

News from Austria

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Chancellor Gusenbauer: state reform main goal of the government

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Administration should be as cost-effective as possible to make available more funds for the future tasks of the state."

"Once Europe succeeds in enshrining social fundamental rights, we will of course also try to implement them in Austria."

The extradition of Helmut Elsner, former head of BAWAG bank, to Austria was noted with great satisfaction by all political parties in Austria.

Labour Minister Bartenstein: "It is a major concern to provide and further develop optimum long-term care services and support."

Minister for Social Affairs Buchinger: "New support models are to make long-term care affordable for all people."

The government's working group on the state and administrative reform met for the first time on 9 February 2007. The key facts of the reform package have already been laid down in the government's programme. The details for a bill are to be prepared by the end of June. The law should be passed by year-end. In a joint press statement before the meeting, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer described the state and administrative reform as one of the "major goals" of the coalition government. An "ambitious timetable" had been adopted to create a new basis for the negotiations on financial equalisation in 2008, explained the head of government.

"The aim of the state and administrative reform is to establish structures in Austria that are fit for the 21st century", said Chancellor Gusenbauer. Administrative expenses should be cut to make available financial resources for financing the state's future tasks. The government debt or the tax burden on citizens should by no means increase, stressed the Chancellor. Concrete measures mentioned by him were the elimination of dual administrative responsibilities between the federal government and the Länder. He proposed new rules for the division of powers.

With regard to the constitutional reform, the Chancellor pled for enshrining social fundamental rights in the Constitution and for promoting democratic participation, e.g. by lowering the voting age to 16 years, introducing postal voting and extending the legislative term to five years.

Besides constitutional and financial experts, the working group includes the Governors of Salzburg and Vorarlberg, Gabi Burgstaller and Herbert Sausgruber. ■

Ex-BAWAG boss Elsner extradited to Austria

On 13 February 2007 Helmut Elsner (71), former head of the BAWAG bank, was extradited to Austria in an overnight operation of the French and Austrian judicial authorities (Justice Minister Maria Berger) and based on a European arrest warrant. He was taken to the Vienna Regional Court. On the following day the competent judge

ruled that Elsner should remain in custody as he might flee the country. On 15 February 2007 Elsner was admitted to Wilheminen Hospital in Vienna for heart troubles. He will undergo heart surgery. The bypass operation will be performed in Vienna's General Hospital. The judge will soon rule on Elsner's request to be released from custody.

The ex-banker is considered a key figure in the biggest financial scandal of the Second Republic and the main suspect in the criminal proceedings in the BAWAG case. The prosecution has charged him with false accounting, severe fraud and fraudulent breach of trust causing losses of more than 1.4 billion euro to the bank. The principle "innocent until proven guilty" must be applied. The BAWAG bank severely affected by the speculation deals in the Caribbean of more than a billion euro, and its former owner, the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB), are seeking damages from Elsner. ■

Legalising domestic long-term care

The Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) agreed to create a legal basis for workers providing "long-term care at home" by 1 July 2007, informed Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer after the Council of Ministers on 14 February 2007. Minister for Economics and Labour Martin Bartenstein and Social Minister Erwin Buchinger presented a joint concept paper. Legal long-term care at home should become affordable, stated Gusenbauer. The social partners and relevant welfare organisations are involved. Up to 20,000 families and 40,000 providers of nursing and long-term care previously working illegally in Austria are affected. The aim is to create a framework for care services provided by independent carers or dependent employees during 24 hours a day. ■

More social pensions

On 15 February 2007 Social Minister Erwin Buchinger submitted the draft of the 2007 Act Amending Social Law for review. "More social aspects" should be taken into account in the social system. The "regulations for heavy workers" allowing early retirement without deductions from pension benefits should for example remain in force until 2010. ■

First state visit abroad takes Chancellor Gusenbauer to Berlin

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and his German counterpart Angela Merkel underlined their shared views on European policy issues and the excellent bilateral relations in Berlin on 7 February 2006. Austria and Germany also adopted a common stance on the hotly debated admission rules for Austrian universities vis-à-vis the European Commission. Gusenbauer explained that the current quota system restricting the access of German students to Austrian universities, especially to the Faculty of Medicine, was an adequate solution. However, he and Merkel emphasised that they wanted to talk about alternatives as well.

The fact that his first official trip abroad took him to Berlin was a “clear political signal“, said the Federal Chancellor. Germany was Austria’s largest and most important neighbour, with which it maintained also close economic ties. At the same time Gusenbauer pledged his support for Germany’s efforts to “get the European train rolling again“. ■

Gusenbauer: Switzerland model for transport policy

As far as transport policy was concerned, Switzerland was “some years” ahead of Austria, stressed Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer on 12 February 2007 after a meeting with Swiss Federal President Micheline Calmy-Rey and several ministers in Berne. He was accompanied by Transport Minister Werner Faymann. The top item on the agenda was the transit issue.

Gusenbauer pointed out that Austria wanted to make available 6 billion euro up to 2010 for expanding public transport. In Switzerland the construction of NEAT (Neue Alpentransversale), the new trans-Alpine rail link, had already started to shift heavy freight from road to rail. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer pays official visit to Slovakia

On 18 February 2007 Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer travelled to Slovakia, where he met *inter alia* with Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico. Their talks focused on European and economic policy issues as well as bilateral

affairs. Both sides highlighted the good mutual relations and their interest in intensifying economic cooperation between the two countries. In this context, attention was drawn to the construction of the Vienna-Bratislava motorway and the cooperation in infrastructure projects between the Schwechat and Bratislava airports. ■

Russian President Putin comes to Austria in May

Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay an official visit to Austria on 23 and 24 May 2007. This date was announced by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer on 18 February 2007 during his stay in Slovakia. ■

Foreign Minister Plassnik at security conference in Munich

“There is a specific European model of life, which distinguishes this continent from others and which we will safeguard and further develop. It is characterised by common values, diversity and participation on an equal footing“, explained Austrian Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik at the security conference in Munich on 11 February 2007. In her speech Plassnik drew attention to the fact that the EU had created more peace, security and wealth in Europe.

Pleading for a concrete European perspective for all countries of South Eastern Europe, including Serbia and Kosovo, Plassnik stated that the prerequisite for overcoming the dividing lines on this continent and for its reunification was cooperation with the Balkan states. ■

New UN Secretary-General expected in Austria

The new UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon will arrive in Vienna on 22 February 2007 for a three-day visit. This confirmed “the importance of Vienna as the only UN seat in the EU“, said Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. His official programme will include meetings with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer. ■

Austria and Slovakia agreed on intensifying bilateral cooperation, notably in transport and infrastructure issues

Foreign Minister Plassnik: “The European model of life is the basis for overcoming the dividing lines on this continent and for ultimately achieving reunification“

EU energy conference in Vienna

EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and Commissioner for External Affairs Ferrero-Waldner presented the new energy policy of the European Union and discussed controversial details, such as the electricity sector, in Vienna on 9 February 2007. The priorities of the EU energy package are diversification of energy resources, more efficient energy consumption, ambitious goals regarding renewable energies as well as a common external strategy of the EU.

In the future energy would be the focus of the EU's external relations, explained Ferrero-Waldner. The Union would develop a "common external energy policy". It should not only be based on agreements with the supplier and neighbouring countries but also on offering energy-saving technologies in international markets, stated Ferrero-Waldner. Minister for Economic Affairs Martin Bartenstein demanded to curb energy consumption and CO2 emissions but emphasised that not only the EU but the whole world faced a challenge. "We have to get the USA and emerging countries like China, India and Brazil on board", said Bartenstein. The energy package provides for a 20% reduction in the consumption of primary energy and CO2 emissions by 2020. ■

Booming industry and building sector

According to an estimate of the Austrian Research Institute (Wifo), the Austrian economy grew by 3.3% in real terms in the 4th quarter 2006 compared to the previous year. This corresponds to a growth of the GDP (gross domestic product) by 0.8% after adjustments for seasonal effects from the level of the previous quarter. Wifo informed on 13 February 2007 that a remarkable economic upturn was recorded, above all in the production of physical goods and the building industry, creating new full-time jobs and reducing unemployment. The Austrian industry is in a prolonged and sustainable boom. In the 4th quarter 2006 the value-added of the production sector registered a year-on-year increase by 7.5% in real terms. In the same period the value-added in the building industry exceeded the prior-year level by 5.5% in real terms. ■

Record profits for Austrian companies

Austrian companies are excellently positioned at international level. The domestic steel producer voestalpine and the building materials group Wienerberger are examples of enterprises that are reaping record profits and significantly raising their profit estimates.

voestalpine benefits from the good economic conditions in the automotive industry, the construction and energy sectors. The sales and result for the three first quarters 2006/07 (the current financial year ends on 31 March 2007) of Linz-based group exceeded all expectations. The sales amount to 5.34 billion euro (previously 4.86 billion euro), and the earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) climbed from 547.0 to 718.9 million euro. Hence, this will be a new record year for voestalpine. An operating result of 950 million euro is expected for the entire year, corresponding to a plus of 30% from the outstanding prior-year level (732 million euro).

The Austrian building materials group Wienerberger also improved its position. Based on preliminary data, the groups sales grew by 14% to 2.23 billion euro. The earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) rose by 10% to 471.9 million euro, the EBIT by 11% to 299.7 million euro. In 2007 Wienerberger wants to invest up to half a billion euro in its expansion plans, comprising acquisitions, the construction of new plants and enhanced production lines. The group focuses on Europe and booming markets in the East. ■

50 top brands elected "Superbrands"

Austria has now "Superbrands", too. 50 exceptional brands in Austria were selected at a gala event on 12 February 2007. Brands like Almdudler, Casinos Austria, Mercedes and WirtschaftsBlatt figure on the exquisite list compiled by a 16-member jury. The title was awarded to strong and appealing domestic and international brands with a high prestige, rooted customer loyalty and market domination. In the future the label "Superbrands" can be affixed to the respective products. The Austrian Press Agency (APA) is among the six media granted this title. ■

EU Energy Commissioner Piebalgs: security of supply and competitiveness can be achieved only with a long-term energy policy."

Austrian companies are thriving at international level.

The domestic boom also strengthens the labour market.

University: conference on history and culture of Viennese Jews

From 19 to 22 March 2007 the conference "Vienna and the Jewish Experience. 1900-1938. Acculturation, Anti-Semitism, Zionism" organised by the Department of Contemporary History of the Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies of the University of Vienna will take place. The aim of the conference is to inform the general public about the current state of research and cultural studies. The venues of the conference are Vienna's town hall, the University of Vienna, the Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna as well as the Metro cinema run by the Austrian Film Archives. Scholars and artists invite to lectures, film screenings and readings. The opening statement is given by author Steven Beller in the framework of the "Vienna Lectures" on 19 March 2007. Beller wrote several books on Austrian and Jewish history and lives in Washington. ■

Eisenstadt: International Haydn Days 2007 "Haydn & Romanticism"

The motto of the International Haydn Days 2007 staged in Eisenstadt (Burgenland) from 6 to 16 September is "Haydn & Romanticism". Conductor in residence Adam Fischer and the Austrian-Hungarian Haydn Philharmonics will perform Haydn's oratory "The Seasons" and his "Holy Mass" as well as the two traditional closing concerts. The festival will once more present a fine selection of symphonies and rarely performed works by Joseph Haydn. The spirit of Romanticism is expressed in great works by Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Weber, Chopin, Liszt, Dvorak, Bruckner, Wagner and Rachmaninov, but also Manuel de Falla and Friedrich Gulda's concert for violoncello and wind orchestra.

Other festival highlights are the numerous orchestra concerts, with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra conducted by Philippe Herreweghe, Wiener Akademie with Martin Haselböck, Hanover Band led by Sir Charles Mackerras, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra with conductor and pianist Rudolf Buchbinder, Wiener Concert-Verein conducted by Milan Turkovic, the Freiburger Barockorchester with conductor and soloist Gottfried von der Goltz as well as a gala

night with the legendary mezzo-soprano Grace Bumbry. The programme is rounded off with chamber concerts by Quatuor Manfred, the Van Swieten Trio & Bart van Oort, the Prometheus Ensemble as well as the piano recital "Beauty and Sensuality" with Minna Re Shin. ■

Landestheater Linz: tribute to Philip Glass with Cocteau's "Orphée"

The Landestheater Linz celebrated the 70th birthday of US composer Philip Glass ("Einstein on the Beach", "Satyagraha", "The Fall of the House of Usher") with an outstanding performance of his opera "Orphée" based on a film by Jean Cocteau. Glass himself came to Linz one week before the premiere. With "La Belle et la Bête" and "Les Enfants Terribles" Glass had composed two more operas based on films and the French screenplay by Cocteau.

Dennis Russell Davies, Chief Conductor of the Linz Opera House, artistic companion and friend of the composer for many years, had premiered the two-act piece at the American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge (USA) in 1993. In the same year he had directed the European premiere at Weikersheim Palace in Baden-Württemberg (Germany). The work was performed for the first time in Austria in 2002, also conducted by Davies, at the University Mozarteum Salzburg.

According to dramatic advisor Felix Losert the opera shows "the drama of a human being overcoming a serious crisis in his relationship and in his art by a journey to his soul or his imaginary death, a kind of creative self-experience, so to speak". Baritone Martin Achrainger impressed in the title role of the celebrated poet of the Parisian Bohemia, Orphée (played by Jean Marais in the film). His congenial singing partner enacting Heurtebise, the leader to the Underworld, was lyric tenor Iurie Ciobanu. Eurydice was brilliantly performed by Anja-Nina Bahrmann. As the erotic-seductive La Princesse, representing death, Gotho Griesmeier enthralled everybody, not only Orphée, both with her voice and personality. She received ovations from the audience. The production, choreography and costumes were by the eminent director of Tanztheater Nürnberg, Daniela Kurz. The Bruckner Orchestra Linz led by its Chief Conductor was at its best. ■

"Vienna and the Jewish Experience 1900-1938".
Programme:
<http://www.univie.ac.at/zeitgeschichte/veranstaltungen/a-07-03-1.pdf>

For more details on Orphée" see:
www.landestheater-linz.at

International Haydn Days:
6 to 16 September 2007.
Ticket sale starting on 5 March 2007.
For hotel stays including a rich buffet see for example www.hotelburgenland.at

Hermann Hesse exhibition at Vienna's Leopold Museum

From 23 February to 3 June 2007 the Leopold Museum in Vienna's MuseumsQuartier (MQ) presents the so far largest exhibition on Hermann Hesse, German winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature (1946) and painter. With "Narziss und Goldmund" ("Narcissus and Goldmund") or the "Glasperlenspiel" (English titles: "The Glass Bead Game" or "Master Ludi") he had made a lasting impact on the philosophical/ideological cosmos of the 20th century. With his counter-culture approach he became a cult figure to the rebellious "generation of 1968". His novel "Siddhartha" sensitised many young people to Buddhism. "Steppenwolf" – the title of another novel by Hesse – was also the name of a leading US rock band. Carlos Santana's title of his "Abraxas" album is also based on Hesse.

Volker Michels, the internationally renowned Hesse expert and editor of the complete edition of his work, selected 100 water colours as well as numerous original letters, photos and poems for the exhibition at the MQ, illustrating the numerous talents of the artist. It will certainly be a highlight of Vienna's exhibition calendar in the next months. ■

Opera ball with Federal President Fischer and Chancellor Gusenbauer

The Opera Ball 2007, celebrated at Vienna State Opera on 15 February, was completely sold out. The net profit of 1.1 million euro reaped in 2006 will be surpassed significantly this year – and this might have been one of the reasons why Chancellor Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor and Finance Minister Wilhelm Molterer flashed smiles. Neo-Austrian/Russian soprano Anna Netrebko came on stage in an antique carriage drawn by the 15-year-old horse "Pascha", led by Opera Director Ioan Holender as the carriage driver. The opera star wearing a purple robe gave an electrifying performance as "Manon Lescaut". The Chancellor welcomed VIPs of politics and culture, e.g. Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa, Bulgarian writer Dimitre Dinev and actress Birgit Minichmayr, recently cheered in Klaus Maria Brandauer's production of Weill's/Brecht's "Threepenny Opera" in Berlin and in Schnitzler's "Reigen" ("La Ronde") at the

Burgtheater in Vienna. President Heinz Fischer, who had no official state guest, enjoyed the ball with his wife Margit. Numerous government members belonging to the People's Party (ÖVP) attended the event, e.g. Science Minister Johannes Hahn, Minister for Health Andrea Kdolsky, Foreign Minister Plassnik, Minister for Economic Affairs Martin Bartenstein and Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka. Social Democratic government members spotted at the Opera Ball were Minister for Education Claudia Schmied and Transport Minister Werner Faymann. Other prominent ball-goers were Russian ambassador Stanislav Osadchiy, US ambassador Susan McCaw and OPEC President Mohamed Bin Dhaen al-Hamli. ■

Vienna's Dome Museum: 100 works for the 100th birthday of Otto Mauer

On 14 February 2007 the 100th birthday of Monsignor Otto Mauer, theologian and founder of "Galerie (nächst) St. Stephan", was commemorated. Mauer was born in Brunn am Gebirge (Lower Austria) in 1907 as the son of a savings bank employee. In his youth he became active in the Catholic movement "Bund Neuland" ("Neuland schools"). He was ordained priest in 1931, became curate and religious instructor. During the NS regime he was forbidden to teach and preach. He was also arrested several times but protected by Cardinal Innitzer and Prelate Rudolf.

After 1945 Mauer played a major role in establishing Katholische Aktion Österreich. He was a co-editor of the monthly magazine for religion and culture "Wort und Wahrheit". By opening "Galerie (nächst) St. Stephan" – "Gallery (next) to St. Stephen's" – with drawings by Herbert Boeckl in 1954, the new cathedral preacher of St. Stephen's ushered in a new and decisive era for Austrian contemporary art. The gallery became a main venue for Austrian avant-garde artists, e.g. Wolfgang Hollegha, Arnulf Rainer, Josef Mikl and Markus Prachensky. Mauer increasingly collided with Conservative Catholic circles. He was of the opinion that Church had always been influenced by the "contemporary" art of the respective period. This tradition had been lost in the Enlightenment. Mauer wanted to re-establish the overdue dialogue with contemporary art. The

Hermann Hesse.
Poet & Painter.
23 February to
3 June 2007.
www.leopoldmuseum.org

"Happy Birthday
Monsignore!".
Special exhibition
to mark the 100th
birthday of Otto
Mauer.
Dom- und Diöze-
sanmuseum.
Vienna I,
Stephansplatz 6.
Catalogue edited
by Bernhard A.
Böhler, ISBN 978-
3-902034-00-7.

Monsignore, a modest and bright personality, died unexpectedly in 1973.

In the exhibition titled "Happy Birthday Monsignore!" (closing on 2 June 2007), Vienna's Dommuseum shows 100 pioneering works, e.g. by Maria Lassnig, Kiki Kogelnik, Oswald Oberhuber, Fritz Wotruba, Alfred Kubin, Ernst Fuchs, Gustav Peichl, Hans Fronius and Friedensreich Hundertwasser.

Mauer, who was far ahead of other collectors with his sense of quality, owned more than 3,000 contemporary works of art. Some were given to him as a gift to thank him for his sponsorship, others were bought by him when nobody else was yet interested in them. ■

Kramer Prize goes posthumously to Austrian exile author Jakov Lind

On 5 February 2007 it was announced that the Theodor Kramer Prize 2007 would go to the Austrian exile author, painter and actor Jakov Lind, who celebrated his 80th birthday on 10 February 2007. The Prize was to be presented by Georg Stefan Troller to relatives of Lind due to his poor health at the Vienna Jewish Museum on 13 March 2007. An awards ceremony was to take place in Krems (Lower Austria) in late May. On 17 February 2007 Jakov Lind died in London, and his funeral was held only one day later.

Jakov Lind was born into an Eastern Jewish family in Vienna in 1927. In 1938 the pupil of the Jewish grammar school in Vienna and his younger sister escaped to Holland with the help of a refugee organisation. He found refuge with a family and prepared himself for a future life in Palestine. After the Nazis occupied the Netherlands, Lind went underground with forged documents in Germany. As Jan Gerrit Overbeek he signed up on a Rhine towboat in 1943. He survived the war in Hamburg. After the war he held various jobs and tried to become an actor in Israel and Vienna. In 1954 he went to London. In 1962 he published his book "Soul of Wood", which was enthusiastically acclaimed in the English-speaking countries, where he was compared to Kafka and Beckett. The German critics remained reserved, obviously not coming to terms with Lind's perspective of an "almost boisterous joker" (Marcel Reich-Ranicki) not assuming the victim's role.

In 1966 he published the grotesque allegory "Eine bessere Welt". "Ergo", the stage adaptation of the book, was successfully premiered in New York in 1968. In 1997 the play was for the first time performed in German language at Vienna's Volkstheater. In "The Trip to Jerusalem" (1972) he criticised official Zionism. In 1997 Lind received the Golden Medal of Honour of the City of Vienna. ■

First Austrian ceramics museum in Scheibbs

On 1 May 2007 Austria's first ceramics museum will be opened in Scheibbs (Lower Austria). Thus almost 2,500 rare objects will become accessible to the public. The ceramics made in Scheibbs emerged due to two circumstances. In 1923 Ludwig Weinbrenner, a gardener who had moved to Scheibbs from Vienna, founded the "Clay Industry Scheibbs" after finding clay on his land. He produced fascinating artistic ceramics by collaborating partly with excellent artists and partly with Wiener Werkstätte. The works created e.g. by Gudrun Baudisch, Helene Dörr, Hilde Heger or Walter Bosse are highly impressive. About 80 percent of the products were exported, predominantly to the USA. In 1933 the company went bankrupt, which was also due to the bleak economic situation. In 1937 the pottery plant was re-founded as "Scheibbscer Keramik" by former employees. It produced good, artistically less ambitious ceramic objects and products designed for every-day use. After the 1960s the talented potter Wolf Dieter Mießl tried to revive the enterprise with ceramics "in a rural style". Since 1987 the "Lebenshilfe" association of Lower Austria has continued the great tradition with disabled people and trained staff. Wonderful ceramics for every-day use are created – true handicraft from the moulded blank to the finished product. In 2006 the building on the road to Scheibbs was bought by the Hottenroth family. Since 1993 the pottery fans have searched all over the world for the unique products of the "Clay Industry Scheibbs" to add them to their collection. The Scheibbs Museum Association founded in 2006 renovated the building with the support of the Regional Government of Lower Austria, the City of Scheibbs and private sponsors. It now operates and maintains the Museum. ■

In 1997 the Vienna-based Picus Verlag published Jakov Lind's autobiographical trilogy "Selbstporträt", "Nahaufnahme" and "Im Gegenwind" in a series of Austrian exile literature.

First Austrian Ceramics Museum:
3270 Scheibbs,
Erlaufstraße 32,
Tel.:
0043/7482/42267
or
0043/676/5584091

www.keramikumseumscheibbs.at

Lebenshilfe
Association:
cheibbs Ceramics
Workshop:
3270 Scheibbs,
Rutesheimer
Straße 2,
Tel.:
0043/7482/42334

Madrid: Austria active in international anti-doping combat

From 12 to 13 February 2007 the Council of Europe organised the “Conference on the Revision of the World Anti-Doping Code“ in Amsterdam. International sports organisations and governments had agreed on a uniform World Anti-Doping Code at the second World-Anti-Doping Conference in Copenhagen on 5 March 2003. It was adopted by the National Olympic Committees in the preliminaries of the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens to ensure the participation of their athletes. The aim of the World Anti-Doping Code was to harmonise the previous anti-doping rules in all sports and all countries of the world. At this conference the representatives of 73 governments signed the “Copenhagen Declaration”, stating that they supported the Anti-Doping Code politically and morally – among them also Austria. In the meantime 110 countries have become signatories. A comprehensive revision of the Code has been planned for 2007. To this end an international consolidation process takes place, which will culminate in the World Anti-Doping Conference in Madrid in November 2007. Austria is participating actively in this process. ■

Giving positive fan culture a chance

Possible stadium bans imposed by the courts on the one hand, more dialogue and social-preventive measures for the fans on the other hand – these were two results of a security dialogue on the subject “Football: Sport and Security” initiated by Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka. Representatives of the Federal Football League, all 22 football clubs as well as security officials and fan representatives discussed whether Austria was prepared for fan riots like in Italy or Germany. Austria’s sports grounds are considered safe (with reasonable certainty). Nevertheless, all clubs are requested to show more commitment to security issues and security officer training. This is also true for efficient video surveillance and security checks. The dialogue with the responsible members of the Federal Football League will become a regular practice to improve coordination between the football clubs and the police forces on an ongoing basis. ■

New career opportunities for top athletes

A career after the career is the objective of the “KA.DA“ (“Karriere.Danach“) project, which is to enable former top athletes to embark on new careers. Athletes, who failed to acquire job qualifications due to professional sports training and who seek integration into the labour market as latecomers after ten or fifteen years, should be supported in finding jobs in which they can use the “soft skills” acquired by them. The Federal Chancellery and the Ministry of Education fund the two-year pilot programme designed for a total of 100 participants with 30,000 euro each. The next step after the test and evaluation phase should be to establish a permanent basis for this important project devoted to the tailored promotion of athletes after their active careers. ■

Ski World Championships in Aare: Austria remains top ski nation

Austria is the best ski nation. Winning nine medals at the Alpine Ski World Championship in Aare (Sweden) it demonstrated once more its leadership in Alpine skiing. The Alpine ski team of the Austrian Ski Federation (ÖSV) earned three gold medals in four World Championships in a row. The final result of the Championships: 3 x gold (Nicole Hosp, Mario Matt and team competition), 3 x silver (Marlies Schild, Fritz Strobl and Benjamin Raich) and 3 x bronze (Renate Götschl, Marlies Schild and Nicole Hosp). This is a great success for the ÖSV team, for all skiers, coaches and officials. Austria clearly tops the final medals table of the Alpine Ski World Championships with a total of 246 medals (79 x gold, 85 x silver, 82 x bronze). ■

Austria remains the number one ski nation.

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