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Government meeting in Linz

The government members of the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP) met for their first working meeting at the Ars Electronica Center in Linz on 2/3 March 2007. The top items on their agenda were growth, employment and the planned administrative reform. A consensus has been reached on the access of foreign skilled workers to the Austrian labour market. Qualified labour force from the new EU members may be employed if the demand cannot be met with domestic workers despite intensified qualification measures, stricter rules for accepting jobs proposed by the Public Employment Agency and higher mobility bonuses. For 2007 a maximum quota of 800 foreign skilled workers has been fixed for the metal-working industry. From 2008 onwards the demand will be identified annually. Gusenbauer stressed that Austrian workers should be given priority also in the future. The set of measures also provides for doubling apprenticeship places not linked to specific companies and a modified Blum bonus to promote training in technical-industrial jobs. In the context of university fees, a tutoring and mentoring model is envisaged. Students working for example as mentors for disadvantaged pupils will be exempted from paying fees. The government initiated the examination of the question if a legal action under international law can be brought against the Czech Republic after the recent incident in the NPP Temelin. Gusenbauer criticised Prague's reluctant information policy but pled for a matter-of-fact approach to the debate based on the Melk process. ■

Green light for biennial budget

On 1 March 2007 the federal government agreed on the biennial budget 2007/2008. Chancellor Gusenbauer praised the "record period" of just six weeks for drawing up the budget. Deficits of a maximum of 1.12% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for this year and of 0.88% for 2008 have been planned. Cost savings are to be achieved mainly by not filling vacancies after retirements of federal employees (90 million euro) and through the non-recurrent effects of cutting discretionary expenses and real estate sales (260 million euro). The savings potential is estimated at 620 and 640 million euro for 2007

and 2008, respectively. Additional expenses have been earmarked for schools (195 million euro), social affairs (445 million euro) as well as growth and employment (150 million euro). ■

Minimum income for pensioners and social assistance beneficiaries

The working group for the planned means-tested guaranteed minimum income became active on 26 February 2007. Together with experts, representatives of the federal government, the *Länder* and communities are to present a "model as solid as possible" by 26 June 2007, explained Minister for Social Affairs Erwin Buchinger to reporters in Vienna.

The guaranteed minimum income is to be realised in three steps. According to the Minister, the first one had already been achieved by the government by increasing minimum pensions to 726 euro per month as from 2007. The costs of 118 million euro will be borne exclusively by the Federal Republic. The second step consists in increasing social assistance benefits (currently about 100,000 recipients). The Federal Republic would make available an additional 80 million euro. At the same time, social assistance benefits should be harmonised at this level countrywide, with the *Länder* and communities contributing about 100 million euro. As from 1 January 2009 all social assistance beneficiaries should receive at least 726 euro per month. A guaranteed minimum income model for part-time workers is envisaged only in a third step. The complete system would cost about 650 million euro, said Buchinger. ■

Common climate strategy adopted

The federal government agreed on a common climate protection strategy. This was announced by Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer after the Council of Ministers on 21 February 2007. Minister of the Environment Josef Pröll and Minister for Infrastructure Werner Feymann were given a mandate to develop an overall climate protection strategy by 21 March 2007. A key element of the overall climate strategy was the planned Climate and Energy Fund, to which 500 million euro would be allocated. Its main objective were research investments, said Gusenbauer. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Thanks to the tailored measures of the government, the favourable growth trend results in a growing number of jobs. The overall employment potential is strengthened and the qualification of the domestic labour force is prioritised."

Minister for Social Affairs Buchinger: "The common action of the federal government and the *Länder* is a qualitative leap in the combat against poverty."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Investments in research also mean great opportunities for employment and the economy in Austria."

EU Fundamental Rights Agency inaugurated – Barroso in Vienna

The newly established EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) became active in Vienna on 1 March 2007. Among the participants in the inauguration ceremony at Palais Niederösterreich were Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik, EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso and Secretary-General of the Council of Europe Terry Davis. German Minister of Justice Brigitte Zypries represented the incumbent German EU Council Presidency. The new institution was praised in unison as a crucial step towards strengthening fundamental rights in the European Union. Gusenbauer said in his speech that it was a “signal“ of the EU “to the people”.

The new agency replaces the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC). Its objective is to monitor the observance of fundamental and human rights in the Union as well as to advise the Member States and the EU institutions in developing and implementing new EU legislation. The previous head of EUMC, Beate Winkler, was appointed interim director.

Before the ceremony Gusenbauer and Barroso met for talks. At a joint press conference they stressed their flexibility and willingness to find a consensus on a quota system governing access to Austrian universities of medicine. Due regard had to be paid to Austria’s position and the EU’s non-discrimination principle. Gusenbauer stated that he was convinced that a solution would be found that would satisfy the needs of Austria and comply with EU law.

They also discussed subjects for debate at the forthcoming EU Spring Summit (8/9 March 2007), such as climate protection and social affairs. Regarding climate protection, Gusenbauer pledged his “full support to the Commission” and emphasised Austria’s “pioneering role” in energy policy. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer in Budapest and Prague

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer continued his first official visits to Austria’s neighbours with trips to Hungary and the Czech Republic. Gusenbauer met with his Hungarian counterpart

Ferenc Gyurcsany in Budapest on 25 February 2007. European subjects, the EU Constitution, the Balkans as well as environmental issues were discussed. A Hungarian-Austrian government meeting will take place in Sopron at the end of this year. The unique character of these meetings that were exclusively held with Hungary were a proof of the excellent relations between the two neighbouring states, underscored Gusenbauer. Among their common concerns were the further approximation of the Western Balkans to the EU and intensified regional cooperation, e.g. in the field of environment and infrastructure. The Federal Chancellor also welcomed Hungary’s accession to the Schengen Treaty, which will take effect at the end of this year. The two countries would take advantage of the Haydn Year 2009 to demonstrate their common cultural background.

In Prague Gusenbauer held talks with Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolaneck and President Vaclav Klaus on 27 February 2007. The key issues discussed were the controversial Temelin nuclear power plant in southern Bohemia, bilateral and economic relations as well as the Czech EU Presidency scheduled for the first six months of 2009.

Temelin was one of very few controversial questions between the two countries, explained Gusenbauer and Topolaneck at a joint press conference. The Czech Republic and Austria were “good friends”, stressed Gusenbauer. The discussion about Temelin should therefore be conducted as objectively as possible. However, the fears of the Austrian population had to be taken seriously. The Melk Agreement of 2000 was a sound basis, in which also the setting up of a common parliamentary committee had been agreed on, said the Federal Chancellor. ■

Ban on cluster munitions

The federal government announced to take action against cluster munitions. A moratorium was declared by the Council of Ministers on 21 February 2007 prohibiting the federal army from using these weapons. Austria advocates a ban on cluster munitions also at international level and will stage a follow-up conference in Vienna in autumn to the international government conference on a worldwide ban on cluster munitions recently held in Oslo. ■

EU Commission President Barroso: “The central worth and dignity of each individual is one of Europe’s greatest gifts to the world.”

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: “The fears of the Austrian population about Temelin have to be taken seriously – the aim is not to live in conflict with the neighbours but to eliminate these fears.”

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: “We have succeeded in demonstrating the European Commission what consequences the elimination of the quota system at universities would have, both for the educational system and the supply with medical services in Austria.”

Austria advocates a worldwide ban on cluster munitions and anti-personal mines.

Trade balance almost in equilibrium

Austria's trade balance is practically in equilibrium. This is evidenced by the preliminary data of the Austrian Statistical Office (Statistik Austria) for 2006. Exports grew by 12.7% to 106.8 billion euro last year, while imports rose by 10.8% to 106,9 billion euro. Thus the trade balance recorded a deficit of 0.16 billion euro.

"Foreign trade was the growth engine of the domestic economy last year as well", President of the Economic Chamber Christoph Leitl explained the latest data. Including the export of services, Austria's export volume totalled about 150 billion euro. "Thus 60 out of 100 euro are earned outside our borders", said Leitl. In 2006 roughly 40,000 out of about 60,000 new jobs had been created as a result of our extraordinary export performance.

Minister for Economic Affairs Martin Bartenstein referred to the "most successful year of Austria's export sector". "The export threshold of 100 billion euro has clearly been surpassed. With an export share of at least 41% in the gross domestic product, we also overachieved our ambitious goal of reaching an export volume of 40% of the GDP", said Bartenstein. Every second job in Austria was already safeguarded by the export sector.

Austria recorded above-average increases in exports to all regions of the world: Africa (21.8%), America (16.3 %), Asia (14.4%), Europe (12.3%), EU-25 (11.7%), Eastern European countries (15.6 %), GIS-Europe (32.1%). The exports to Germany (12.9%) and Italy (13.2%), Austria's two most important trading partners in Europe, also grew significantly. An enormous plus of 15.5% was registered in exports to the USA, Austria's most important overseas trading partner. ■

Wifo increases Austria's mid-term economic growth forecast

The Austrian economy is expected to develop favourably, with the gross domestic product increasing by 2.5% annually in real terms between 2007 and 2011. Thus growth will not only exceed the level of the past five years (+1.7% p.a.) considerably but also surpass previous forecasts for this period (+2.1%). In the next years mid-term growth is expected to

accelerate in the euro-zone. Austria will grow slightly faster than the remaining euro-area.

The incipient recovery of the German economy will have repercussions on the entire euro-zone. The opportunities of expansion in the new EU Member States and candidate countries will provide additional growth stimuli, explained the experts of the Austrian Economic Research Institute (Wifo) on 27 February 2007. Domestic exporters are expected to reap above-average benefits from this development.

The economic boom will stimulate the investment activities of companies and give impetus to housing construction. According to Wifo, private consumption will grow only insignificantly. However, the increase in the number of jobs will boost the income available to private households.

The analysts informed that the dynamic growth would also lead to a significant expansion of employment but that the unemployment rate would decline only slightly due to the larger supply of domestic and foreign labour force. ■

Unemployment dropped by 11.2%

The favourable economic conditions and the mild weather (benefiting above all the building sector) have had favourable effects on the Austrian labour market. In February the number of jobless for the first time recorded a double-digit decline (- 11.2%). After the trend reversal in April 2006 the unemployment figures "declined sharply", stressed Minister for Economics and Labour Bartenstein on 1 March 2007 in his presentation of the latest labour market statistics at a joint press conference with Secretary of State Christine Marek and the head of the Public Employment Agency (AMS), Herbert Buchinger. The objective was full employment with an unemployment rate of 3.9% in 2010. At present, Austria recorded an unemployment rate of 4.4% (Eurostat).

In February the unemployment rate declined by 11.2% year-on-year or by 35,042 to 276,652 jobseekers. Taking into account the increase in persons participating in job training programmes by 2.2% to 60,219, a total of 336,871 persons were without job at the end of February, i.e. 33,763 less than one year ago. At the same time, employment grew by 1.9% or by almost 60,000 to 3,246,560 economically active persons. ■

Thanks to the export boom of domestic enterprises, 40,000 new jobs were created in 2006. 60 out of 100 euro are earned abroad.

Labour Minister Bartenstein: "With an unemployment rate of 4.4% Austria is just half a percentage point above the threshold to full employment".

Wifo: Austria's economy will grow strongly in the medium term.

Vienna: positioning itself more strongly and efficiently in the world

On 21 February 2007 Vienna's new international campaign was presented at Vienna's town hall in the presence of Mayor Michael Häupl, the City Administration, the Directorate of the Municipal Administration of Vienna as well as numerous representatives of the economy, tourism and administration. By joining forces, the Vienna Tourist Board, the Economic Chamber, the City of Vienna and the Vienna Business Agency want to intensify their efforts to promote the "Vienna" brand internationally. Häupl explained that the aim was to position Vienna as a city of culture, a stronghold of research and technology, a business and educational location. Vice-Mayor and City Councillor for Financial Affairs Renate Brauner emphasised Vienna's role as a hub in Europe. In the future, traditionally leading positions, e.g. in communications technology, biotechnology and the creative industries had to be strengthened. President of the Vienna Economic Chamber Brigitte Jank thanked the Mayor on behalf of the business community for his initiative of bundling international activities. Competition between cities was getting stiffer. Therefore the strengths of Vienna's economy had to be made more visible abroad. Direct support of the policy-makers was required especially in the export sector. In a first step the new alliance concentrated on five destinations, which – according to an analysis of Austrian universities – are promising new markets: Berlin, Bucharest, New York, Abu Dhabi / Dubai. Plans have been made to establish a partnership between the New York and Vienna stock exchanges. As far as tourism is concerned, Vienna wants to turn the spotlight on its world cultural heritage. With Berlin Vienna wishes to cooperate at expert level in the areas of security, events (European Football Championship 2008) and integration. While Vienna introduces New York to Austrian psychotherapy, it presents for example Jewish Vienna to Berlin.

Austria considers the new EU member Romania an emerging market. The image campaign in Bucharest focuses on traditional Vienna (art and culture) and Vienna as a business location (production sites in Vienna) to convince Romanian entrepreneurs to choose the city as the seat of their companies.

With its "creative industries" (architecture/media/IT), environmental technologies and its image as an internationally leading city of medicine, Vienna wants to market itself successfully in the Arab region (in Abu Dhabi and Dubai) and to establish new networks. ■

www.international.wien.at

Oscar-winner Eric Pleskow becomes honorary citizen of Vienna

President of the Vienna film festival "Viennale" Eric Pleskow (aged 82) received the certificate of honorary citizenship of the City of Vienna on 26 February 2007 from Vienna's Mayor Michael Häupl. City Councillor for Culture Andreas Mailath-Pokorny hailed Pleskow as one of the personalities covering the whole spectrum of the 20th and 21st centuries. The award was also a "thank you for having come back". Pleskow was born as Erich Pleskoff into a Jewish-Viennese merchant family in 1924. When he was 14 years old, he had to flee from the Nazi terror. After his engineering studies, he got involved with documentary film in the USA. As a member of the US military government he returned to Europe, where he was for example among those responsible for reopening the Bavaria-Studios. After serving as a film advisor for the War Department, he started to work for the US film company United Artists in 1951. He became its President in the 1970s, as the second European after Charles Chaplin. Under his aegis ten Oscar-winning films like Billy Wilder's "The Apartment", Milos Forman's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" and Woody Allen's "Annie Hall" were created. In 1978 he founded the production company Orion Pictures, which he headed until 1992. During this period Oscar-winning films like Forman's "Amadeus", Oliver Stone's "Platoon", Kevin Costner's "Dances With the Wolves" and Jonathan Demme's "Silence of the Lambs" were produced.

Today Pleskow lives with his wife in the US state Connecticut but returns to his native city Vienna several times a year. ■

Rudolf Leopold is officer of the Order "Les Arts et Lettres"

Rudolf Leopold, legendary collector of the works of Egon Schiele and Director of the Vienna Leopold Museum, was appointed "Officier"

André Previn's opera "A Streetcar Named Desire": www.theater-wien.at

(Officer) of the French Order "Les Arts et Lettres" "in recognition of his special merits". The insignia were presented to him by France's Ambassador to Austria, Pierre Viaux, at the French Embassy in Vienna on 28 February 2007. The distinction is bestowed on persons of French or other nationality for their merits in the arts or for their contributions to furthering arts and literature in France and throughout the world. The list of Austrian laureates includes Thomas Bernhard, Peter Handke, Robert Menasse and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. ■

Joseph Maria Olbrich exhibition at WAGNER:WERK in Vienna

From 27 March to 12 May 2007 the WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse presents an exhibition featuring Joseph Maria Olbrich (1867-1908), with the subtitle "Every epoch has its artist". The show focuses on two main works of the Austrian architect: Vienna Secession and the artists' colony Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt. Architecture models, exemplary sketches and drafts as well as historical photos of buildings and interior designs will illustrate Olbrich's importance in the context of European Art Nouveau movement (referred to as "Jugendstil" in the German-speaking area). Moreover, original pieces of furniture and objects of every day use from the collections of the Museum Künstlerkolonie Darmstadt, the Vienna University for Applied Arts as well as private owners will be displayed. These works of art were designed by the brilliant Olbrich in the short period of his artistic creation between 1897 and 1908. Olbrich did not only create icons of Art Nouveau, a style enamoured with ornament, like Vienna Secession and Ernst Ludwig House, but also designed the exhibition building in Darmstadt stripped of almost all ornament. This is the first time in several decades that his artistic and architectural ideas are in the limelight. The 140th anniversary of the birthday of Joseph Maria Olbrich will be celebrated on 22 December 2007. He died from leukaemia aged 40 in 1908. ■

André Previn's "A Streetcar Named Desire" at Theater an der Wien

The opera "A Streetcar Named Desire" by André Previn is still running until 9 March 2007 at

Theater an der Wien. The work created in 1998 is based on the acclaimed play of the same name by Tennessee Williams (1948). Elia Kazan's film version became legendary – with outstanding actors like Vivien Leigh and the young Marlon Brando. André Previn and his librettist Philip Littell have not copied the film adaptation. The key character of the opera drama is not the immigrant's son Stanley Kowalski, but the fading Southern state beauty Blanche DuBois. Previn had won an Oscar for the music in Billy Wilder's "Irma la Douce" in 1964. This opera composed by him is relatively traditional – attracting a larger audience – and incorporates late Romantic and jazz influences. The first-class singers also convince by their acting skills: Mary Mills (Stella Kowalski), Teddy Tahu Rhodes (her husband Stanley Kowalski), Simon O'Neill (Mitch) and Janice Watson (Blanche DuBois). Norwegian director Stein Winge created the shabby two-room flat with a dense atmosphere, where the three acts of the (operatic) drama take their course. ■

BA-CA Kunstforum in Vienna: "Eros in Modern Art"

The BA-CA Kunstforum in Vienna is the venue of the exhibition "Eros in Modern Art" (ending on 22 July 2007). As the director of Kunstforum, Ingrid Brugger explained, in some cases the show borders on sexuality, pornography and obscenity. More than 200 pieces of art from the late 19th century to the present are displayed, e.g. works by Klimt, Schiele, Picasso, Bacon, Lucian Freud and de Kooning. Representatives of other branches of art like comics or film are not excluded, e.g. Man Ray and Jean Cocteau. The most exciting works were obviously created by women (e.g. Valie Export, Cindy Sherman), who adopted a more differentiated approach to female eroticism than their male counterparts. ■

Great Japan show at Kunsthalle Krems

The exhibition "Japan. Meiji art from the Khalili Collection and Japonism from Van Gogh to Schiele" can be visited at Kunsthalle Krems (Lower Austria) until 3 June 2007. Unique Japanese works of art of the 19th century, of the Meiji epoch as well as masterpieces of the prime

WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse, Georg-Coch-Platz 2, 1018 Vienna, www.ottowagner.com, Tel.: +43/1/53453/33825

Catalogue: "Ideen von Olbrich", reprint of the 2nd edition 1904, Arnoldsche Art Publishers, ISBN 3-925369-15-5.

"Joseph Maria Olbrich", Secession Vienna, Mathildenhöhe Darmstadt, Ausstellungsarchitektur um 1900, Deutscher Kunstverlag, ISBN 3422066594

"Eros in Modern Art": www.ba-ca-kunstforum.at
A catalogue was published by Hatje-Cantz-Verlag.

Japan show at Kunsthalle Krems: www.kunsthalle.at

of colour woodblock printing, the so-called “Ukiyo-e”, from Hiroshige to Hokusai, are on show. Cooperation partners of the exhibition are the Van Gogh Museum Amsterdam and the Khalili Collection. Nasser David Khalili, who was born in Iran and now lives in England, attended the exhibition opening. The second part of the show offers an introduction to Japonism and presents the inter-relations between the Meiji art and Art Nouveau. It highlights Japan’s impact on early expressionism and the beginnings of modern art in Europe. ■

Innsbruck and Hall: dialogue of cultures at Tyrol Easter Festival

The Tyrol ’07 Easter Festival in Innsbruck, Hall and Rum is dedicated to the general theme “Leben. Nicht leben lassen” (which can be roughly translated as “Live your life. Do not make others live it for you“) from 22 March to Easter Sunday, 8 April 2007. The music, dance and film presentations focus on the two Americas as the “escapist destinations of our desires and hopes“, as the creator of the programme Gerhard Crepaz put it. The events span a wide spectrum, from the tranquil America of Nancarrow, Steve Reich, Feldman, Cage and the jazz-oriented Tristano to Bach’s High Mass, with its symbols of faith from the Middle Ages to the courteous elegance of his time (1.4.), the transfiguration of suffering into the beauty of liturgical music (5.4., Monteverdi, etc.), baroque music of the Jesuits in the “reducciones“ (mission settlements) (7./8.4.) as well as the dialogue of Christianity with the world in the era of globalisation (24/26.3, Market of the Possible). The basic idea of the festival is to make a contribution to overcoming fears and prejudices by mutual learning about cultures and religions, which have more common than separating features. Besides its cultural diversity, the festival stands out for the variety of artistic expression and the integration of traditions. This year it offers for the first time a “Market of the Possible“, with concrete examples of different, alternative lifestyles. ■

Vienna: summer concerts 2007 at Schubert church in Lichtental

Franz Schubert was born as the son of a teacher

in Lichtental (then belonging to the suburbs of Vienna, today situated in the ninth district of the city) in 1797. He was baptised in the parish church of Lichtental, where he later sang in the church choir, played the violin and organ. His first teacher was the choirmaster of Lichtental, Michael Holzer. Before 1816 he wrote 17 pieces of church music, including four masses, for this church. At the 100th anniversary ceremony of the church in 1814 Schubert conducted his first great mass (F Major), which became his first great public success. The church restored in the Schubert Year 1997 and still echoing the spirit of the composer is the venue of a series of concerts in summer (26 June to 28 August 2007) – with first-rate chamber musicians, piano soloists such as Gerda Struhal (10.7.), Norman Shetler (7.8.) or Richard Fuller (21.8.), and excellent singers like Wiener Schubertbund (26.6.) and Wiener Vokalisten (4.9.). This enchanting and rare highlight is highly recommendable to all friends of Franz Schubert. ■

Caricature museum Krems: Donald Duck. The work of Carl Barks.

“Donald Duck ... and the duck became human“ is the title of the exhibition about the drawings and poetic work of Carl Barks at the Caricature Museum Krems (Lower Austria) from 25 March to 4 November 2007. Barks, who is one of the most eminent American artists of the 20th century, was a leading cartoonist of Walt Disney. He made Donald Duck a highly popular character and created duckdom with his unique style and original stories. He is considered the inventor of Uncle Scrooge, the Beagle Boys, Gladstone Gander and Gyro Gearloose and other inhabitants of duckdom. His creative work had a lasting influence on artists like Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, Robert Crumb and Manfred Deix. Film directors such as Steven Spielberg and George Lucas also expressed their admiration for Barks.

The about 250 works displayed in Krems are loans from international private collections. They include rare original pages of comic books, personal letters as well as the desk of the artist. The exhibition was conceived exclusively for the Caricature Museum Krems by Gottfried Helnwein. This is the first time that Barks’s body of work is presented in Austria. ■

Highly recommendable to all Schubert fans: www.schubertkirche.at

Comprehensive Tyrol Easter Festival Programme: www.osterfestival.at

Donald Duck: The work of Carl Barks. From 25 March to 4 November 2007: www.karikaturmuseum.at

EURO 2008 key subject of Sports Committee in Parliament

EURO 2008 is the largest sports event in the history of Austria. Therefore the government has earmarked the necessary funds for security measures, infrastructure investments as well as national and international marketing campaigns in the biennial budget 2007/2008. The European Football Championship was also the central subject discussed in the first session of the Parliamentary Sports Committee in the new legislative term. The preparations are underway. The security concept has been developed jointly with Switzerland. The largest share in the investments of the federal government goes to the construction of stadiums. The adaptation of the stadiums for other purposes after the championship will be decided by the owners. In Salzburg and Klagenfurt the decision-makers consider to use the stadiums as multi-functional halls in the long run. The Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT) coordinates the preparations in the area of transport with Switzerland and the host cities. Combined tickets based on the Swiss model are regarded as decisive measures in this context. ■

Large sports events create jobs and stimulate the economy

In Austria every tenth job (more than 355,000 jobs in total) is linked directly or indirectly to sport. Sport safeguards jobs by triggering a value-added of more than 7%. Moreover, the latest data of the “SportsEconAustria“ Institute demonstrate the significance of large-scale sports events for the Austrian economy. Hence, in Austria EURO 2008 is expected to create about 6,000 all-year jobs, increase hotel nights by almost one million people and produce value-added effects of 321 million euro. It will also make a lasting impact on infrastructure, transport and tourism. The Olympic Games and the Paralympic Winter Games in Salzburg in 2014 are likely to lead to value-added effects of one billion euro between the planning stage and the end of the Winter Games. At least 10,000 all-year jobs will be created directly. The estimated number of indirectly created jobs is 3,500. The economic relevance of sport will be promoted by the Secretariat of State for Sport also at

European level, e.g. at the meeting of EU sports ministers in Stuttgart on 12/13 March 2007. ■

Combat against children’s alarming lack of exercise

The 1st Austrian Adipositas Report 2006 showed that every fourth child is overweight or even obese – diabetes and bad posture are the consequences. An important measure against this negative development has been taken by SPORTUNION by launching UGOTCHI. This health-promotion project focuses on exercise and healthy diets. On 19 March 2007 the go ahead will be given in more than 700 school classes and 100 schools throughout Austria. The aim is to educate children in a playful way to ensure that they will adopt lifelong lifestyles integrating exercise and healthy nutrition. UGOTCHI, the pilot project conducted by SPORTUNION, is financed under the special federal sports promotion scheme. It is based on the criteria defined in the government programme providing for the “promotion of cooperation models between schools and sports associations” as well as “educational measures in the field of nutrition and health”. ■

For more information see: www.ugotchi.at.

ÖSV young eagles fly in Sapporo

The “young eagles” of the Austrian Ski Federation (ÖSV) Wolfgang Loitzl, Gregor Schlierenzauer, Andreas Kofler and Thomas Morgenstern won gold in the ski jumping large hill team competition at the Nordic Ski World Championship in Sapporo (Japan). Thomas Morgenstern earning bronze in the normal ski jump event was responsible for Austria’s first individual medal at a championship since 2001, when Martin Höllwart also won bronze in the normal ski jump competition. The ÖSV Combiners, strong as a team, only scored two fourth and fifth ranks. The ÖSV is ranked eighth in the “eternal” table of medals with a total of 51 medals (13 x gold, 14 x silver and 24 x bronze). ■

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 Dispatch: Division I/5, Ms. Irene Bucher, tel. ++43/1/53115-2958, fax ++43/1/53115-2880, e-mail: irene.bucher@bka.gv.at.
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