

News from Austria

No. 11/07

HOME AFFAIRS | EUROPE

Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer: "The ÖGB plays a key role in Austria"

EUROPE | INTERNATIONAL

Russian President Vladimir Putin pays state visit to Austria

ECONOMY

Putin visit: economic agreements totalling 3 billion euros signed

CULTURE | MEDIA | SCIENCE

President Vladimir Putin visits "Heroes' Monument of the Red Army" and St. Nicolas Cathedral

SPORTS POLICY

Anti-Doping Act strengthens Austria's fight for clean sport

Our service to our readers: quicker and even more up-to-date information by e-mail. Now available free of charge:

www.bundeskanzleramt.at/aktuell

Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer: “The ÖGB plays a key role in Austria“

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: “After overcoming the BAWAG crisis, the trade unions can increasingly concentrate on representing the interests of the workers.“

Minister of the Environment Pröll: “By having set up the Climate Fund, we consistently pursue our strategy of a sustainable energy supply.“

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: “Austria supports the German EU Presidency because we want to achieve common results.“

At the opening of the Trade Union Day of Municipal Employees on 22 May 2007, Chancellor and SPÖ Chairman Alfred Gusenbauer stated that he was “happy” about the fact that after overcoming the BAWAG crisis and the financial problems associated with it the trade unions could again concentrate on representing the interests of the workers. “The Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) has been and is playing a key role in this country”, said Gusenbauer.

2006 had probably been the most difficult year for the trade unions since the 1950s, concluded the Chancellor. He trusted in the state governed by the rule of law; the BAWAG affaire would therefore be addressed with the adequate judicial mechanisms. However, it was crucial that the trade unions had met the challenge of re-orientation. ÖGB President Rudolf Hundstorfer had made an “extraordinary” contribution to this process, stressed Gusenbauer.

The Chancellor rejected neo-liberal tendencies in privatisation for ideological reasons and explained that the planned state reform should “not only be good but first-class“. ■

Austria defends quota for medical students

On 23 May 2007 the Austrian federal government adopted its position on the quota regime for medical students to be submitted to Brussels. Chancellor Gusenbauer described the document as a sound basis to avoid that the European Commission would take further steps against Austria. Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer also referred to an “absolutely sound and conclusive solution, which had been prepared by Minister for Science Johannes Hahn. Hahn presented five studies to the Council of Ministers, demonstrating that the complete opening of Austrian universities to medical students from the EU could result in an acute shortage of up to 1000 doctors per year in Austria. The comprehensive documentation will be forwarded to the European Commission still in May. On 25 May 2007 Hahn attended the meeting of EU ministers of education in Brussels to present once more Austria’s arguments on this issue. ■

Minister of Science Hahn: “If EU nationals are granted unrestricted access to medicine studies in Austria, experts expect that only 350 to 400 Austrians per year will graduate in medicine, while there is an annual demand for 1000 to 1500 new doctors.“

Student elections: victory for Aktionsgemeinschaft (AG)

The Austrian student elections on 24 May 2007 ended with a clear victory of the conservative Aktionsgemeinschaft (AG). In the Austrian students’ parliament, the so-called “Federal Assembly” will have 66 members. With 20 seats (+6; 31.2%), the AG does not hold an absolute majority. The Greens and Alternative Students (GRAS) won 15 seats (+1; 21.9%), the independent lists of academic disciplines holds 13 seats (+2; 14.7%), while the Federation of Socialist Students (VSSStÖ) has 11 seats (-5; 17%). About 220,000 students of 21 universities were eligible to vote. Voter turnout was about 28.7%. ■

Chancellor Gusenbauer in Berlin

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Germany’s head of government Angela Merkel adopted a common stance on the Treaty for a European Constitution in their talks in Berlin on 28 May 2007. They explained that one should avoid creating the false impression that “those countries prevail in Europe” that did not ratify the Treaty. Changes on one side could lead to consequences on the other side, warned Gusenbauer. “We understand that certain adjustments have to be made. But nobody should think that Europe can be dismantled”, underlined the Federal Chancellor. ■

Numerous Europe-related activities of top government members

On 17 May 2007 Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer met with Liechtenstein’s head of government Otmar Hasler in Vaduz for an official meeting. On 18 May 2007 he paid a visit to Slovenia, where he discussed bilateral and EU-related topics with Prime Minister Janez Jansa.

In Vienna Gusenbauer held talks with the President of the German Federal Council and Minister-President of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Harald Ringstorff on 22 May 2007.

On 25 May 2007 Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer travelled to Slovenia for talks with Prime Minister Jansa and Minister of Finance Andrej Bajuk. ■

Russian President Vladimir Putin pays state visit to Austria

Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to Austria from 23 to 24 May 2007. He was accompanied by his wife Lyudmila Putina, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and a large trade delegation. Bilateral economic issues were discussed, which Putin had stated to be a major objective of his trip to Austria. Investment and cooperation agreements amounting to 3 billion euros were concluded (see Economy).

His agenda included a meeting with Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer.

The talks in Vienna were held in a very friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Controversial issues such as the development of democracy, human rights and freedom of speech in Russia were not avoided by the hosts but addressed with adequate diplomatic sensitivity.

During his visit to Austria, Putin clearly signalled his willingness to engage in dialogue on human rights issues and controversial topics debated at the recent EU-Russia summit (conflict regarding Polish food imports, EU subsidies) and also took advantage of the opportunity to explain his position. Russia should pay attention to the criticism regarding human rights issues, the respective legislation was “not perfect” in Austria or other countries. The Russian President mentioned the problematic situation regarding asylum seekers and criticised the “patronising attitude” of those pointing a finger at Russia. However, he stressed that Austria did not assume such a position. Federal President Fischer made it clear that Austria was an “EU member committed to solidarity” and would not “diverge”. However, Austria was very interested in a strategic partnership between the EU and Russia.

Regarding the Kosovo issue, Putin pled for a dialogue between the parties affected but also referred to a UN Resolution defining Kosovo as an integral part of Serbia. Fischer underlined Austria’s support for the Kosovo plan of UN special envoy Martti Ahtisaari, according to which the present Serbian province should be granted independence subject to international surveillance.

Putin harshly criticised the planned US missile

shield in Eastern Europe. There was no need for these “fatal, harmful” plans, they would only lead to a new spiral in the armament race, stated Putin.

Russia presented itself to Austria as a “reliable partner“ in the energy sector. The Russian President highlighted that the 40th anniversary of cooperation between Gazprom and the OMV would be celebrated next year. In addition, the contract for long-term gas supplies was extended up to 2027.

In talks with Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer Putin drew attention to the successful development of Russia’s economy. In 2006 Russia had registered an unprecedented capital inflow, totalling 21 billion dollars; this year the net inflow has so far amounted to 31 billion dollars. Gusenbauer stated that the bilateral trade and investments relations had achieved a “new quality”.

The political programme was rounded off with Putin’s visit to the Austrian Parliament and participation in a round-table discussion on economic topics in the Economic Chamber Austria. The cultural and social highlights of the first day of his stay in Vienna were a visit to the Spanish Horse Riding School and a state banquet at Hofburg palace, where the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra was responsible for the musical accompaniment.

Before departing for Luxembourg (24 May 2007) Putin laid a wreath at the “Heroes’ Monument of the Red Army” at Schwarzenbergplatz in Vienna and visited the Russian-Orthodox St. Nicolas Cathedral. ■

Federal President Heinz Fischer at Presidents’ meeting in Brno

On 25 May 2007 Federal President Heinz Fischer travelled to a two-day meeting of Central European Presidents to Brno, which was hosted by Czech President Vaclav Klaus. 15 heads of state participated in this informal meeting to deliberate about the future status of Kosovo, the EU Constitution and the planned US missile defence bases in the Czech Republic and Poland. In this context, Fischer advocated a European debate involving the population. Regarding the Kosovo issue he pled for a solution acceptable to both sides. He considered Ahtisaari’s plan the optimal basis. ■

Federal President Heinz Fischer: “Every democratic system – without exception – needs the oxygen of criticism and diversity of opinion.“

“As members of the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation and Austria are committed to the Human Rights Convention, the rule of law and other democratic fundamental values.“

President Putin: “Austria can play an important role as a mediator at European level.“

“Russia and Austria have worked together in the natural gas sector for 40 years. We have never had any problems with Austria and Austria has never had any problems with us.“

Federal President Fischer: “It is necessary to analyse rationally what dangers really exist and what measures could be useful to address them.“

Putin visit: economic agreements totalling 3 billion euros signed

The domestic economy benefits from multi-billion-euro deals in the wake of Russian President Vladimir Putin's official visit to Austria.

At the Russian-Austrian Economic Forum in Vienna (23 May 2007), in which Putin, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer as well as prominent Russian business magnates participated, 35 investment and cooperation agreements amounting to 3 billion euros were entered into. This sum corresponded to half of Austria's annual foreign investments, informed President of the Economic Chamber Austria (WKÖ) Christoph Leitl. Moreover, letters of intent worth one to two billion euros had been signed, said Leitl.

Putin praised the economic cooperation with Austria. It created confidence and provided a basis for cooperation in other fields. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer hailed the new quality of bilateral economic relations, which were highly important for Austria. Minister for Economic Affairs Martin Bartenstein also underlined the "very good relations with Russia", both at economic and political level.

The Austrian building group Strabag, in which Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska had recently acquired a stake of 30%, succeeded in tripling its order volume in Russia (to 3 billion euros). The Hotel Fund H1 will build 50 hotels in Russia's largest cities (order volume: about 800 million euros). Contracts totalling about 270 million euros were awarded to the steel building group Unger from Burgenland. The Graz-based engine specialist AVL signed a framework contract totalling 210 million euros. The OMV entered into a memorandum of understanding with Gazprom on the joint development of the gas distribution centre at Baumgarten into Europe's largest gas trade platform, including a gas exchange.

Russian President Putin also asked Austria to support the accession of his country to the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The European and American partners should be even more interested in Russia's joining the organisation than Russia itself, stated Putin. Austria pledged its support to Russia.

According to the Austrian Ministry of Economic

Affairs, foreign trade between the Russian Federation and Austria continues to thrive. "For Austria Russia is the fastest growing export market among the 20 most important customer countries", emphasised Minister for Economic Affairs Bartenstein. Austria's exports to Russia increased by 31.2% to 2.2 billion euros in 2006. Thus Russia is the eleventh most important export market of Austria. Austrian imports from Russia climbed to a record level of 2.4 billion euros last year, with energy resources accounting for almost 90% of all imports.

Austrian direct investment in Russia also increased in 2006, surging from 1.5 billion euros in 2005 by several hundred million euros. More than 500 Austrian companies have establishments or hold investments in Russia. ■

OECD: upward revision of growth forecast 2007 for Austria to 3.2%

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) raised its growth forecast for Austria for the year 2007 significantly. In its "World Economic Outlook" presented on 24 May 2007, the OECD expects an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) by 3.2%. In autumn the Organisation had forecast a GDP growth of 2.5% for 2007.

With a GDP increase of 3.4% from the level of 2006, the latest outlook represents only a minor deceleration of growth. In 2008 a more significant economic downturn is expected as the cyclical development will have reached its peak. The OECD expects a "strong and lasting" recovery also for Europe and considers it likely that Europe could replace the USA as the driving force behind a worldwide upswing. Growth in the euro zone is estimated at 2.7% for the year 2007 and at 2.3% for 2008. ■

Carinthian Hypo Alpe-Adria bank sold to Bavarian bank

An agreement to sell the majority holding in the Carinthian Hypo Alpe-Adria Bank to Bayerische Landesbank (BayernLB) was signed on 22 May 2007.

The purchase price of 50% plus one share totals about 1.6 billion euros. ■

President Putin wants to further develop the economic relations between Russia and Austria.

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer: "The economic relations between Austria and Russia achieved a new quality. Before they were mainly trade relations but now they have also become investment relations."

Minister of Economic Affairs Bartenstein: "For Austria Russia is the fastest growing export market among the 20 most important customer countries."

WKÖ President Leitl: "As Austria invests in Russia, we do not have a problem with Russian investors acquiring stakes in Austrian companies."

President Vladimir Putin visits “Heroes’ Monument of the Red Army” and St. Nicolas Cathedral

Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded his official trip to Vienna on 24 May 2007 with a visit to the “Heroes’ Monument of the Red Army” at Schwarzenbergplatz. He was accompanied by Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer. Putin laid a wreath to commemorate the Russian soldiers killed in WWII.

Against the background of the conflict regarding the removal of a Russian memorial from the centre of Tallinn (Estonia), one day earlier Putin had explicitly thanked Austria for paying respect to the Russian soldiers killed in the world wars. According to official Soviet records, 18,000 Soviet soldiers and 19,000 members of the German armed forces (“Wehrmacht”) were killed in the battle of Vienna during the liberation of Austria from the Nazi regime in April 1945.

The monument behind the fountain at Schwarzenbergplatz was created by architect S. G. Jakoviev and sculptor M. A. Intazarin. It was unveiled on 19 August 1945 in a ceremony, in which representatives of the Red Army Command, State Chancellor Karl Renner, Secretary of State Ernst Fischer, Secretary of State Leopold Figl and Vienna’s Mayor Theodor Körner delivered speeches. Soviet Colonel General Gusyev officially handed over the monument to the City of Vienna. A parade of Soviet, American, English and French troops concluded the ceremony. The monument showing the bronze sculpture of a Red Army soldier with flag and laterally two fighting soldiers is now under the aegis of the City of Vienna.

Before his departure, President Putin visited the Russian-Orthodox Cathedral in the third district of Vienna (“Landstrasse”), where he was received by bishop A. Hilarion.

The Russian-Orthodox St. Nicolas Cathedral in Jaurèsgasse in Vienna’s embassy district was built between 1893 and 1899 in the style of Russian 16th century renaissance based on plans by architect Grigoriy I. Kotov (1859-1942) from St. Petersburg. In the early 18th century there had been a Russian-Orthodox chapel at the Russian ambassador’s residence in Vienna. Some years before the Vienna Congress (1814/15), a larger

church was established in Walfischgasse, which existed until 1899.

The St. Nicolas Cathedral is currently being restored. The Vienna Cathedral Architect Wolfgang Zehetner is in charge of the works.

The development of the Russian-Orthodox community in Vienna had been interrupted by WWI. In the period between the two world wars, the St. Nicolas Church remained closed. It was re-opened at the end of WWII. In the inter-war period the religious community had used rented premises adapted to the requirements of religious ceremonies. Since 1946 the St. Nicolas Church has been the seat of the Russian-Orthodox diocesan bishop for Vienna and Austria. The previous parish church of the Moscow Patriarchate in Vienna became a cathedral in 1962.

In Austria the Russian-Orthodox community has the status of a public body as it has been officially recognised as a Church. ■

Russia’s First Lady Lyudmila Putina visits Austrian National Library

On 23 May 2007, Lyudmila Putina, Russia’s first lady, visited the Austrian National Library together with Margit Fischer, the wife of the Austrian Federal President. The Library’s Director General, Johanna Rachinger, guided the guests through the world-famous Baroque hall (the so-called “Prunksaal”) and presented great treasures from the rich collections of the Library. Lyudmila Putina had become the Jacob-Grimm Prize winner in 2002 for promoting German as a foreign language in Russia. She was not only enthusiastic about the architecture and interior of the “Prunksaal” but as a bibliophile she was also very fascinated by the magnificent books. Besides Russian literature of the 18th century, maps and copper engravings, the prominent visitors admired valuable Russian manuscripts and selected editions of early important newspapers. Among the objects that impressed Lyudmila Putina most was a general map by Joseph-Nicolas Delisle of 1745 – with a dedication to Tsarina Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, showing the Russian Empire from the Dnepr in the west to Kamchatka in the east and from Novaya Zemlya in the north to Lake Baikal in the south. ■

Sibiu: “Nocturnal Walks” by Franz Koglmann

On the initiative of Liviana Dan and the Brukenthal Foundation – named after Empress Maria Theresa’s Governor in Transylvania, Samuel Baron of Brukenthal (1721-1803) – the Viennese composer and trumpeter Franz Koglmann (60) composed an eight-part piece for chamber orchestra and trumpet/fluegelhorn, including a recording of the original voice of E.M. Cioran, as Austria’s contribution to the European capital of culture 2007 Sibiu (Hermannstadt) in Romania. Key elements of the piece are themes drawn from Symphony No. 27 in G major composed around 1760 by Joseph Haydn, the avant-garde representative of the Vienna classical period of music. A copy of the unknown work was found in Avrig near Sibiu in 1946. Another source of inspiration was E.M. Cioran, a master of aphorism and sceptical philosopher, who was born in 1911 as the son of a Greek-Orthodox priest in Răşinari near Sibiu, where he also spent his youth and often went for walks in sleepless nights. From 1937 to his death in 1995 he lived in Paris, where he created a unique literary work. Famous examples of his work are his “Précis de Décomposition“ (“A Short History of Decay”) translated into German by Paul Celan (“Die Lehre vom Zerfall“) or his “Cahiers 1957-1972“ (“The Notebooks 1957-1972”).

A successful preview of Koglmann’s “Nocturnal Walks“ (“Plimbări Nocturne“) was given at Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna on 16 May 2007. The premiere took place on 18 May 2007 in the Protestant parish church of Sibiu, where Brukenthal was buried. Another performance was staged at Brukenthal’s former summer palace in Avrig on 19 May 2007, an overgrown, enchanting place lost in the past. The concerts attracting a large audience were introduced humorously and with great affection by parish priest Kilian Dörr, giving an impression of the wide spectrum of the Protestant faith and ideas. Waltraud Dennhardt-Herzog, who inter alia is responsible for the coordination of Austrian music programmes abroad in the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs, lent her organisational and personal support to the festival focusing on concerts. Mircea

Stanescu produced excellent photos for the programme booklet. He is also the graphic designer of “Euphorion“, an outstanding literature and art magazine from Sibiu publishing not only Romanian but also German, English and French texts. Vienna’s City Councillor for Culture Andreas Mailath-Pokorny, who came unexpectedly to Avrig, also congratulated on the excellent performance of the music ensemble exxj, conducted by Peter Burwik, including solos of the composer.

The Gmunden festival (Upper Austria) will perform Koglmann’s “Nocturnal Walks“ on 26 August 2007 as well as compositions by Peter Androsch and Oskar Aichinger. Historian and journalist Lisa Fischer will show images of Sibiu and read from her new book about the politician, collector and Freemason Brukenthal.

The ensemble exxj has in the meantime recorded the “Nocturnal Walks“ for the label “col legno”. Together with Haydn’s Symphony No. 27 performed by the Haydn Orchestra Bolzano-Trient (conducted by Gustav Kuhn), they will appear on a double CD in autumn as a prelude to the Haydn Year 2009. ■

Cruel and tender “Viennese sketches“ by Gemma Salem

Gemma Salem, a director from Paris and author of twelve books and nine theatre plays, has spent more and more time in Vienna since 1991 owing to her love for Thomas Bernhard and Franz Schubert. In 1997 she founded the “Open Theatre” with the support of numerous renowned Viennese actors. The festival of the 7th district of Vienna (“Neubau“) presents her new work “Wiener Dramolette“, i.e. Viennese sketches or short dramas. Nine actors brilliantly perform forty roles at Café Lux & Weinstüberl at Vienna’s Spittelberg up to 26 May 2007 and at Theater Center Forum from 29 May to 6 June 2007. Salem states that the miniature plays (which cannot deny the spirit of Cioran and Bernhard but are still very original both in terms of content and language) deal with the “very human approach to values like openness, authenticity, personal courage“. The play shows people caught up in their egocentricity, who keep on hurting one another constantly although they long for understanding and love. In “Monthly coffee-party” two old ladies make unkind

“Euphorion“:

www.eurozine.com/journals/euphorion/selfdescription.html

www.festwochen-gmunden.at

Lisa Fischer: Eden hinter den Wäldern. Samuel von Brukenthal. hora Verlag, Hermannstadt 2007. ISBN 978-973-8226-62-3
www.hora-verlag.ro
www.teutsch.ro

The label “col legno” is known for its excellent acoustic and visual design:
www.col-legno.com

Parish priest Dörr also drew attention to a great photo exhibition in the city parish church of Sibiu, which addresses the subject of “uprooting”, the “most dangerous disease”, with texts by Simone Weil (1909-1943).

www.evang.ro/hermannstadt

remarks about other people; in “Marcello“ a young successful conductor of the Philharmonic Orchestra brags to impress a former lover, who is by no means a poor little thing; in the “Magic of Faith“ the conflict between a ticket inspector and the passengers in a tram escalates – to mention just a few titles and details of the sketches. All actors are simply wonderful, creating unique portraits of personalities, e.g. Jörg Maria Berg as an elderly gentleman, Hilde Günther and Mimi Kilinger as elderly ladies, Christoph Prückner enacting for example a moderator, Stefan Rager in the role of comedians like Chaplin, Florian Sedivy as a maestro, Dorothea Trappel and Veronica Zahorik as beautiful young women. Max Rogl is responsible for the light design and engineering. The translation is by Margret Millischer. The author and director is Gemma Salem, who also acts as an extra.

Leoš Janáček “The House of the Dead“ – festival highlight

Leoš Janáček’s opera “The House of the Dead – Z mrtvého domu“ based on Feodor Dostoevski’s novel and produced by Patrice Chéreau triumphed at the Vienna Festival (“Wiener Festwochen”). Pierre Boulez conducted the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and the Arnold Schoenberg Choir. The set by Richard Peduzzi, the costumes by Caroline de Vivaise and the light design by Bertrand Couderc were acclaimed by the audience and the critics. Unfortunately, the magnificent and pioneering opera event was performed at Theater an der Wien only four times. ■

“Concert for Europe“: Valery Gergiev conducted Philharmonic Orchestra

Departing from Vienna at midday on 24 May 2007, Russian President Putin missed the triumph of Russian conductor Valery Gergiev in the evening. Gergiev inspired the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra to a brilliant performance at the “Concert for Europe“ (free admission) at Schönbrunn Palace. The programme featured his compatriots Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky and Igor Stravinsky (with Johann Strauß as an encore). 140,000 people, among them Federal President Fischer, Federal

Chancellor Gusenbauer, Vice-Chancellor Molterer, US actress Sharon Stone and former US President Bill Clinton, enjoyed the concert in fine weather. Clinton also came to Vienna to attend the Aids Life Charity Gala at Schönbrunn Palace, where he received a cheque amounting to 1 million dollar (about 740,000 euros) from Life Ball organiser Gery Keszler to support the Clinton Foundation HIV/Aids Programme (CHAI). ■

Death of former Minister of Justice Foregger

Former Minister of Justice Egmont Foregger died aged 84 on 15 May 2007 after a long illness. From 1987 to 1990 he served as an independent minister in the Vranitzky II. Cabinet. During his term of office he reformed juvenile criminal law. By incorporating victim/offender mediation in the law, he set an example for lawmakers across Europe. Other achievements of Foregger were legislation banning violence in education and the elimination of provisions in the inheritance and family law discriminating against children born out of wedlock. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer praised the former Minister as a “true advocate of justice“. Minister of Justice Maria Berger stressed for example that Egmont Foregger had decisively shaped “criminal law policies in Austria“. ■

Klagenfurt: Dietmar Pfliegerl, a man of integrity and fighting spirit, died

Dietmar Pfliegerl, who had been the manager of Stadttheater Klagenfurt since 1992, died at the age of 63 from cancer on 17 May 2007, only some weeks before his last theatre season came to an end. The great theatre and opera director (e.g. of Puccini’s “Madame Butterfly“) had been awarded the “Nestroy“ Special Prize still in November 2006. Author Peter Turrini, whose play “Bei Einbruch der Dunkelheit“ was premiered by Pfliegerl, hailed his “courage and passion in fighting against the politically repulsive and for innovation in art“. In their obituaries Chancellor Gusenbauer, Minister of Culture Schmied and Vienna’s City Councillor for Culture Mailath-Pokorny paid homage to the deceased, who always made every effort to oppose narrow-mindedness and conceitedness. ■

**Café Lux & Wein-
stüberl: until
26 May 2007,
7.30 p.m.,
Spittelberg 3,
1070 Vienna.
Contact:
0664/9736662**

**Theater Center
Forum: 29 May to
6 June,
8 p.m.,
Porzellangasse 50,
1090 Vienna.
Bookings:
0043/1/3104646**

[www.festwo-
chen.at](http://www.festwochen.at)

[www.schoen-
brunnkonzert.at](http://www.schoen-
brunnkonzert.at)

Anti-Doping Act strengthens Austria's fight for clean sport

The decision of the Sports Committee of the National Council (the second chamber of the Austrian Parliament) to introduce a specific Anti-Doping Act strengthens the combat against doping in Austria. At the same time the credibility of the sports nation Austria is enhanced. The five political parties represented in Parliament will give a clear signal in the anti-doping fight until 30 June 2007. In view of the rapid development of doping substances and methods, politicians are called upon to revise the anti-doping legislation at regular intervals. By adopting the new law, the entire federal government also made a contribution to support the application of the City of Salzburg to host the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The Committee was not only in favour of the new Anti-Doping Act but also pled for the ratification of the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport. Thus the new law is embedded in an international framework that is indispensable to combat doping efficiently. ■

Preparing "a second career after sport" for athletes

Together with Österreichische Sporthilfe, the Secretariat of State for Sport in the Federal Chancellery presented the project "A second career after sport" („Kariere.Danach"/KA:DA). In cooperation with the Public Employment Agency (AMS), 100 training positions were created within this pilot project to prepare former elite athletes for a life after sport. Former ski racer and Athlete of the Year Roswitha Stadlober and social worker Christine Seemann provide support in planning for a second career after sport. The preliminary result after only one year has been very successful. 82 athletes have taken advantage of these services, and in 64 cases the KA:DA project has enabled former athletes to start a new career. Thus the federal government has established the necessary framework for providing athletes with new career opportunities after sport.

The next step of this pilot project will consist in offering career counselling both during the sports career and in particular after sport. ■

Federal Government sets up independent Anti-Doping Agency

Based on a proposal by Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka, "NADA Austria" (National Anti-Doping Agency) will be set up following international examples. NADA will perform inspections and provide anti-doping counselling independently from the political level and the sports federations. Whereas under the current regulation the sports federations act as the first instance in doping procedures, this function will be performed by the independent NADA in the future. Hence, this will lead to an operational separation between the activities of the federations and doping inspections. Furthermore, successful athletes are to become active as "anti-doping ambassadors". They will provide comprehensive anti-doping information sessions across Austria, especially in sports schools and sports clubs. These measures were conceived by the federal government to safeguard fair and clean sport. ■

Giving the go-ahead to combat obesity in nurseries and schools

To increase the funds earmarked for co-operation between schools and sports clubs means to promote physical exercise and sport activities. Thanks to the reform of the federal sports promotion scheme, which was also adopted by the Sports Committee, an additional 1.8 million euros will be allocated to "innovative sports projects". The funds will be used for promoting exercise and sport in nurseries and schools. Especially against the background of the sharp increase in the number of obese children, the Secretariat of State for Sport plans to combat civilisational diseases affecting more and more young people by ensuring that particularly schools focus on exercise and sport as well as health-oriented educational measures. ■

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer: "By unanimously adopting the UNESCO Anti-Doping Convention and the new Anti-Doping Act, the federal government has given a clear signal."

www.bundeskanzleramt.at

www.sporthilfe.at

Programmes promoting sport in nurseries and schools are supported with additional subsidies of 1.8 million euros.

IMPRINT

Owner (publisher) and producer: Federal Chancellery, Federal Press Service, A-1014 Vienna, Ballhausplatz 1.

Editor: Dr. Franz Putz, tel. ++43/1/53115-2579, fax ++43/1/53115-4274, e-mail: franz.putz@bka.gv.at.

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

Website: <http://www.bundeskanzleramt.at>. Excerpts from this text may be reprinted. Published by the Federal Press Service–Vienna.