007

The varied music programme of the OsterKlang Festival 2007 (from 31 March to 9 April 2007) with its numerous extraordinary projects spans from baroque to modernity. At five different venues, among them Vienna’s most beautiful concert halls such as the great hall of Musikverein or the Mozart hall at Konzerthaus, internationally renowned artists present a selected top-quality programme focusing on the “death of Christ”. Georg Friedrich Händel’s “Giulio Cesare“ under the musical direction of René Jacobs will be performed at Vienna’s “new opera house” Theater an der Wien. The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra led by Philippe Jordan will open the festival with Johannes Brahms’ “A German Requiem“. The work has often been considered to echo the death of Robert Schumann but also reflects the confrontation of the composer with the loss of his own mother. Her death made him complete the composition he had started in 1856. ■

OsterKlang Wien Festival: 31 March to 9 April 2007
www.theater-wien.at

Haydn Year 2009 to be positioned successfully at international level

After the Mozart jubilee in 2006, the 200th anniversary of Joseph Haydn's death in 2009 will be another occasion to "effectively advertise for Austrian tourist destinations and their musical competence". The Austrian tourist boards WienTourismus, Burgenland Tourismus, Niederösterreich-Werbung and Österreich Werbung formed an alliance called "ArGe Haydn" to develop an international campaign for the Haydn Year.

Joseph Haydn, the first master of the Vienna classical period, was born into a family of modest circumstances in Rohrau (Lower Austria) in 1732. From 1766 to 1790 he was in the service of the Esterházy in Eisenstadt (Burgenland) and Esterháza (today Fertőd/Hungary) as a conductor. In old age he earned a reputation for being Europe's most brilliant and famous composer. In 1809 Haydn died in Vienna.

Being extremely fond of experimenting, he created 52 piano sonatas, 83 string quartets (becoming the first to achieve complete equality of the four performing instruments), 24 piano and organ concerts and more than 100 symphonies – from the revolutionary ones of his "Sturm und Drang" ("Storm and Stress") period around 1765 to those of his years in London (1790-92, 1794/95). His oeuvre culminated in the oratorios "The Creation" (1798) and "The Seasons" (1801), which he composed in very old age. His operas were re-discovered in the recent past, above all at the Haydn Days in Eisenstadt. The Salzburg Festival 2007 will present one his most important operas, i.e. "Armida".

In the cities mentioned authentic sights illustrate Haydn's life and work. His music is performed there at the highest level, and this is the ideal basis for a theme leadership. With Bratislava (Slovak Republic), where Haydn had often performed and even premiered some works; and the Esterháza Palace in Fertőd, whose opera house he had headed for many years, two international partners were invited to join the tourist advertising alliance. Another aim of the campaign is to cooperate with the management of the "Centroepe region" (Central Europe: Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Austria). The action plan for the period up to 2009 will be presented to the public this year. ■

www.pleyel.at
www.pleyeljahr.at
 A visit to the Pleyel Museum in Ruppersthal near Tulln (Lower Austria) can be recommended to friends of music.

www.sallepleyel.fr

www.haydnfestival.at

Jubilee of the musician and entrepreneur Ignaz Joseph Pleyel

On 18 June 1757 – 250 years ago – Ignaz Joseph Pleyel was born in Ruppersthal near Tulln (Lower Austria) as the eighth child of a village teacher. He played the violin and organ when he was only a small child. He was taught by Johann Baptist Vanhal and Joseph Haydn. At the Strasbourg Cathedral he became the first conductor, but he had to give up this position due to the revolutionary events. In London he led the "professional concerts" in 1791. Mozart admired the string quartets of the Haydn disciple. Pleyel did not only create 70 string quartets but also composed 41 symphonies, 48 piano sonatas and two operas. The composer also had a unique talent as a music entrepreneur. After moving to Paris in 1795, he published 4,000 works. Pleyel was the first to launch pocket scores – small-size, inexpensive issues of the conductors' scores – on the market. In 1807 he also founded the legendary piano manufacturing company "Pleyel, S.A. Paris", which was taken over by his son Camille in 1824 and is still in existence. To date about 900 pianos and 60 concert grand pianos are manufactured per year in Alès (South France). In 1839 Camille built the "Salle Pleyel" in Paris, where among others Cesar Franck and Camille Saint-Saens made their debuts and which is still famous today. Ignace Pleyel lived in his country house near Paris until his death in 1831. He was buried in the cemetery Père Lachaise, close to Bizet, Cherubini and Bellini.

The 250th birthday of Ignaz Pleyel is duly commemorated in Austria. About 60 events are dedicated to him in the current year. For example, concerts of the International Pleyel Society (IPG) will be given in Ziersdorf (Weinviertel/Lower Austria). Music by Pleyel will be offered also in the framework of the festivals Allegro Vivo and Musica Sacra, the Chopin Festival in Gaming, the Organ Festival at the Convent of Zwettl and the Haydn Days at Rohrau Palace. The Youth Symphony Orchestra of Lower Austria includes Pleyel in its repertoire for the current year, and so does the International Summer Academy Prague-Vienna-Budapest, the the Haydn Academy at Esterházy Palace in Eisenstadt and the Linz-based Brucknerhaus. The University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna and the "prima la musica" competition

grant a Pleyel Prize. The Viennese music publisher Doblinger issues a number of chamber music works and Pleyel's Scottish songs, which will be presented at the Potsdam Sanssouci music festival and the Beethoven festival in Bonn. At Festspielhaus in St. Pölten a "Pleyel foyer" will in the future remind of the great composer from Lower Austria, who started his international career in France. ■

Vorarlberg commemorates the great painter Angelika Kauffmann

On 5 November 2007 the 200th anniversary of the death of paintress Angelika Kauffmann will be celebrated. She was born in Chur (Switzerland) in 1741 as the only child to the painter Joseph Kauffmann. She lived near Lake Como and later moved to London, Venice and Schwarzenberg in the Bregenz Woods – a place she was particularly fond of. It was not only the birthplace of her father but also hosts her estate. Fascinated by the ideas of Enlightenment, she became one of the most outstanding woman artists – a neo-classicistic "painting princess". Her understanding of art and her painting style was also shaped by the German archaeologist Johann Joachim Winckelmann, whom she became friends with in Rome. She painted a famous portrait of him in 1764. In 1787 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe posed as a model for her. Angelika Kauffmann became a member of the art academies of Rome, Florence and London, although they did not admit female students, and women were forbidden to draw male nudes. Under the protection of Joshua Reynolds, director of the Royal Academy in London, she developed a very personal approach to the fashionable "style grec" derived from ancient art. The eminent woman spoke four languages, was a good singer and was described as graceful and sensitive. Her obsequies in Rome were conceived by the sculptor Antonio Canova as a sumptuous funeral procession, in which the most important personalities of the city participated. "Ein Weib von ungeheurem Talent" ("A woman of tremendous talent") – a quote of a contemporary – is the title of a great Angelika Kauffmann exhibition. The show with international loans is staged at the Vorarlberger Landesmuseum in Bregenz and the Kauffmann Museum in Schwarzenberg (14 June to

5 November 2007). It takes place in parallel to the Schubertiade Schwarzenberg. The anniversary of her death will be commemorated with the Mozart Requiem in the parish church of Schwarzenberg.

As a prelude to the great summer exhibition, the Vorarlberger Landesmuseum presents (until March) "Kauffmann from the museum collection – 26 outstanding oil paintings, numerous drawings and 350 engravings", selected by the head of museum and curator Tobias G. Natter. ■

www.vlm.at

Schubertiade Schwarzenberg: in 2007 also in Hohenems

The festival for Franz Schubert – giving him his due place alongside with Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven – was founded by Hermann Prey in Hohenems (Vorarlberg) in 1976. The previously practically unknown townlet quickly developed into a renowned festival venue. Today the Schubertiade, which has been staged in the Angelika Kauffmann Hall in Schwarzenberg in the Bregenz Wood since 1994, is the world's most important Schubert festival, with annually about 70 events and more than 30,000 visitors. All participating artists enjoy a great reputation for their Schubert expertise. After fifteen years, the Schubertiade invites again to concerts at the original festival venue Hohenems. They will take place in the festive atmosphere of the Markus Sittikus hall, which was classified as an historical monument and named after the Prince Archbishop of Salzburg, who shaped the townscape by building the Dome and the Hellbrunn Palace. ■

www.angelika-kauffmann.com

Schubertiade Schwarzenberg : 14 to 24 June and 24 August to 9 September 2007. Hohenems offers a programme from 23 February to 20 May 2007. www.schubertiade.at

Brochure "Innovative Film Austria" provides overview of support

The Department for Art of the Federal Chancellery issued the richly illustrated brochure "iF - Innovative Film Austria" in English language. It presents innovative films supported under the Art Promotion Act. In the past two years financial aid was granted for about 50 film projects for which individuals or companies had filed requests for subsidies. The range includes short films, documentaries and avant-garde films. Prominent film directors are *inter alia* Peter Tscherkassky, Virgil Widrich, Martin Arnold, Gustav Deutsch and Lisl Ponger. ■

www.art.austria.gv.at

Ski jumping: Gregor Schlierenzauer sensation at Four Hills tournament

The 21-year old Norwegian plumber Anders Jacobsen, who even had left the B Category due to his lasting poor form, won the Four Hills tournament (Oberstdorf, Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Innsbruck, Bischofshofen) on 7 January 2007. But the real sensation was the 17-year-old Austrian Gregor Schlierenzauer, winner of the events in Oberstdorf and Bischofshofen. He was prevented from jumping the biggest total only by high backwinds. The third place in the overall tournament was taken by the Swiss star Simon Ammann. The Austrian chief coach Alexander Pointner agreed that Schlierenzauer would participate in the Nordic World Championship in Sapporo. Alongside Olympic winner Thomas Morgenstern, who shows an improving performance, he is the ace of the Austrian team and expected to excel in the World Cup. ■

Vienna indoor football is alive

After a one-year break, the 46th round of the traditional indoor football tournament took place at Stadthalle in Vienna. This top event staged on the turn of the year had been founded by Pepi Argauer in 1959. Heinz Palme, who organised the event with his agency and together with Austria and Rapid, was pleased about the large audience, the excellent games and special atmosphere. The Viennese football club Austria won the tournament for the 19th time. All participants expressed their wish to jointly continue the indoor football tradition at Stadthalle. ■

Preparations in 2007 for the EURO and Olympics in 2008

The Austrian winter sports athletes can continue their great success of the Olympics in Turin at the World Championships in Alpine (3 to 18 February in Aare) and Nordic (22 February to 4 March in Sapporo) Skiing. Unlike the skiers, Austria's sledgers have a home advantage at the world championship in Igls (2 to 4 February). The two great sports events of 2008 – EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland (7 to 29 June 2008) and the Olympics in Beijing (8 to 24 August 2008) have an impact on the sports year 2007. In the new year the athletes in the summer

disciplines on land and in the water will compete for being included in the quota for the Olympic Games in China in no less than 21 world championships, while the kickers will fight on the lawn for 14 admission tickets to the EURO 2008 up to 21 November 2007. In sports policy the most important decision of the year will be taken in Guatemala City on 4 July 2007. In Central America the plenary session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will select the host of the Winter Games 2014. Salzburg's remaining rivals are Pyeongchang (South Korea) and Sochi on the Black Sea (Russia). ■

ORF SPORT for "Licht ins Dunkel"

This has already been the eighth time the SPORT department of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) was engaged in the charity campaign "Licht ins Dunkel" ("Light into the Dark") – with the firm support of domestic athletes, sports companies and numerous ORF viewers. The sports Sunday on 17 December 2006 became a long charity day for children with disabilities and needy people in Austria. With the aid of numerous athletes, such as rally ace Manfred Stohl and skiing stars Hans Knauß and Benjamin Raich, many unique experiences or objects could be bought in an auction. ORF SPORT handed over a total of 92,475 euro to the "Licht ins Dunkel" campaign. ■

Marlies Schild is record hunting

In Kranjska Gora (Slovenia) Marlies Schild (25) took her eleventh slalom victory. Hence, she broke the slalom record of the Austrian Skiing Association (ÖSV) held by her friend, double Olympic winner Benjamin Raich. The Croatian Janica Kostelic, the most successful athlete in the history of the Olympics, explained that Schild was "miles ahead of the others". The woman born in Admont (Styria) is considered an aspirant to the crystal globe in the Slalom World Cup. ■

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