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Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "The Berlin Declaration covers the key perspectives of the European project. It pays tribute to the integration achieved, highlights the advantages of Europe and also addresses the Union's future development."

The jubilee show "Treaties for a common Europe" can be visited at the Federal Chancellery until 13 April 2007. Open from Monday to Friday. Guided visits at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. as well as for groups with advance bookings. For details see: www.zukunfteuropa.gv.at

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Austria expects the European Football Championship to contribute a value-added of almost 350 million euros and a GDP growth of about 0.15%. The expenditure is therefore an investment in the future."

For detailed information on the new transport projects see: www.bmf.gv.at www.bmvit.gv.at www.oebb.at www.asfinag.at

Chancellor Gusenbauer: Berlin Declaration is a "milestone" for EU

At the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome establishing inter alia the European Economic Community on 25 March, the 27 EU heads of state and government adopted the "Berlin Declaration" highlighting the common roots, values and future challenges. Austria was represented by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer.

The Declaration was signed by German Chancellor and incumbent EU Council President Angela Merkel, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso and President of the European Parliament Hans-Gert Pöttering. It obligates the Member States to realise the institutional reform of the EU by 2009.

The Berlin Declaration gives priority to the individual, stating that "His/her dignity is inviolable". The EU's history from its foundation on 25 March 1957 to the present day is praised as a successful model. Peace and freedom, the European model of society, solidarity and equal rights, the common market and the euro are among the main achievements enumerated. According to the common statement, globalisation, the combat against international terrorism, against racism and xenophobia as well as climate protection are challenges of the future. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer described the past 50 years as a "huge success story" despite all setbacks. In view of the next enlargement round to include the Western Balkans in about ten years it was not only crucial to ensure the Union's capacity to act but also to realise that Europe had to become more social, fairer and closer to the citizen, said Gusenbauer. In this process the special summit in Berlin marked an "important milestone". As a country having ratified the European Constitution in Parliament, Austria was "very keen" that the Constitution Treaty would be adopted without major amendments. Due to the normative power of the factual it would make a decisive contribution to enhance democracy at European level, e.g. by strengthening the rights of the European Parliament, clearly defining fundamental rights, laying down key social objectives and boosting the Union's capacity to act, said Gusenbauer.

On 25 March 2007 Vienna celebrated the EU anniversary with music, exhibitions and a

"Europe rally" through the embassies of the EU Member States. The Federal Chancellery and the Foreign Ministry opened their doors to the public. The special exhibition "Treaties for a common Europe" with historical documents of the European unification process can be visited at the Federal Chancellery until 13 April 2007. ■

Gusenbauer: "Euro 2008" great chance for Austria and Switzerland

Federal Chancellor and Minister of Sport Alfred Gusenbauer met with Swiss Federal Councillor and Minister for Defence and Sport Samuel Schmid in Vienna on 23 March 2007. The top item on the agenda was the European Football Championship 2008 ("Euro 2008").

In a joint press conference Gusenbauer and Schmid stated in unison that the preparations for the "Euro 2008" were progressing extremely well and according to schedule. Both sides praised the cooperation with the respective partner country in the areas of security, transport, marketing, tourism and sustainability. The Austrian Chancellor stressed the importance of the European Football Championship for society and stated that it would become a "big party" for all. Accompanying events in the sphere of sport, art, culture and education were to create a good atmosphere.

"As the third largest sports event in the world, the European Football Championship offers great opportunities for the national economy. In Austria we expect value-added effects of about 350 million euros", emphasised Gusenbauer. ■

41 billion euros for rail and road

The new infrastructure programme of the federal government entails record investments. 11 billion euros will be allocated to construction and extension work of rail and road by 2010; this is 500 million euros above the level projected in the government programme. An additional 30 billion euros will be invested in the period to 2020. Among the top priorities are the Koralm tunnel between Graz and Klagenfurt to be completed by 2018, Vienna's central railway station (to be completed by 2013) and the S1 north east bypass, the so-called "Lobau motorway" (2018). ■

Federal President Fischer pays state visit to South Korea

President Heinz Fischer pays a state visit of several days to South Korea (1 to 4 April 2007). This is the first time an Austrian head of state officially visits this country. He is accompanied by his wife Margit as well as a large delegation of members of government and of parliament, business people and scientists, including Minister of the Environment Josef Pröll, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied, Minister of Science Johannes Hahn, President of the Economic Chamber Austria Christoph Leitl and President of the Austrian Academy of Sciences Peter Schuster. Fischer holds talks with South Korean President Moo Hyun and Speaker of the National Assembly Lim Chae Jung in the capital Seoul.

The aim of the visit is to intensify bilateral relations at political, economic and scientific level. After China and Japan, South Korea is Austria's most important export market in Asia. The two states plan to boost cooperation in research and between universities. Other subjects discussed are the relationship between South Korea and the EU as well as the situation on the Korean peninsula. Fischer also visited the demilitarised zone near Panmunjom along the demarcation line with the Communist North Korea. Austria's long-term contribution to détente has been acknowledged by both states. ■

Chancellor Gusenbauer meets with EU Commission President Barroso

On 4 April 2007 Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer met with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso in Brussels to discuss prioritised EU subjects like the climate and energy policy, economic reforms (catchphrase: Lisbon strategy) as well as the future of Europe.

In a working meeting with Barroso on 26 March 2007, Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance Wilhelm Molterer called for a debate about the urgently required internal funding of the EU. ■

Ursula Plassnik at meeting of EU foreign ministers in Bremen

Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik participated in an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Bremen on 30/31 March 2007. The EU Member

States agreed to intensify their Middle East peace efforts. Their plans include contacts to independent members of the Palestinian national unity government, who are not members of the radical Islamic Hamas. Plassnik underlined that the community of nations upheld its demands for the renunciation of violence and the recognition of Israel. Independent Palestinian Foreign Minister Ziad Abu Amr pays a visit to Austria on 4 April 2007.

The EU Member States jointly back the plan of UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari regarding the independence of the south Serbian province Kosovo subject to international surveillance. ■

Czech Foreign Minister Karl Schwarzenberg in Vienna

After talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik in Vienna on 26 March 2007, Czech Foreign Minister Karl Schwarzenberg announced with regard to the controversial south Bohemian nuclear power plant (NPP) Temelin that a record of all incidents and measures taken would be made available.

In connection with the planned US missile-defence system in Eastern Europe, Schwarzenberg assured that this would not lead to a division of Europe. ■

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Austria signed the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York on 30 March 2007, which makes the observance of these rights binding under international law. ■

Bosnian Foreign Minister Alaklaj holds talks with Minister Plassnik

During his stay in Vienna on 23 March 2007 Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Sven Alaklaj stated that he was confident that his country would be able to sign the stabilisation and association agreement previously negotiated with the EU already in July. Alaklaj informed that his country would fully cooperate with the UN War Crimes Tribunal and implement a police reform. Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik also hoped that by year-end all Balkan States would be linked with the EU by agreements. ■

Foreign Minister Plassnik: "Austria expects full transparency and clarity with regard to Temelin."

Foreign Minister Plassnik: "It is my personal goal that the EU should establish contractual relations with all states of the Western Balkans by the end of 2007. Therefore, Bosnia must not lose time on its path towards European integration."

Government adopts biennial budget 2007/2008

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Our approach is social, future-oriented and sustainable. Since a budget is social policy expressed in figures, it can be seen that 100% of the priorities in the government programme were realised in this budget."

Minister of Finance Molterer: "This budget is fit for the generations, fit for the future, and in all respects fit for Europe."

"Austria is among the leading countries in Europe as far as employment and growth are concerned."

For detailed information on the biennial budget 2007/2008 and on the budget statement see: www.bmf.gv.at

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "The planned fusion of voestalpine and Böhler-Uddeholm is a very welcomed event. Thus the industrial steel competence is retained and bundled in Austria."

On 28 March 2007 the federal government adopted the biennial budget for 2007 and 2008 in the Council of Ministers. This year a public-sector deficit (Federal Republic, Länder, communities, social insurance) of 0.91% of the gross domestic product (GDP) will be registered, which is considerably below the estimated level of 1.12% in the government programme. In 2008 the deficit is expected to be 0.73% below projections. With a revenue of 65.7 billion euros and an expenditure of 69.6 billion euros, the Federal Republic will account for a deficit of 1.3% of the GDP (3.9 billion euros). In 2008 the revenue and expenditure will increase slightly (to 66.9 and 69.9 billion euros, respectively). The deficit drops to 1.2% (3 billion euros).

Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer explained that this was a "very modern and future-oriented budget" used to fully implement the government programme. "It is our aim to invest in the future of our country, while remaining committed to the consolidation policy", he said. The favourable economic trend would be taken advantage of to continue the consolidation of public households, reduce unemployment "drastically" and to boost economic growth. Sustainability is the key goal of all planned investments. According to Gusenbauer, the investments would mainly go to education, research and development, climate protection, labour market, social affairs and health as well as security and infrastructure.

Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance Wilhelm Molterer stated that the government debt should decrease from currently 62.2% of the GDP to 59.9% by 2008. This means that for the first time since 1993 a level below the EU limit of 60% would be reached. Molterer emphasised that thanks to the 3% growth and decreasing unemployment Austria's position was "excellent" compared to other European states. The dynamic growth had favourable effects on unemployment (about 4.2% in 2007 and 4.1% in 2008). The tax reform would be realised only upon achieving a zero-deficit in 2010.

In his first budget statement to Parliament on 29 March 2007 Molterer underscored that the budgets focused on the future. The necessary cost savings would be achieved mainly through the administrative reform. ■

Wifo/IHS forecast: boom in Austria continues

Austria's economy is in high gear, and last year's favourable trend is continuing in 2007. On 27 March 2007, the Economic Research Institute (Wifo) and the Institute of Advanced Studies (IHS) raised once more their growth forecasts. After an economic growth of 3.2% in 2006, Wifo expects a GDP growth of 3.0% in real terms for 2007, compared with its earlier estimate of 2.7%. The IHS forecasts 2.9% (previously 2.6%). For 2008 Wifo and the IHS predict a growth of 2.4 and 2.6%, respectively.

According to Wifo, the number of dependent employees will grow significantly by 56,000 or 1.8% compared to last year (IHS: + 1.5%). Based on Eurostat, the unemployment rate will drop to 4.2% in 2007 and 4.1% in 2008 (IHS: 4.5% and 4.4%, respectively). ■

Mega deal: voestalpine plans to take over Böhler-Uddeholm

Austria is on the eve of the largest deal in its industrial history. The Linz-based steel group voestalpine plans to acquire a majority holding of the domestic specialty steel giant Böhler-Uddeholm. An agreement has already been reached with the Fries group, Böhler's main shareholder (almost 21%). This was announced by the two listed companies on 29 March 2007.

To this end, voest has to buy at least 50% of Böhler plus one share (simple majority). Böhler-Uddeholm is worth about 3.5 billion euros on the stock exchange. voest is now submitting a take-over offer of 69 euros per share to the remaining Böhler shareholders. The total cost of the acquisition would be at least 1.8 billion euros.

Böhler-Uddeholm is to be turned into the voestalpine group's fifth division. Böhler chief Claus Raidl would change to the voestalpine Managing Board. Voest CEO Wolfgang Eder predicts synergies from the take-over (to be completed by 20 May 2007) of about 65 million euros annually and sales of approx. 10 billion euros. The aim of the envisaged alliance was to become a "premium supplier of steel products in the top quality segment" and the global market leader in important market niches. The new mega group would have almost 40,000 employees around the globe. ■

EU anniversary in Rome with Egon Schiele masterpiece from Austria

The Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) were signed in the Capitol on 25 March 1957 by Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg. They entered into force on 1 January 1958. The Treaties of Rome are considered the foundation stone of the present-day European Union.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome, the large-scale exhibition “Masterpieces of European Art” was opened in the sumptuous “Salone dei Corazzieri” in the Quirinal Palace on 23 March 2007 by Italian President Giorgio Napolitano. The show (ending on 20 May 2007) has been conceived as a historical and cultural tour through Europe. The oldest exhibit is a sculpture from Malta dating back to the 3rd millennium before Christ, while the most recent work, a painting by the Dane Per Kirkeby, was created in 1976. Each of the 27 Member States of the European Union contributed a work of art to the exhibition at the seat of the Italian government in Rome. Austria is represented with Egon Schiele’s “Reclining Woman“, a loan from the collection of the Leopold Museum in Vienna. ■

Rome: “Ver Sacrum” journal of Secession in Angelica Library

An exhibition covering the complete series of journals of the “Secession” art movement “Ver Sacrum“ is shown in the Angelica Library near Piazza Navona in Rome. It was organised by the Italian-Austrian Association and can be visited up to 28 April 2007. The 120 issues of the art magazine were published between January 1898 and the end of December 1903. Artists like Gustav Klimt, Kolo Moser, Alfred Roller and Anton Hanak, the architects Otto Wagner and Adolf Loos, the writers Rainer Maria Rilke, Ricarda Huch and Hermann Bahr participated in “Ver Sacrum”. Presenting a mix of art theory and practical examples as well as contributions of Austrian and foreign authors and poets, Austria’s most important mouthpiece of Art Nouveau (referred to as “Jugendstil” in the German-speaking area) had a major impact on artistic

creation around 1900. The protagonists of the “Vienna Secession” movement were responsible for the artistic layout, who often presented original prints. Numerous issues had the character of monographs, introducing a larger audience to the work of individual artists shaping the development of modern art. ■

Nobel Prize laureate Jelinek commemorates Politkovskaya

Organised by the German Peter Weiss Foundation and supported by Journalists without Borders, Goethe institutes and the PEN Club, several events in memoriam of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who had been killed in 2006, were held in many countries of the world on 20 March 2007. Austrian Nobel Prize laureate in literature Elfriede Jelinek read Politkovskaya’s text “Machkety. A Concentration Camp with a Commercial Streak“ on Deutschlandradio. In Austria inter alia Radio Helsinki (Graz), FRO (Linz) and Freirad (Innsbruck) participated in the worldwide reading. ■

Monika Fioreschy at “European Cultural Month” in Sharjah

To mark the 50th anniversary of the EU, the United Arab Emirates stage the “European Cultural Month 2007“, which will end on April 30th. Each branch of art – visual arts, filmmaking, music and literature – is represented by one European artist. The participants were invited to exhibit their works at the Cultural Palace of the Arab cultural capital Sharjah.

In visual arts Austrian artist Monika Fioreschy was selected, whose exhibition “Weaving the Self“ ushered in the European Cultural Month. The woman from Salzburg was preferred over her numerous competitors thanks to her highly individual interpretation of the art of weaving, for which she also uses novel materials. Her images woven from silicon tubes, which made her famous in Europe, also met with great interest by the Arab audience, whose love for the arts had also become manifest at the recent Gulf Art Fair. Fioreschy’s works can be found in leading art collections, e.g. the Guggenheim Museum in New York, which plans to establish a branch in Abu Dhabi. ■

European Cultural Month 2007 in the United Arab Emirates: exhibition with Monika Fioreschy in Sharjah until 21 April 2007. See also: www.fioreschy.com

"Garden Pleasures – The Garden in Art" at Belvedere in Vienna

The orangery of Lower Belvedere, the parterre garden surrounding it and the Augarten Studio will be the venues of the spectacular show "Garden Pleasures – The Garden in Art" until 24 June 2007. It is the first project of the new director of Belvedere Gallery, Agnes Husslein-Arco. This pure and beautiful opening exhibition traces the history of the search for a unity between art and nature. It gives insight into the fascinating world of Medieval garden symbols, shows Baroque palace gardens, presents gardens of the Biedermeier era and illustrates the perspective of the impressionists. The exhibition displays garden-inspired masterpieces of the turn of 20th century and classical modernism, e.g. by Edvard Munch, August Macke or Emil Nolde. Moreover, it illustrates the position of contemporary artists, such as Ian Hamilton Finlay, Mark Dion and Candida Höfer. At the opening ceremony on 21 March 2007 all visitors – above all Federal President Heinz Fischer – were enthused about the blooming worlds of fantasy. ■

"Biedermeier" exhibition at Vienna's Liechtenstein Museum

The exquisite exhibition "Biedermeier – The Invention of Simplicity" focusing on the early period of the style from about 1800 to 1830 can still be visited at Vienna's Albertina until 13 May 2007. The period after 1815 may be explored at the Liechtenstein Museum in the exhibition "Biedermeier in the House of Liechtenstein. The epoch in the light of the Princely Collections" (until 20 August 2007). More than 200 objects presented in the library and the ladies' apartments of the Liechtenstein Garden Palace give an overview of one of the most fruitful periods in the Austrian history of art. The multi-faceted Biedermeier style can be documented with objects of supreme quality from the collections of the Hereditary Prince of Liechtenstein, ranging from monumental paintings to modest miniatures or portrait sketches, from furniture to china, e.g. the famous Bloch-Bauer porcelain collection. Among the highlights of the temporary exhibition are the masterpieces by Heinrich von Füger, Friedrich

von Amerling, Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller, Thomas Ender and Franz Xaver Petter. Special mention should be made of the Raiffeisen Zentralbank's collection of water colour paintings by the Alt family. This will be the first time that the complete collection will be showcased (at the Library as from 29 June 2007). Almost all of these unique works by Jakob Alt (1789-1872), Rudolf von Alt (1812-1905) and Franz Alt (1821-1914) come from the Collection of Carl von Roth and were bought by the bank in 1999. ■

Jewish Museum Vienna presents "Oskar Strnad 1879-1935"

Oskar Strnad was one of the most brilliant architects, stage designers and theoreticians of the early 20th century. Together with Josef Frank, he founded the "Vienna School" of architecture, which distanced itself from the aestheticism of Vienna Werkstätte and was close to Adolf Loos in its basic approach free from dogmatism. As almost all Loos disciples, the founders and early members of the "Vienna School" came from a Jewish liberal middle-class background. Strnad's main focus was housing. His aim was to "shape without rigid shapes" and to create "no dungeons but open worlds". He realised for example the villa of the writer Jakob Wassermann presented in the exhibition, a semi-detached building in Vienna's Werkbundsiedlung and several flats in social housing complexes. Besides water colours and ceramic objects, also furniture created by Strnad (e.g. for Hugo von Hofmannsthal) and a drinking glass series made from mousellin glass can be admired.

In 1909 Strnad led the architecture class at the Kunstgewerbeschule (arts and crafts college). The drawings, photos and publications exhibited are a tribute to his pedagogical work as well as to his disciples and assistants, who passed into oblivion after their emigration. Typescripts, books and magazines introduce to Strnad's theoretical work.

Another important section of the exhibition is devoted to Strnad's theatre, stage and film designs. It shows the plans for a "simultaneous theatre" with three stages, the Leopoldskron Palace Theatre, a theatre tent for New York as well as plans and a model of a theatre with a circular stage designed with Max Reinhardt,

"Garden Pleasures – The Garden in Art", on show until 24 June 2007 at Belvedere Orangery, Rennweg 6, 1030 Vienna, and Augarten Studio, Scherzergasse 1a, 1020 Vienna.
www.belvedere.at
www.bundesgaerten.at

Jewish Museum Vienna: "Oskar Strnad 1879-1935", up to 24 June 2007.
1010 Vienna, Dorotheergasse 11th catalogue, edited by Evi Fuks and Iris Meder, Verlag Anton Pustet, Salzburg. ISBN 978-3-7025-0553-0.
www.jmw.at

Biedermeier show from the Vienna Liechtenstein Museum's own collections. Comprehensive accompanying programme: lectures, concerts, workshops, guided visits.
On 5 and 6 May 2007 flower party in the Garden Palace. Richly illustrated catalogue available in the museum shop.
www.liechtensteinmuseum.at

a theatre and cinema for the Ortmann-Pernitz workers' colony and a model of the Royaards Theatre in Amsterdam. Strnad excelled also as a stage designer, creating the sets for the spectacular premiers of Ernst Křenek's "Jonny spielt auf" ("Jonny Strikes Up the Band") and Alban Berg's "Wozzeck" in Vienna. Moreover, he was credited for the sets of "Masquerade" and "Episode", two famous films starring Paula Wessely.

The first comprehensive exhibition on this outstanding artistic creator is held at the Jewish Museum Vienna until 24 June 2007. ■

Alte Schmiede brings fascinating Czech literature to Vienna

Readings of a dozen of Czech writers in German language – titled "NAHE ZU UNVERTRAUT" ("Almost Unfamiliar") – are staged at Alte Schmiede in Vienna (until the end of May). This cultural event taking place in the presence of the authors was organised by the Czech Centre Vienna, the Department of Slavic Studies at Vienna University and Alte Schmiede, which had already turned the spotlight on contemporary Czech literature in 1996 and 1997. While some decades ago numerous Czech authors (e.g. Bohumil Hrabal, Milan Kundera or Libuše Moníková) became famous for fiercely opposing the totalitarian state with subversion and anarchical craftiness, the twelve authors of the middle and younger generation are expected to describe how they see the situation after the collapse of the Communist regime and what effects the new market economy has on human behaviour. Gertrude Zand of the Department of Slavic Studies stated in an interview with the daily "Presse" that the Czech authors were "more uninhibited, more fond of experimenting – more fearless". They were not afraid of addressing taboos. Miloš Urban, who became famous for his horror novels based in Prague (published by Rowohlt in German), addresses environmental destruction in northern Bohemia in his novel "Hastrman" not yet translated. Anna Zonová born in Slovakia describes the situation in the Sudeten region in the last decades after the displacement of the Sudeten Germans in her novel "Za trest a za odmenu" (the German translation "Zur Strafe und als Belohnung" was published by Wieser Verlag in 2004). ■

Freud Museum: On the Couch – Cartoons from the New Yorker

Sigmund Freud made several scientific analyses of the joke. His book "Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious" was published in 1905. The Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna now shows – fully consciously – psychoanalysis-related cartoons from "The New Yorker" magazine. Curator Michael Freund selected 80 drawings. In 1928 the first of countless caricatures of psychoanalysis appeared in the influential magazine.

The complete exhibition initiated in 2006 with the support of the Art Department of the then Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is shown for the first time in Austria. The exhibition was previously displayed at the Museum of the City of New York, the Freud Museum London, the Dream Museum in St. Petersburg and the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague. ■

Innsbruck Festival 2007

Friends of Early Music will take delight in the festival in Innsbruck (Tyrol) under the artistic leadership of René Jacobs from 3 July to 26 August 2007. The highlights of this year are Georg Philipp Telemann's opera "The Patience of Socrates" and his Passion oratorio "Jesus suffering and dying for the sins of the world". Another outstanding work performed is Georg Friedrich Händel's opera "Acis and Galatea", an English masque about jealousy in the realm of shepherds and nymphs. The concert programme reflects the quest of the Germans in Baroque for their own musical identity and their ambivalent attitude to the Italian or French national styles. This will be illustrated in many concerts, e.g. by Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin or the Trio Hantaï. ■

Austria celebrates anniversary of Southern Railway

The Austrian State Archives (ÖSTA) coordinate four exhibitions devoted to the theme "150 years of the Southern Railway" and contribute exhibits. Visitors may admire carefully restored locomotives, an ambulance car as well as Austria's oldest steam locomotive of a fast train. ■

Paula Wessely exhibition at Vienna Theatre Museum, running through 30 September 2007.

www.theatermuseum.at

Wessely film retrospective: www.filmarchiv.at

www.freudmuseum.at

www.alte-schmiede.at

www.altemusik.at

Exhibition about Southern Railway in Strasshof, Müzzzuschlag, Lieboch, Reichenau:

www.suedbahn.at
www.eisenbahnmuseum-heizhaus.com

Budget: more money for sport

The federal government continues its successful sports policy with the biennial budget 2007/2008. In 2004 the Federal Sports Promotion Act had been adopted, allocating 3% of the sales revenue of the Austrian Lotteries (Österreichische Lotterien) to the budget of the federal sports promotion scheme. This has not only helped to improve the financial situation of sport in Austria but also made it easier to plan ahead. Based on the result of the Lotteries for 2006, more than 60 million euros go to the federal sports promotion scheme, which is almost 6 million more than in 2006. Hence, the associations responsible for the individual sports disciplines will be provided with about 3 million euros more for project sponsoring than in the previous year. This allows them to plan on a sound basis and make long-term investments in sports and exercise programmes. The federal government also increased its financial commitment to large-scale sports events. In the 2007/2008 budget 15 million euros per year have been earmarked for the European Football Championship 2008. In addition, Salzburg's application as a host of the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games 2014 is supported with 1.6 million euros. The budget also reflects the fact that priority is given to the promotion of top-level sport. While only 0.7 million euros had been made available to Top Sport in 2000, the amount climbed to 2.7 million euros in 2006. For 2007 and 2008 the government raised the budget once more, investing 3.5 million in 2007 and 4.7 million euros in 2008 to promote top-level sport. ■

"Bridge to success 08"

In Austria young talents and top-level athletes do not only receive federal government support. Österreichische Sporthilfe is another key pillar. Its new campaign "Bridge to success 08" aims at raising one million euros for support measures in the "super sports year 2008" (European Football Championship and Olympic Summer Games in Beijing). Sporthilfe is not only sponsored by the business community but also engages in "fund-raising" in the population by selling "good luck bracelets". The programme "Bridge to success 08" is to build a bridge from the Summer Olympics in Athens in 2004 – the most

rewarding Games in the history of the Second Republic – to an even greater number of medals in Beijing in 2008. Besides, Sporthilfe also grants support to successful athletes in developing a "second career". ■

Anti-doping: "Transparent Athletes"

The pilot project "Transparent Athletes" of the Lower Austrian cycling association "Rad Union" has been developed together with the Institute for Medical and Sports-Scientific Consultancy (IMSB) in Südstadt. The Austrian-wide unique campaign adds another dimension to the combat against doping. The entire U23 cycling team will be turned into "transparent athletes" throughout the cycling season. With the IMSB's sports-scientific and sports-medical support the performance of the cyclists will be made transparent. The Austrian federal government demonstrated its commitment to anti-doping action by ratifying the UNESCO Anti-Doping Convention and taking several other measures. The political players ensure that the necessary legislation is passed and allocate 600,000 euros annually to the ÖADC for anti-doping efforts. ■

Gymnaestrada – Austria's largest sports event

The World Gymnaestrada in Dornbirn (Vorarlberg) from 8 to 14 July 2007 is Austria's largest sports event in 2007. 22,000 gymnasts from 56 countries of all continents present their stunning skills without the pressure of having to score points in the competition. The best groups from the Baltic States to Greece, from Brazil to Japan present shows. IOC Ex-Chief Juan Antonio Samaranch described the "giant gymnastics festival" as the most important international mass sports event. The Federal Chancellery/Secretariat of State for Sport supports this festival combining fitness, health and social aspects of sport with 240,000 euros. ■

Great financial commitment of the new federal government to sport

www.gymnaestrada.at

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