

# News from Austria

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## Gusenbauer: Climate protection strategy successful at EU summit

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "We have succeeded in developing a very important climate protection strategy and in realising the most important goals. We made a binding commitment to intensify the use of renewable energies. Austria has always played a pioneering role and will continue to give its full support."

Climate and energy were high on the agenda at the traditional Spring Summit of the EU heads of state and government in Brussels on 8 and 9 March 2007. Austria was represented by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance Wilhelm Molterer and Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. The EU Member States agreed on binding objectives for climate protection and energy policy. German Chancellor and incumbent EU Council President Angela Merkel referred to a "moment of real satisfaction". Chancellor Gusenbauer described the decisions taken at the summit as a real contribution of Europe to reducing CO2 emissions and to climate protection. Renewable energies were for example defined as "binding EU targets". Moreover, climate protection had become an integral part of an economic and technological innovation campaign, which would trigger employment effects, said Gusenbauer.

The EU members agreed to increase the share of renewable energies (wind, water, sun, geothermal energy and biomass) from currently about 6 to 20% by 2020. In addition, greenhouse gas emissions leading to global warming and energy consumption are to be cut by 20%.

The transit country Austria had achieved a "real breakthrough" by linking transport issues with climate protection concerns, said Gusenbauer. ■

## Programme fixed for Pope's visit

The highlights of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI. to Austria from 7 to 9 September 2007 on the occasion of the 850<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mariazell has been fixed. Besides this place of pilgrimage in Styria, the Pope will also visit Vienna and the Abbey of Heiligenkreuz (Lower Austria). ■

## Voting at the age of 16 – Austria is a pioneer in Europe

In Austria the voting age is reduced from 18 to 16 years and the postal vote is introduced. This is part of the planned democracy reform, whose key measures were presented by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer after the Council

of Ministers on 14 March 2007. Furthermore, a resolution was passed to prolong the legislative term from four to five years after the next parliamentary elections. The reform of the right to vote is to be passed by Parliament before the summer break.

Austria is a pioneer in reducing the voting age in Europe. Chancellor Gusenbauer stated that the reduction in the voting age to 16 years means "more opportunities of co-determination for the young people in our country". The introduction of the postal vote is to make it easier for citizens to participate in elections, especially those staying abroad. The legislative term is extended to harmonise it with that of the Länder, where elections are held mostly at five-year intervals. ■

## Chancellor Gusenbauer: we must not tolerate any form of violence

At the International Women's Day on 8 March 2007, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer explained that violence must not be tolerated "in any form and nowhere" – neither in the private sphere nor in football stadiums or school yards. The federal government envisaged a number of projects to raise the awareness of the problem of domestic violence, especially against women and children. According to crime statistics, women fell victim to domestic violence in 300,000 cases per year, and 90% of the parents considered slaps in the face still an appropriate means of education, said Gusenbauer. Information, prevention, work with the perpetrators and the financial independence of women were crucial. ■

## Future Fund of the Republic of Austria highlights positive results

On 9 March 2007 the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria presented the positive results of its first year of activity. So far 148 applications were filed, 120 were processed and 80 projects were approved. The total financial aid for 2006 amounted to 2.5 million euros. The Future Fund was established in 2005 as the successor organisation of the Reconciliation Fund for the indemnification of NS forced labourers. It was endowed with 20 million euros, will be functional for ten years and supports projects commemorating NS victims as well as promoting tolerance and non-discrimination. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Victims must be able to afford to escape perpetrators from whom they depend financially. Therefore the combat against poverty is a decisive contribution to combating violence."

For details on the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria see: [www.zukunftsfonds-austria.at](http://www.zukunftsfonds-austria.at)

## Gusenbauer presents Austria's foreign policy priorities

At the inaugural reception for the diplomatic corps at the Federal Chancellery on 6 March 2007, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer presented Austria's five foreign policy priorities. He mentioned the combat against climate change and poverty, the commitment to human rights, nuclear disarmament, the observance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as a proactive European policy as the main objectives of the government during this legislative term. Gusenbauer pledged Austria's full support to the UN programmes for the global combat against poverty. Austria also supported the efforts of the UN to ensure nuclear disarmament and the observance of human rights. Furthermore, Gusenbauer advocated deeper integration and further enlargement of the EU. However, enlargement had to be adjusted to the EU's capacity to admit new members. Last but not least, the Chancellor pled for support for Austria's candidacy for membership in the UN Security Council. ■

## Foreign Minister Plassnik pays official visit to Pakistan and India

Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik paid an official visit to Pakistan and India from 12 to 16 March 2007, where she met with leading politicians of both countries. She was accompanied by a trade delegation. Her official programme included political talks as well as a visit to the Austro-Pakistani Technical University in Lahore and the inauguration of the Austrian Cultural Forum in New Delhi (India). Plassnik started her trip to South Asia with a visit to Pakistan's capital Islamabad, meeting inter alia with her counterpart Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri and Minister for Women's Affairs Sumaira Malik. Besides India, Pakistan was one of the "countries decisive for the stability of Asia and an important ally in the international security architecture, said Plassnik. The aim of both visits were exchanges at political, economic and cultural level as well as in tourism. She stated that cooperation with regard to global challenges, such as climate protection, energy policy, the combat against terrorism as well as the dialogue of cultures and religions was fundamental. Other

issues discussed were the situation in Afghanistan, Iran's nuclear programme and the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India. Plassnik expressed her concern about the internal tensions in Pakistan after dismissing the country's top judge. On behalf of the EU she expected full compliance with the rule of law and the Constitution, stressed Plassnik.

In New Delhi Plassnik conducted talks with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Foreign Minister Pranap Mukherjee. Plassnik underlined India's growing importance in the world, in the UN and in peace-keeping missions. Great opportunities were arising for Austrian companies in the dynamically growing market. "By opening the Cultural Forum in New Delhi we enhance Austria's presence in the cultural sphere in India and the region", said Plassnik. ■

## Patriarch Bartholomew I. in Austria

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. is "very optimistic" about Turkey's possible accession to the EU. The EU membership perspective would help "to reduce the problems of the minorities", explained Bartholomew in Vienna. The head of the Orthodox Christian Church met with Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer and Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik during his five-day stay in Austria (12 to 16 March 2007). Austria assured the Patriarch to advocate the freedom of religion and the protection of the religious minorities in Turkey at EU level and in its contacts with Ankara.

At Vienna's St. Stephen's Cathedral Bartholomew I. was presented the Cardinal König Prize. ■

## South Tyrol summit in Vienna

South Tyrol's Governor Luis Durnwalder and chief of the South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP) Elmar Pichler came to Vienna on 13 March 2007 for talks with political leaders, such as Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer and Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. The Governor expressed his great satisfaction about the fact that obviously all of Austria remained committed to its "protective function" for the South Tyrol. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "In the combat against terrorism and international crime the people must not be ignored. We need a balance between collective security and individual rights."

Patriarch Bartholomew I.: "The united Europe requires a common social policy in the framework of a peaceful and fruitful cooperation of the nations."

"We thank Austria for its contribution to securing peace, human rights, minority rights, the freedom of religion as well as inter-religious dialogue."

Foreign Minister Plassnik: "Pakistan and India are countries that are decisive for Asia's stability, and they are important allies in the international security architecture."

## New record in Austrian tourism: more than 30 million guests in 2006

2006 was a year of record results for the Austrian tourist industry:

More than 30 million guests, a turnover exceeding 30 billion euros, a share in the GDP of 8.7%, 220,876 dependent employees (+2.7%). Two thirds of all services exports (30 billion euros) can be attributed to tourism. Austria is the world's second most important tourist industry location and number ten in the international ranking of tourist destinations.

Budget deficit 2006: with 1.1% significantly below expectations

Tax revenue considerably above projections: 60.4 billion euros

“2006 was a year of excellent results for the Austrian tourist industry. The number of arrivals exceeded the 30-million-euro threshold for the first time. The turnover rose to more than 30 billion euros. Hence, we broke through two sonic barriers“, explained Economic Minister Martin Bartenstein at the International Travel Trade Show (ITB) in Berlin on 7 March 2007.

According to Bartenstein, the number of arrivals surged by 2.6% year-on-year to an all-time high of 30.1 million (foreign guests: +1.5% to 20.2 million; Austrians: +5.1% to 9.9 million). The World Tourism Organisation estimates that the number of worldwide arrivals amounted to 806 million (+5.5%). In the international ranking of tourist destinations (based on arrivals in 2005) Austria was placed tenth.

The turnover in tourism grew by 3.9% in the same period, reaching a record level of 30.38 billion euros although the number of hotel nights remained practically unchanged (+0.1%) on a level of 119,3 million. The share of tourism (including all direct and indirect effects) in the gross domestic product (GDP) was 8.7% in 2006, that of the entire tourist and leisure industry was 16.4%. Austria's most important tourists are still the Germans with 48.8 million hotel nights (-4.5%) in 2006, followed by guests from the USA (+7.8%), France (+5.2%) and Great Britain (+5.1%).

The “Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2007“, which was released for the first time by the World Economic Forum, selected Austria (after Switzerland and before Germany) as the second most important location in terms of economic attractiveness for the tourism industry. The Austrian tourist and leisure industry also registered record employment. In 2006 the number of dependent employees in enterprises totalled 220,876, corresponding to a significant plus of 3.7% from the prior-year level, as the Economic Chamber Austria (WKÖ) informed. With this top employment level, the tourist and leisure industry made an important contribution to the excellent job situation in Austria, emphasised the head of the competent department within the WKÖ, Johann Schenner, at the ITB in Berlin.

The share of the tourist industry in the total

exports is also remarkable. In 2006 merchandise exports totalled 106.8 billion euros; services exports stood at 45 billion euros. Two thirds of the services exports (30 billion euros) are attributable to tourism, setting another new record. “Tourism also proved to be an export engine“, underlined Schenner. ■

## Budget deficit 2006 clearly below expectations – higher revenue

The budget deficit of 2006 was significantly below expectations. Instead of the expected 1.7%, the public sector deficit (new debts of the Federal Republic, the Länder, communities and social insurance institutions) was only 1.1% of the gross domestic product (GDP).

Experts explained that the “sensationally” improved budget balance was due to the economic upswing. In 2006 the tax revenue was significantly above projections. A major share was contributed by the revenue from corporate income tax (tax on the profit of companies) of 4.8 billion euros, corresponding to a plus of 1 billion euros (2005: 3.8 billion euros) although it was in 2006 that the reduction of the corporate income tax rate from 34 to 25% (tax reform 2005) became fully effective. Value-added tax revenue rose by 800 million euros to 20.2 billion euros. The wage tax (18.1 million euros) increased by about 400 million euros.

Last year the Federal Republic earned taxes and fiscal charges of 60.4 billion euros, exceeding estimates by 2.1 billion euros. However, expenditure also rose. Due to the favourable tax revenue trend, the deficit is only 1.5% of the GDP (planned 2.3%). The total income plus of the government in 2006 clearly exceeded the tax revenue increase of 2.1 billion euros. The Ministry of Finance reported a total revenue of 66.1 billion euros (5.74 billion euros above estimates) and a total expenditure of 70.5 billion euros (+4.347 billion euros). A public sector deficit of 1.12% has been forecast for 2007. ■

## Flourishing private pension plan

The state-subsidised private pension plan “Zukunftsvorsorge” registered a steep increase also in 2006. The volume of premiums amounted to 619 million euros. So far about 1 million contracts were concluded. ■

“Manon“ at Vienna State Opera: celebrating Anna Netrebko and Roberto Alagna

The premiere of Jules Massenet’s “Manon“ at Vienna State Opera on 3 March 2007 became a great artistic and personal success for Anna Netrebko (Manon), Roberto Alagna (Chevalier Des Grieux), Adrian Eröd (Lescaut) and above all conductor Bertrand de Billy, who led the Vienna State Opera Orchestra skilfully and with subtle nuances. The production by Andrei Serban met with the approval of both the audience and critics. The director’s approach raises subjects that are valid still today. In a corrupt and rotten society the Cinderella career of Manon, who is hungry for life, comes to a fatal end. This role seems tailored to Anna Netrebko. She is the seductive Manon – not only with her voice but her entire erotic personality.

On Saturday, 11 March 2007, the ORF 2 channel of the Austrian Broadcasting Station transmitted live the three-hour performance of “Manon“. Although “James Bond 007 – Die Another Day“ (USA/GB 2002) with Pierce Brosnan and Halle Berry was shown on ORF 1 at the same time, an audience of 678,000 watched the rarely performed French opera. The production ending on 19 March 2007 is sold out. ■

Klagenfurt: premiere of “Jedem das Seine“ by Turrini and Neuwirth

In spring 1945 about 100,000 Hungarian Jews were driven to the Mauthausen concentration camp. Only 20,000 survived. Silke Hassler and Peter Turrini describe the fate of 20 of them waiting in a barn to continue their march in “Jedem das Seine“ (“To Each His Own”). Roland Neuwirth, the founder of the music group “Extremeschrammeln“ (blending traditional Viennese “Schrammel” music with contemporary elements) wrote the music for this “popular operetta“, as the subtitle of the work reads. The artist describes his music as the “tonality of the people“. Disfigured sounds echoing the waltzes of Johann Strauß from a distance, sweet and light, harsh and bitter. “Vienna Blood” is performed as a Klezmer version on the violin by Aliosha Biz.

When WWII was drawing to a close in late April 1945, the half-starved people were provided with

food by the peasant woman Traudl Fasching in the barn. To thank her, opera singer Lou Gandolf – brilliantly enacted by Alexander Kaimbacher – wants to perform an operetta for the music-loving farmer. The project is increasingly fascinating, even to Traudl’s alcoholic husband and the Nazi Stefan Fasching. At the end the war is over, Hitler is dead and the prisoners believe that the horror finally came to an end. But the barn is boarded up and set to fire. After it burnt, the entire ensemble stands for several minutes in the dark at the edge of the stage – probably the most touching moment of Michael Sturminger’s production at Stadttheater Klagenfurt. Then the actors collapse and the orchestra led by Guido Mancusi performs once more this strange waltz-like music.

The play has been conceived as a present to the outgoing theatre manager of Stadttheater Klagenfurt, Dietmar Pflegerl. The actors, authors and the composer were given standing ovations at the first night on 8 March 2007, e.g. by Minister for Culture Claudia Schmied and the Director General of the Austrian National Library, Johanna Rachinger. ■

The honourable: Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar“ at Burgtheater

Yes certainly, Brutus was a honourable man. He had demonstrated it in his speech, in which he assured the people of Rome that he had stabbed Caesar with a dagger for the sake of his fatherland. But the whining singsong of Mark Antony praising the Roman senator forebodes that the murderer himself is doomed to die. In the key scene of William Shakespeare’s drama “Julius Caesar“ premiered at Vienna Burgtheater on 14 March 2007, Michael Maertens delivered an superb performance as the future triumvir Mark Antony, who tries to gain control over the new power game with faked clumsiness. Later he can hardly believe it that Octavius (played by Moritz Vierboom) is becoming his new opponent. Congenial conspirators are Roland Koch as the upright idealist Brutus, to whom the political idea of freedom is more important than anything else, even the love to friends, and Ignaz Kirchner as the treacherous and dangerous Cassius. The performance of Peter Simonischek in the role of Julius Caesar is highly impressive despite the limitations of the role. The young

[www.staatsoper.at](http://www.staatsoper.at)

[www.stadttheater-klagenfurt.at](http://www.stadttheater-klagenfurt.at)  
Performances  
until 3 May 2007.

Shakespeare's  
"Julius Caesar" at  
Vienna's  
Burgtheater.  
Running until  
21 April 2007.  
Tickets:  
0043/1/513 1 513,  
[www.burgtheater.at](http://www.burgtheater.at)

German stage director Falk Richter produced the Roman drama based on the new translation of Helmut Krausser as a cool parable of power, in which nothing can stop the men in their fight for power. The drama unfolds rapidly and rationally, the gentlemen conspirers wear suits in the radically reduced stage set of Katrin Hoffmann. The only toga in the performance is worn by a TV announcer, who is projected as a video on countless canvasses and presents the "big story": "Caesar is dead! The people want revenge".

The first-night audience, among them former Speaker of the first chamber of Parliament Andreas Khol and former Chancellor Franz Vranitzky were impressed by the new Burgtheater production and applauded the actors, the stage designer, costume designer Martin Kraemer and the director loudly. ■

#### Commemorating the death of actor and Green politician Herbert Fux

The actor, former Green Member of Parliament and former City Councillor of the Salzburg Citizens' List, Herbert Fux, died on 13 March 2007 after having suffered from a severe condition. Fux born in Hallein (Salzburg) in 1927 attended the Actors' School at Mozarteum in Salzburg. The stage actor soon became a much sought-after film villain. In the 1970s he started to become politically active. The Salzburg Citizens' List co-founded by him won two seats in the Municipal Council elections in the City of Salzburg in 1977. At that time the main focus of this activities was the preservation of the historic city centre.

As a founding member of the United Greens of Austria, he became a Green Member of Parliament in 1986. In the late 1990s, Fux, who always defined himself as an "independent Green", broke with the Citizens' List as well as the Green Party at federal level.

In his tribute Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer stated: "Herbert Fux was an exceptional artist and politician. He consciously played the role of the villain, even in politics, moving to the centre stage at Parliament. His rightful and firm commitment to a wide range of citizens' concerns introduced a new quality into domestic politics. His demand that the needs of all people should be taken seriously is his most important legacy, which we as democrats should

always bear in mind". ■

#### MUMOK in Vienna: Yves Klein

The Vienna Museum of Modern Art (MUMOK) presents the first comprehensive retrospective of the oeuvre of Yves Klein in Austria, which is open to art lovers until 3 June 2007. Klein was one of Europe's most important avant-garde artists in the 1950s. The show dedicated to him was created in cooperation with the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Klein is considered the most important protagonist of monochrome painting. He became famous for his patented "International Klein Blue" – pure colour pigment as light as a feather and enriched with polyvinyl acetate. His body of work – created within only eight extremely productive years as he died aged only 34 – is highly diverse and goes far beyond painting and sculpture, encompassing performing and concept arts. Klein's artistic creation is based on the colour blue as the expression of supreme spirituality and mental energy. In his late artistic period he added the colours pink and gold to this spectrum. Klein's architectural works of water and fire walls and air roofs show structural parallels to the ideas of the representatives of Vienna Actionism and the ethereal architectural utopias around Hans Hollein.

The opening of the "Blue Revolution" – as the exhibition is titled – was attended inter alia by President Heinz Fischer and French Ambassador Pierre Viaux. ■

#### Linz Capital of Culture in 2009: Vilnius, Essen, Pécs as partners

"Linz will become the host of Europe". This is one of the slogans proclaimed by Linz – the European Capital of Culture 2009 – at the world's largest tourist fair, the ITB in Berlin. Besides Linz, Pécs und Essen, Capitals of Culture in 2010, presented themselves at this event. Vilnius, the Lithuanian capital and the partner city of Linz, was prevented from participating. Linz plans to turn the spotlight on culture, industry and nature. The Ars Electronica Center will broadcast live from 80 places in the world "in 80 days around the world". As an ambassador of the Capital of Culture, the singer and world musician Hubert von Goisern will

The Blue  
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[www.mumok.at](http://www.mumok.at)

start his boat tour on the Danube still this year. The German city Essen wants to form an alliance with 53 towns in the Ruhr area under the trademark “Ruhr 2010“, with the world cultural heritage Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex as the centre. The abandoned pits some kilometres below the surface will be the venue of the cultural project “The second city”. The Hungarian town Pécs will present itself in 2010 as the gateway to the Balkans, e.g. with a Balkan music festival, a concert hall and an exhibition about the Bauhaus architects from Pécs. Linz seeks to establish networks with these cities. ■

### Vienna pays homage to Leon Askin

Vienna gets a “Leon Askin Square“. The square near the last stop of the tram line 52 in Vienna’s district Penzing will be named after the actor and director deceased in 2005. Askin, born as Leon Aschkenasy in Vienna in 1907, studied at the Vienna Academy of Music and Performing Arts. He won international renown as a political cabaret artist in Vienna, Düsseldorf and Paris in the 1930s. In 1938 he fled Paris. In 1940 he moved to the USA, where he first became a successful theatre actor (production of Goethe’s “Faust“ on Broadway in 1949) and started his film career in Hollywood in 1952. In 1960 he played a role in the film “One, Two, Three“ directed by Billy Wilder and in 1972 he participated in “Hammersmith Is Out“, with Peter Ustinov as the film director. In 1994 he finally returned to his native city Vienna, where he impressed as a stage actor even in very old age. ■

### UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity in force since March 18<sup>th</sup>

Ratified by more than 30 countries in late December 2006, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions entered into force on 18 March 2007. On 25 March 2007 this event will be celebrated with a live music performance at Rote Bar at Vienna’s Volkstheater. Among the participants will be Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied and Volkstheater Director Michael Schottenberg.

“The core element of the Convention is the guarantee under international law that every

country has a right to an independent cultural policy“, stated Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik at the ratification in Paris in December. The signatory states expressed their wish to prevent culture from becoming a playground for liberal market mechanisms. In the Convention they agreed to curb the current process of cultural levelling. In the text cultural diversity is described as a factor crucial for pluralism and democracy as well as the identities of societies and individuals. Austrian author Marlene Streeruwitz considers the Convention “a reminder of the possibility of upholding self-determination“. The Convention is a binding instrument under international law, which the UNESCO members can use to defend their cultural policy in the negotiations with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) about the removal of trade barriers and the liberalisation of markets. The USA is afraid that the Convention could pose an obstacle to the international distribution of films and entertainment music. The Convention initiated by France and Canada was signed at the headquarters in Paris of the UN’s Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation on 20 October 2005. Out of a total of 150 countries, only the USA and Israel voted against it and four countries abstained. ■

### Theatre Museum: exhibition to mark Wessely’s 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

To mark the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Paula Wessely, the Vienna Theatre Museum presents an exhibition that is based on a “critical and objective” approach to the outstanding Austrian actress, who had become a model for generations with her film “Masquerade“. Her career suffered as a result of her participation in the NS propaganda film “Heimkehr“. Wessely’s estate had been given to the Theatre Museum as a loan already in 2005 and will be converted into a permanent donation in the future. ■

### Schubert: digital and free of charge

The Austrian National Library, the Vienna Library and various music institutions in Vienna plan to digitalise all autographs of Franz Schubert and to make them available free of charge on the Internet in the framework of the Schubert Online“ project. ■

“EU ratifies UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity“ was a headline in “News from Austria“, No. 1/2007.

In 1997 Leon Askin published his autobiography worth reading: “Der Mann mit den 99 Gesichtern“ (“The Man of 99 Faces“).

Vienna Theatre Museum: Paula Wessely. Until 30 September 2007 [www.theatremuseum.at](http://www.theatremuseum.at) The Film Archives Austria show a spectacular Wessely film retrospective to accompany the exhibition.

Out of 1,100 Schubert autographs, more than 500 scores, letters and diary entries can be accessed online on about 8,000 pages: [www.schubert-online.at](http://www.schubert-online.at)

## Beckenbauer at meeting of EU sports ministers in Stuttgart

In the framework of the German EU Council Presidency, the EU sports ministers gathered for an informal meeting in Stuttgart from 12 to 13 March 2007. German Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schäuble, who is also responsible for sport, was in the chair. Delegations and ministers from 26 EU Member States as well as Ján Figel, the EU Commissioner for education and training, culture and youth, also participated in the conference. The key subjects of this meeting were “sport & integration“, “anti-doping measures” as well as the “White Paper on Sport“ envisaged by the European Commission. As a special guest of the German EU Council Presidency, Franz Beckenbauer informed the EU sports ministers about his experience during the preparations and organisation of the 2006 Football World Cup. ■

## Secretary of State Lopatka: violence and sport are incompatible

In Stuttgart Austrian Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka took advantage of the occasion to discuss sports topics with his colleagues from Europe. A Europe-wide solution was necessary to solve the burning problem of increasing violence at sports events, demanded Lopatka. The Secretary of State for Sports also pled for court rulings banning hooligans from sports stadiums, for which the EU Member States were to lay down uniform requirements. Just like the German Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, he stressed the necessity of cross-border police action as well as greater involvement of the communities and fan projects: “We have to adopt a set of legal and social prevention measures against violence in sport that is uniform across Europe. Sport and violence are incompatible.“ ■

## Anti-doping action now at global level

"The common combat of the EU Member States against doping and racism has to be successful, otherwise the fundamental values of sport will be threatened", stressed Franz Beckenbauer at the meeting of EU sports ministers. The Council of

Ministers adopted the ratification of the UNESCO's International Convention Against Doping in Sport on 14 March 2007, which will now be submitted to the Austrian Parliament. By ratifying the Convention, Austria becomes part of the global initiative advocating doping-free sport. The resolution of the Council of Ministers reinforces Austria's anti-doping efforts. The basic principles of the World Anti-Doping Code issued by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) become binding under international law. Thus, the possibilities of preventing doping are enhanced and sanctions in case of violations are harmonised at international level. ■

## Salzburg's bid for Olympics: winter sports tradition praised

On 18 March 2007 the 13 members of the evaluation panel of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) concluded their examination of the three candidate cities for hosting the Olympic Winter Games 2014. The panel chaired by the Japanese Chiharu Igaya concluded the evaluation of Salzburg's bid after having appraised Sochi (Russia) and Pyeongchang (South Korea). The report of the evaluation panel, which is likely to be submitted on 4 June 2007, supports the IOC members in making a decision to select the host in Guatemala on 4 July 2007. Based on the IOC criteria, the general security level, environmental conditions, the so-called “legacy of the games“, as well as, in the case of Winter Games, the dramatic climate change play an increasingly important role. Igaya showed himself “impressed” by Salzburg, emphasised the “great winter sports tradition” and praised the strong support of the Austrian federal government. The Federal President, Federal Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor as well as a number of federal ministers had readily answered all the questions of the IOC evaluation panel. ■

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