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Gusenbauer: significant increase in small and average pensions

On 13 November 2007 the federal government and representatives of Austria's senior citizens agreed on the pension increase for 2008. The minimum pension (top-up benefit) is increased by 2.9%, which is significantly above the consumer price index. In January the minimum pension of single persons will go up to 747 euros per month (gross increase: +21 euros), while couples will be entitled to 1,120 euros. Pensions above that level are increased based by a graduated scheme adjusted to social needs, with a 2% increase being granted for a pension of 1,700 euros. Beyond that amount, a transition rule will be applied, with declining percentages for higher pensions. Pensions of more than 2,161.50 euros (i.e. 55% of the maximum basis of contribution) increase by a lump-sum amount of 36.75 euros monthly. This threshold (without inflation adjustment) for recipients of higher pensions will remain in force until the end of 2010. The increases of lower pensions will be negotiated annually.

After the Council of Ministers, Chancellor Gusenbauer stated that this was a "good solution for the senior citizens of Austria", taking into account the "legitimate interests" of the older generation as well as the long-term financial sustainability of the pension system. Those benefiting most were the recipients of smaller and average pensions. Due to the graduated system of pensions increases, the model was "socially very balanced" and satisfied a key requirement of the government, "that is to combat poverty in old age in Austria", said Gusenbauer. The interests of younger people were also safeguarded. "All groups of society should participate in the wealth achieved", underlined the Chancellor. He also highlighted the "broad consensus of all political groups represented in the Council of Senior Citizens". Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer described the agreement as a "result of reason and reasonableness". ■

Coalition adopted prison reform measures and asylum court

The federal government adopted a comprehensive package of reforms and projects in the Council of Ministers on 7 November 2007.

Agreements were reached on measures reducing the burden on the prison system, facilitating conditional release with effect 2008 and easing the strain on domestic prisons. As in the past, conditional release will be possible only after serving for three months. After the reform it can be granted also in respect of sentences partly served and partly suspended. Decisions will no longer take into account the aspect of "general prevention" (deterrent effect on potential criminals). Intensive counselling before and after release is to reduce the risk of recidivism. Other new rules include electronic surveillance ("foot cuffs") for day-release prisoners and social work instead of short prison sentences. Foreign prisoners sentenced to up to three years can be sent back to their home countries after serving half of their term and prohibited from returning to Austria. This rule will, however, not apply to sentences of more than five years or in the case of sexual and violence offences.

The green light was given for establishing the asylum court to speed up asylum proceedings. It will be competent for all complaints against decisions by asylum authorities.

In addition, a "cleanup of the Constitution", i.e. the deletion of about 1,000 constitutional provisions in simple acts, was approved. The government also agreed on the participation of the Federal Army in the EU's Chad mission (with 160 soldiers) as well as on Austria's "yes" to the Schengen enlargement, including security measures in the hinterland like extending the Federal Army's assistance mission. ■

Comprehensive school: pilot projects agreed on

After the Council of Ministers on 13 November 2007 Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wihlem Molterer also expressed their satisfaction about the compromise on the school reform and the reform of school pilot projects, making it possible to launch "new pilot projects to further develop secondary level I" (secondary school, first four years of grammar school) in future test regions. In September 2008 pilot projects will be launched in 30 to 40 schools. "With this very pluralistic model we advance on our path towards a better educational system", emphasised Gusenbauer. The aim is to promote both the socially weak and the highly talented. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "With this pension adjustment for 2008 we have made major progress in the combat against poverty in old age and created a socially compatible and future-oriented model."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "This government works for the country and achieves good results."

"The asylum court is a guarantee for faster asylum proceedings as well as standards and levels of protection conforming to the rule of law."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer in South Tyrol

“South Tyrol must and will be open on its way into the future but the proven fundamental objectives of protecting and preserving the identity of the German and Ladin ethnic groups must always be borne in mind“, stressed Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer at the convention of the South Tyrolian People’s Party (SVP) in Merano on 17 November 2007, to which the Austrian head of government had been invited as a guest speaker. This year the SVP’s national assembly was marked by the 50th anniversary of the legendary “protest march to Sigmundskron“ of 1957, when 35,000 South Tyrolians had demanded more rights for their country. The march is considered a “turning point“ in the development of the autonomy. South Tyrol’s Governor Luis Durnwalder thanked Austria for its firm support.

Today South Tyrol did no longer separate Austria and Italy but linked the two nations, Gusenbauer explained in his speech. South Tyrol could continue to rely on Austria, which would fulfil its protective function also in the future, assured the Federal Chancellor.

The autonomy was an example of how minority conflicts could be solved in Europe. Austria has always pursued a long-term strategy with regard to South Tyrol. Together with Hungary, Austria had advocated successfully the incorporation of minority rights into the provisions on the values of the Union. “With the entry into force of the new Reform Treaty of Lisbon, the autonomy of South Tyrol will benefit from additional international safeguards.■

Chancellor Gusenbauer in Paris

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer paid a working visit to Paris from 13 to 14 November 2007. His official programme included talks with President Nicolas Sarkozy and Prime Minister Francois Fillon.

Among the key topics of the meeting with Sarkozy were climate and environmental protection, immigration policy as well as Turkey’s accession to the EU. Regarding the latter issue both countries were “very sceptical“, explained Gusenbauer. The relations between Austria and France were “excellent”. ■

Gusenbauer pleads for speedy ratification of the EU Reform Treaty

At an event staged in the framework of the European Forum Alpbach in the Austrian National Bank (OeNB) on 11 November 2007, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer pled for a fast ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. Austria would start ratification immediately after signing the Reform Treaty in December, announced Gusenbauer. ■

Sweden’s royal couple pays visit to Austria

Following an invitation by Federal President Heinz Fischer, the Swedish royal couple, King Carl XVI. Gustaf and Queen Silvia, pay a state visit to Austria from 20 to 22 November 2007. Their programme includes participation in the Austrian-Swedish Economic Forum as well as visits to Parliament and to the Austrian Land of Burgenland.■

Spanish King attends inauguration of the new OSCE building in Vienna

In the framework of the inaugural ceremony for the new OSCE building in Vienna on 21 November 2007, Spanish King Juan Carlos I. meets with Federal President Heinz Fischer for an exchange of views at the presidential seat in Hofburg. The monarch travelled to Austria as the representative of the OSCE chair Spain. ■

Foreign Minister Plassnik at West Africa conference in Burkina Faso

On 12 November 2007 Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik officially opened the conference “Peace and security in West Africa – the role of a common EU-Africa strategy” in Ouagadougou, the capital of the West African state Burkina Faso“. ■

Austrian bishops in Israel

In the framework of their trip to Israel (6 to 10 November 2007), the Austrian bishops visited the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, where Cardinal Christoph Schönborn reminded of Austria’s “enormous guilt”. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: “South Tyrol continues to be a main concern and important element of Austria’s identity in foreign policy.”

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: “France and Austria are very sceptical about the question of Turkey’s accession to the EU.”

voestalpine plans second steelworks on Black Sea coast

The planned second voestalpine steelworks on the Black Sea is to double capacity to 11 million tons per year by 2013.

iwi boss Herwig Schneider: "Every additional employee and every single euro of additional value-added in a listed company create 1.3 additional jobs on average."

Shortly after the take-over of the special steel producer Böhler-Uddeholm (to date 80.3% for 3 billion euros), the Linz-based listed steel group voestalpine announced its next several-billion-euro investment. voestalpine plans to erect a second steelworks on the Black Sea, which is to double the capacity to 11 million tons per year by 2013, employ thousands of workers and complement the group's hitherto only steel site in Linz. This information was provided by the company on 13 November 2007. The site in Linz will be expanded its production capacity to six million tons, while the new plant including a harbour on the Black Sea is to produce five million tons per year. Potential locations are Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine or Turkey. The decision will be taken in 2008. According to voestalpine, the production could be launched at the end of 2012 or beginning of 2013 at the earliest. The steelworks in Linz could no longer cope with the heavy customer demand and the dynamic market growth in Eastern Europe, CEO Eder explained at the presentation of the group's interim financial statements in Vienna.

Despite the acquisition of the Böhler group, the company in Linz posted new record figures in the first half of 2007/08: the earnings per share increased from 2.01 to 2.74 euros; without the special effects of the acquisition deal recognised in the balance sheet, the earnings would, however, have climbed by about 60% to 3.3 euro per share. The earnings before interest and taxes (Ebit) grew by 37.1% to 612 million euros in the first six months. The earnings after tax (annual surplus) improved from 328.8 to 434.4 million euros, sales rose from 3.37 to 4.75 billion euros. Currently, synergies arising from the Böhler take-over total about 81 million euros but voestalpine CEO Eder was convinced that after 2010 100 million euros annually were realistic, especially in raw materials purchases. For the total financial year 2007/08 he expected the "fourth record balance in a row". ■

Listed companies guarantee 15 percent of the economic performance

The 127 domestic listed companies guarantee 15.4% in Austria's output, contribute 14.8% to

the value-added and create up to 400,000 jobs in Austria. The study – commissioned by Vienna Stock Exchange and Share Forum (the interest group of listed companies) and prepared by the Industry Research Institute (Industriewissenschaftliches Institut/ iwi) – was presented on 12 November 2007. According to Share Forum President Hellmut Longin, its findings prove that listed companies safeguard wealth and employment in Austria despite international production and sales markets.

"Every additional employee and every single euro of additional value-added in a listed company create an additional 1.3 jobs on average, emphasised also iwi manager Herwig Schneider. Therefore the best way of promoting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was to strengthen listed companies. ■

Government adopted new rules for financial markets supervision

The Council of Ministers adopted the new Financial Markets Supervision Act on 7 November 2007. After its entry into force on 1 January 2008, the directors of smaller banks will still be able to head the Supervisory Board of their bank without having to wait for two years. The so-called "cooling off phase" applies only to financial institutions with a balance sheet total of more than 500 million euros.

Potential Supervisory Board chairmen of these institutions will be subject to a "fit & proper test". "This does not affect the small institutions but the larger banks", emphasised Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance Wilhelm Molterer, referring to the lessons learned from the scandals around BAWAG and Hypo-Alpe-Adria banks. 119 of the 857 banks registered in Austria have a balance sheet volume exceeding the threshold of 500 million euros.

The Austrian National Bank (OeNB), where a change in the top position of the General Council is due in 2008, is exempted from the new provisions. The OeNB is subject to specific legal provisions. ■

Change in BAWAG leadership

BAWAG Director General Ewald Nowotny resigns with effect 31 December 2008. His successor is Brit David Roberts of Cerberus. ■

Wittgenstein Prize to biochemist from Graz and mathematician from Vienna

The 2007 Wittgenstein Prize goes to biochemist Rudolf Zechner (53) from Graz and mathematician Christian Krattenthaler (49) from Vienna. This was announced by Minister of Science Johannes Hahn and head of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) Christoph Kratky in Vienna. Austria's most renowned prize for academic achievements (1.5 million euros for each award) is also referred to as the "Austro Nobel Prize". At the same time the START prizes (up to 1.2 million euros each) were conferred on eight young researchers.

Zechner, professor of biochemistry at the Department of Molecular Biosciences at Graz University since 1998, has concentrated on research into fat metabolism and related diseases. In spring the go-ahead was given for a project in this field "Lipotox". In the framework of its programme "Special Research Area" (SFB), the FWF funded it with 5.5 million euros. In cooperation with scientists of the Technical and Medical Universities of Graz, the biochemist conducts research on the toxic function of fatty acids and lipids. Zechner is the first researcher to be awarded a second SFB in a row (previous SFB: "Biomembrane"). Besides the Wittgenstein Prize and the SFB, the researcher had another reason for celebrating: the new "Centre of Molecular Biosciences" inaugurated in Graz some days ago, offers optimum working conditions.

Christian Krattenthaler has been a professor of Discrete Mathematics with a special focus on combinatorics at Vienna University since 2005. The researcher born in Vienna in 1958 was awarded a doctorate "Sub Auspiciis Praesidentis" at Vienna University. His remarkable international career took him for example to San Diego, Berkeley, Strasbourg and Lyon. In parallel to his studies in mathematics, he studied piano at the Vienna University of Music, earning a concert diploma. He has given concerts in the past but had to give up his career as a pianist due a problem with his hand.

Krattenthaler's scientific research focuses on enumerative methods allowing mathematicians to solve concrete problems in other scientific disciplines such as physics or chemistry. ■

Promotional Prize in Music 2006 goes to media artist Markus Bless

The 2006 "Förderungspreis für Musik" (Promotional Prize in Music) of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture goes to music and media artist Markus Bless. The award was granted to him for his work "Chromatic Variations" in the category "Electronic Music and Computer Music". Markus Bless, born in Seewalchen am Attersee (Upper Austria) in 1963, studied visual media design at the University of Art in Linz as well as music and media technology with Adelhard Roidinger, Gerald Wolf and Andreas Weixler and algorithmic composition with Karlheinz Essl at Bruckner University Linz. In 1998 Bless was the only and first Austrian photo artist in the international festival of contemporary photography "Photosynkyria 98" in Thessaloniki (Greece). In 2000 he participated in the "Wien Modern" music festival with an audiovisual installation, which was also presented at the Essl Collection in Klosterneuburg (Lower Austria). Exhibitions and presentations of his works were also held in Brussels, Chengdu (China), Glasgow and Pusan (Korea). ■

Prize in artistic photography awarded to Maria Hahnenkamp

Maria Hahnenkamp was awarded the 2007 "Würdigungspreis für Künstlerische Fotografie" (Prize in Appreciation of Artistic Photography) of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture. The jury – Sabine Bitter, Martin Hochleitner and Günther Selichar – explained that they had voted for Hahnenkamp for her "photographic analyses of the subjects "presentation and representation" for which she uses the female body as an example. The prize was presented to the artist by Minister Claudia Schmied herself.

Hahnenkamp, born in Eisenstadt in 1959, lives and works in Vienna. In the late 1980s she became active in photography, focusing on subjects revolving around women. She has already received several awards, e.g. the frauen.kunst.preis in 2006. In 2004 she was a guest professor at the University of Art in Linz. This prize (founded in 1988) pays tribute to artists looking back on a long artistic

development and whose body of work has won (inter)national recognition. ■

Mourning for Eva Petrik

Eva Petrik, who has been President of the Austrian Catholic Action (Katholische Aktion Österreichs/KAÖ) for many years, died from cancer aged 75. She was one of the most influential personalities of the lay apostolate of the Roman Catholic Church after 1945. She was a leading figure in the “sea of light” against xenophobia in 1993. The woman born in Graz taught at the grammar school of the Institute of Neuland Schools in the 19th district of Vienna since 1958. She was also a lecturer at the Academy of Religious Pedagogy of the Archdiocese Vienna. From 1974 to 1983 she acted as deputy chairwoman of the Austrian Catholics Days. Between 1988 and 1994 she was President of the Federal Working Community for Catholic Adult Education (BAKEB). Petrik participated in the Coordinating Committee for Christian-Jewish Cooperation until her death. In her political career, Eva Petrik was a member of the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) and represented in Vienna’s regional parliament and municipal council.

In March of this year the Petrik was awarded the Golden Order of Stephanus by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, the highest distinction of the diocese, “to acknowledge her services to the Archdiocese Vienna“. Among the numerous awards bestowed on her is the Golden Medal of Honour for Meritorious Service to the Republic of Austria. ■

Joseph Haydn’s opera “Orlando Paladino” at Theater an der Wien

The premier of Joseph Haydn’s rarely performed opera “Orlando Paladino” was cheered by the audience. It was staged by British director Keith Warner at Theater an der Wien, who obviously borrowed deliberately from the witty and crude works of Monty Python, who for example did not treat the proud Middle Ages very respectfully. Haydn’s work (libretto by Nunziato Porta) is a dramatic story about love and jealousy. The composer created it for a planned visit of Russian Grand Duke Pavel Petrovitch – the later Tsar – to Esterháza (today

Fertöd/Hungary), who in the end did not come. Even though the director refrained from transferring the opera to the present, the story with all sorts of turmoil is enthusiastically received by today’s audience.

Together with Concentus Musicus, Haydn specialist Nikolaus Harnoncourt brought the marvellous music rich in contrasts to life. The very special event will hopefully be recreated in the Haydn Year 2009, when the 200th anniversary of the death of the first revolutionary master of Viennese classics will be commemorated. ■

MQ: great Czech art

The Leopold Museum at Vienna’s Museumsquartier (MQ) shows about 120 works of Czech artists of baroque and rococo, Art Nouveau and cubism in the exhibition “Grund, Mucha, Capek“ (ending on 4 February 2008). The outstanding works are presented to the public for the first time. They are on loan from the collection of Kooperativa, an insurance company of the insurance group Wiener Städtische, a sponsor of Leopold Museum. ■

Jewish Film Festival Vienna 2007

In cooperation with the Film Archives Austria, the Jewish Film Festival Vienna (closing on 22 November 2007) is staged in four cinemas in Vienna: Metro Kino as the festival centre, Burg Kino, Filmhaus Kino and Top Kino. 42 feature films, 6 silent films, 16 documentaries and 5 short films are screened. Parts of the festival will be presented in Vorarlberg as from 21 November 2007. As in the past years, the comprehensive festival programme offers special sections. A programme section developed in cooperation with the Film Archives Austria, focuses on different golem films. Another one on films about the lives of various jazz singers. The golem, a creature modelled on the image of man, has fascinated for centuries. According to the most famous legend Rabbi Loew from Prague made an artificial person from mud in the 16th century but the character can be traced back to considerably older books of the Kabala. “The Jazz Singer“, premiered in 1927, is considered one of the first “talking pictures“ in film history. The story about the rise of the son of a poor

Leopold Museum: “Grund, Mucha, Capek“. The exhibition is accompanied by a trilingual catalogue, 300 pages, approx. 25€.
www.leopoldmuseum.org

Jewish Film Festival Vienna 2007:
www.jfw.at
www.filmarchiv.at

Joseph Haydn: “Orlando Paladino“. Conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt, directed by Keith Warner. With Eva Mei, Juliane Banse, Kurt Streit, Markus Schäfer, Jonathan Lemalu. Theater an der Wien. Performances on 22, 25, 27, 29 November.
www.theater-wien.at

cantor to a celebrated Broadway star is based on the biography of the singer Al Jolson – it also inspired later productions. In addition, rare, very autobiographic films by Claude Berri are shown. They describe his survival as a Jew in a hiding place during WWII., his difficulties in growing up and the suffering of love. Other festival guests are Palestinian director Hanna Elias and Arab-Israeli actor Mohammed Bakri.

Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947), the director of famous US movies like “Trouble in Paradise“, “Ninotchka“ (with Greta Garbo) or “To Be or Not to Be“ (among others, with Carole Lombard) died 60 years ago. The Jewish Film Festival Vienna does not present his American productions but the silent pictures still created in Germany. In these films Lubitsch enacts a character created by him: the cheeky Jewish apprentice, mastering life with chutzpah.

Several films by Fred Zinnemann (1907/Vienna - 1997/London) are shown, e.g. “The Search“ (1948), describing the fate of deported children during WWII. in an impressive semi-documentary.

According to the UNHCR, 20.8 million people around the globe are displaced by war, persecution and gross human rights violations. The total number of refugees and persons in similar situations all over the world is estimated at up to 40 million people. The series of films “Hungry Hearts. Exile and Identities“ is to remind of all those who had to leave behind their families and home countries due to poverty, despair or persecution. The title of the series is derived from the film of the same name by E. Mason Hoppers produced in the USA in 1922. “Hungry Hearts“ tells the story of an immigrant family from Eastern Europe, trying to survive in New York’s Lower East Side. ■

Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer received US director David Lynch

US director and photographer David Lynch (born in 1946), who was awarded the Golden Lion for his life-time achievements at the 2006 Film Festival of Venice, met with Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer at the Federal Chancellery on 12 November 2007. His visit to Austria is part of a European tour to promote the concept of “transcendental meditation“ as the key to a more peaceful world. In early October 2007 he had

discussed his ideas with Israeli President Shimon Peres and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, of which he also wants to convince German Chancellor Angela Merkel. To draw attention to his idea, Lynch – together with Ayurveda specialist Lothar Krenner, quantum physicist John Hagelin and the President of Maharishi University of Management in the USA, Bevan Morris – symbolically founded the “Invincible Austria University“, a “private university” based on a “holistic approach in education”. Its mission was “to reduce violence and raise awareness”.

The Chancellor attentively listened to the “peace missionary” and explained him the Austrian legislation concerning the founding of (private) universities. Before an institution can take on the name “university”, it has to be approved by a Council of Accreditation. After passing a thorough examination, such a permit could be granted only after one year. David Lynch plans to found 191 of these “private universities” all over the world. The chancellor expressed his interest but also reservations to the daily “Die Presse“: “It is in any case an interesting idea that you calm down through mediation in stress and conflict situations”. ■

Vienna Book Week at City Hall

The Vienna City Hall was crowded by bookworms: from 13 to 18 November 2007 more than 150 publishers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland presented their publishing programmes. The books could also be bought on the spot in 13 bookstalls. Book presentations were given by Erich Hackl, Christoph Ransmayr, Thomas Glavinic and others. In 2008 the Book Week will be replaced by the new international book fair “Vienna Book“. From 20 to 23 November 2008 it will take place for the first time in Vienna’s fair trade centre.

This year’s free book given as a gift to readers in the libraries of the City of Vienna is Nick Hornby’s football story “Fever Pitch“.

The honorary prize of the Austrian book trade for tolerance in thought and action went to author, editor and translator Martin Pollack. The laudatory speech was delivered by Henryk M. Broder. ■

David Lynch created outstanding films like “The Elephant Man“ (1980), “Blue Velvet“ (1986), “Wild at Heart“ (1990), “Twin Peaks“ (1992), “Lost Highway“ (1996) or “Mulholland Drive“ (2001).

David Lynch: “Austria has 8 million inhabitants. You need only 300 persons who know how to meditate and pass it on – and the people in this country would be happier“.

[www.buch-woche.at](http://www.buchwoche.at)

Star author Nick Hornby (“About a Boy“, “High Fidelity“) read from his football-crazy book “Fever Pitch“ in Vienna’s City Hall on 18 November 2007 – as a prelude to the European Football Championship 2008 in Austria and Switzerland.

EURO 2008: optimal support for football fans from all over the world

Together with Kevin Miles, International Coordinator of the Football Supporters' Federation England, Speaker of Parliament and FairPlay-vidc President Barbara Prammer and Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka presented the fan support initiatives for EURO 2008 in the preliminaries of the national match Austria against England.

During the European Football Championship so-called "fan embassies" will act as a point of contact for all football fans and as a link between the fans and official bodies. Lopatka wants to take advantage of the experience with fan support measures made during EURO 2008 at national level, "country-wide fan support" is to become an integral part of the activities of all clubs of the T-Mobile Federal League as well as the Red-Zac-Erste League.

Kevin Miles and his colleagues have been applying a highly professional approach for a long time. Before every match abroad, a "guide" is issued specifically for the event. It introduces the fans to the respective country in which the team plays and provides tips on where to eat, public transport and the sights not to be missed. Miles stated that he wanted to help in EURO 2008 to ensure that "if possible, everybody should have only the most pleasant experience". With his fan embassy, Kevin Miles is not only a contact partner for the fans but also an important point of liaison between them and the authorities as well as the organisers. ■

New leadership for the Federal Sports Organisation

At the recent meeting of the Federal Sports Organisation (BSO), ASKÖ President Peter Wittmann was elected new BSO President. The new chairman of the BSO Specialised Committee is Gottfried Forsthuber, who is at the same time President of the Austrian Table Tennis Association. Wittmann and Forsthuber succeed to Franz Löschnak, former President, and Theodor Zeh, the previous committee chairman. Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka congratulated the new duo heading the Federal Sports Organisation. ■

WADA conference: World Anti-Doping Code adopted in Madrid

A change in leadership takes place also in the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). At the WADA conference in Madrid, former Australian Minister of Finance John Fahey was appointed successor of parting WADA President Richard Pound from Canada. The WADA Foundation Board unanimously adopted the revised World Anti-Doping Code in Madrid, which will take effect on 1 January 2009. The most important new provisions include increasing bans from sport from two to four years for serious doping offences, more flexible sanctions in individual cases, a more comprehensive crown witness rule as well as the suspension of an athlete immediately after a positive A drug test. ■

"Youth and sport" study: the majority wants more sports instruction

According to the study "Youth and Sport", conducted with 1,200 young people aged between 12 and 24 years, 80 percent of those polled engage in sports activities once a week, while significantly more than half of them are motivated to do so twice a week (58 percent).

The study – commissioned by Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka and presented by the polling institute Fessel-GfK Institute – also showed that about two thirds (67 percent) practise sports together with friends and acquaintances, 16 percent pursue their sports hobbies alone. Four out of ten young people having completed apprenticeship training and seven percent of the students of grammar schools participate in sports rarely or never.

More than half of the young people (57 percent) consider the level of sports instruction provided at school insufficient. They mentioned a healthy lifestyle (81 percent), counterbalancing work (69) and physical attractiveness (67) as their main motivation. ■

Secretary of State for Sport Lopatka: "If we want to promote sports projects in the future, we have to focus especially on kindergartens and schools as well as apprentices and girls".

To read more about the study and the highly interesting, differentiated findings, click on www.sport.austria.gv.at

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