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Coalition package adopted – SPÖ and ÖVP form new government

The “new version” of the grand coalition has been given the go-ahead. The party committees of the SPÖ (Social Democratic Party) and the ÖVP (Austrian People’s Party) adopted the government agreement on 24 November 2008. On the same day the 18 members of the new federal government – two less than in the outgoing Cabinet – were officially presented. With six female members (three of the SPÖ and the ÖVP, respectively), the women’s share is now one third (previously 40%).

Besides Chancellor Werner Faymann (SPÖ) and Vice-Chancellor Josef Pröll (ÖVP), who will also head the Ministry of Finance, there are twelve ministers and four secretaries of state: ministers Doris Bures (S)/infrastructure, transport; Norbert Darabos (S)/defence; Rudolf Hundstorfer (S)/labour and social affairs; Claudia Schmied (S)/education, art, culture; Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek (S)/women, civil servants; Alois Stöger (S)/health; Michael Spindelegger (P)/foreign affairs; Maria Fekter (P)/internal affairs; Reinhold Mitterlehner (P)/economy; Johannes Hahn (V)/science; Nikolaus Berlakovich (V)/agriculture, environment; Claudia Bandion-Ortner/justice; secretaries of state Andreas Schieder (S)/finance; Josef Ostermayer (S)/Chancellery (e.g. media); Reinhold Lopatka (V)/finance; Christine Marek (V)/economy.

The new government will be sworn in by President Heinz Fischer on 2 December 2008. On the next day the new Chancellor will present his team to Parliament and make the Government Proclamation. This is the first legislative period lasting 5 instead of 4 years (reform of electoral law 2007).

The formation of the new government implied several new appointments and numerous personnel changes in the various institutions of the parties and social partners as well as in Parliament. The independent Minister of Justice Bandion-Ortner (who won renown as a judge for example in the BAWAG case and was nominated by the ÖVP) is new in the government. Hundstorfer also rose to a ministerial position (Minister for Social Affairs). As President of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB), he is succeeded by Erich Folgar, Chairman of the Metalworkers’ Union. Other “newcomers“ are Minister for Women’s Affairs Heinisch-Hosek, Economic Minister Mitterlehner, Minister of Agriculture Berlakovich and Secretary of State

Ostermayer, previously Faymann’s head of Cabinet in the Ministry of Transport. The successor of the new Minister of the Exterior Spindelegger as Second Speaker of Parliament is Chairman of the ÖVP’s Employee Association (ÖAAB) Fritz Neugebauer.

Josef Cap remains Chairman of the SPÖ group in Parliament, his new ÖVP counterpart is Karlheinz Kopf, Secretary-General of the Economic Federation of Vorarlberg. New SPÖ federal party whips are the MPs Laura Rudas and Günther Kräuter, new ÖVP Secretary-General is Fritz Kaltenegger. With Werner Faymann, the Social Democrats provide the sixth SPÖ Federal Chancellor and eleventh Chancellor of the Second Republic (excluding the provisional nine-month state government led by Karl Renner after the end of WWII.). Werner Faymann aged 48 years is one of the Republic’s youngest heads of government. He is married and a father of two children. ■

Government programme for the XXIV. legislative period – key data

The government programme of the SPÖ/ÖVP coalition is, of course, clearly under the impact of the current financial and economic crisis. More than 5 billion euros are injected to safeguard jobs and to stimulate economic activity. They were not taking things easily, the chief negotiators Werner Faymann (SPÖ) and Josef Pröll (ÖVP) explained upon adopting the government programme on 23 November 2008. It focused on measures boosting the economy, preventing unemployment as well as on advancing the tax reform to reduce the burden on those earning incomes between 1,200 and 4,000 euros, Faymann stated.

In the preamble of the 267-page government programme (for the XXIV. legislative period), the SPÖ and the ÖVP made a commitment to joint, consistent work for Austria and underlined the “great challenges facing policy-makers“. In the remaining text the subjects economic development and labour market are addressed in detail.

In the following a short overview of some key data is provided:

Economy: After the bank rescue package (which has already been implemented to some extent) and the first economic policy package (e.g. advanced investments in rail and road infrastructure), a second economic package is to be adopted. The Federal Real Estate Agency will advance “measures stimulating economic

activity”, e.g. the renovation of public buildings. 100 million euros have been made available for the thermal rehabilitation of buildings. The funds allocated to the Public Employment Service (AMS) are stepped up. An additional 50 million euros p.a. are earmarked for R & D.

Labour: Major objectives are to raise the capacity for AMS job qualification training to 10,000 persons as well as the strict application of transition periods concerning the free movement of labour from the new EU Member States (up to 2011).

Infrastructure: The Austrian Railways (ÖBB) and private rail companies will get more money. From 2009 to 2013 820 million euros will be allocated to this sector. An investment programme for combined rail-road transport has been planned.

Environment and agriculture: The government envisages to adopt a Federal Climate Protection Act. In 2009/2010 incentives are to be created to ensure the “Austria-wide minimum supply“ with alternative energies and electric power plants.

Justice: Possibilities of sanctioning the participation in terrorist training camps and of permitting online search are being examined. The possession and use of pyrotechnic articles in the proximity of mass sports events will be forbidden. In addition, a youth court with a separate prison will be established in Vienna.

Internal affairs: 1,000 new police officers are to be trained per year. The daily allowance for conscientious objectors doing alternative civilian service will be increased. Postal ballots will require an affidavit (signature) but no information on the place, time and date of election.

Internal affairs – asylum and immigration: With the introduction of the “Red-White-Red Card“, a criteria-based immigration system for qualified immigrants (e.g. German language skills, job qualifications, no prior convictions, ability to maintain themselves without social benefits), the quota for key personnel has been abolished. The conditions of residence of top managers, students and researchers are to be improved. The right of abode of refugees is not subject to changes. “Old cases“ (before the Amendment to the Asylum Act in 2003) could be allowed to file a request. In the asylum procedure a mandatory waiting period for filing subsequent requests has been introduced (“last-minute procedures“ to determine if a new request for asylum is permissible during the deportation procedure).

Family: Stepparents are to become “involved in the responsibility for the child“. The childcare

allowance will be adjusted to the income. The “flexibilisation of the discretionary earnings cap“ is also being considered. A compulsory year of free nursery attendance will be introduced.

Pensions and social affairs: A transition regulation will be introduced after the special retirement rules for specific groups of workers end in 2013. It will become easier to credit childcare and nursing periods towards pension entitlements. A Long-Term Care Fund will be set up within the Ministry of Social Affairs. In addition, the system of needs-based minimum income is to be implemented “speedily“.

Education and universities: The coalition parties agreed for example on defining model regions across Austria for the New Middle School. Training at university level is being considered for nursery, primary school and grammar school teachers. District and Land school councillors will be abolished, directorates for education will be set up. Universities have to implement compulsory induction and guidance programmes and may define criteria for master’s programmes.

Tax reform: The tax reform previously agreed on has been enshrined in the government programme. The minimum taxable income is raised from 10,000 euros to 11,000 euros, incomes up to 25,000 euros are taxed only at 36.50% instead of 38.33% and incomes up to 60,000 euros at 43.2% instead of 43.60%. An income tax rate of 50% is applied only above that level. ■

Last Council of Ministers under Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer

The outgoing government met for its 71st and last Council of Ministers on 26 November 2008. Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer looked back on the achievements of the past two years with a touch of nostalgia but also pride. “In 71 Council of Ministers we prepared 224 government drafts and submitted them to Parliament for adoption“, he stated. Fundamental policy decisions were taken, especially in two areas: the educational offensive and a tightly knit social security network. The outcome was quite impressive. “We managed to work and to fight simultaneously“, Gusenbauer remarked with a hint of self-mockery. His personal relationship with Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer had always been correct. Gusenbauer will waive claims to continued payment of his salary during the next six months to which he would be legally entitled. ■

OECD outlook: Austria's economy will shrink in 2009

According to the latest forecast of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Austrian economy is expected to drift into a slight recession in 2009. A minus of 0.1% of the GDP (gross domestic product) is likely; but this means that Austria is still better off than the remaining OECD countries or the euro-zone. For Germany – Austria's most important trade partner – a minus of 0.9% is projected, while the GDP in the euro-zone is likely to shrink by 0.6%. In the spring forecast of the Paris-based organisation a GDP growth of 1.7% had still been forecast for Austria in 2009. Based on the "Economic Outlook" of the OECD presented on 25 November 2008, in 2010 the domestic economy is, however, expected to recover and grow by 1.2%.

The recent forecasts of Austrian economic research institutes were significantly more optimistic than that of the OECD. The Economic Research Institute (Wifo) predicted an economic growth of 0.9% for next year, the IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies) even projected a growth rate of 1.2%.

For 2008 the OECD revised its forecast from 2.3% to 1.9%. The deteriorating conditions of the external sector are given as a reason.

A low unemployment rate of 4.9% is predicted still for 2009 but the OECD expects it to climb to 5.7% in 2008 and 6% in 2010.

According to the OECD, inflation will decrease in Austria due to declining energy and food prices as well as lower import prices. The OECD experts still expect an inflation rate (Harmonised Consumer Price Index) of 3.3% for 2008, 1.1% for 2009 and 0.8% for 2010.

The latest economic measures (including tax cuts) are assessed partly critically by the OECD. They would lead to lower tax receipts and higher public expenditure already in 2008. Against the background of the economic slowdown and the shrinking corporate profits in Central and Eastern Europe, the budget deficit in Austria could increase to 3.5% of the GDP by 2010.

The bank rescue packages adopted by the individual countries were, however, welcomed by the OECD as they had helped to end the phase of panic. Nevertheless, the financial institutions had to continue operating with less borrowings and consolidate their financial statements, the OECD stated.

The European Commission adopted a 200-billion-euro stimulus package on 26 November 2008 to revive the sluggish EU economy. The national contributions have not yet been fixed. In addition, the euro stability package (budget deficits of a maximum of 3%) will be interpreted "flexibly" in the next two years and in the case of insignificantly increased budget deficits no procedures will be instituted.

To stimulate the economy in 2009/10, Austria has adopted two economic packages worth approximately 2.1 billion euros. The federal government makes available an additional amount of 100 billion euros for the banks. ■

Moody's: Austria's Aaa ratings are stable

The international rating agency Moody's sees Austria's sound positioning in the credit market confirmed and safe. "Austria's Aaa government ratings, with a stable outlook, are supported by many economic and institutional strengths and its healthy government balance sheet, despite challenges from the global financial turmoil and economic slowdown", says Moody's in its latest credit analysis for Austria.

"Austria's very high economic strength is related to its wealthy population, which tends to foster social consensus, skilled labour force and competitive export sector." Therefore the country had been growing faster than the European average in recent years and reached difficult political agreements on complex reforms, such as the pension system. ■

Summer season 2008: 2.4 percent increase in hotel nights

In the summer season 2008 Austria recorded a favourable upward trend with remarkable growth rates of guests from Central and Eastern Europe. The total number of hotel nights rose by 2.4% to 62.39 million overnight stays.

The number of guests increased by 3.7% to 17.31 million. According to the Austrian Statistical Office (Statistik Austria), the "highest number of arrivals ever recorded in a summer season" had been achieved. ■

Linz Capital of Culture 2009 – “The Programme” with 220 projects

The European Capital of Culture Linz (Linz09) presents an extensive calendar of events with exhibitions, theatre and music for 2009. Under the modest title “The Programme“, a 288-page brochure provides details about 220 projects – often consisting of several individual events – that take place at 51 venues. This corresponds to almost one event per day of the year.

The motto of the year during which Linz is European Capital of Culture is “Linz.changes“, alluding to its development from a small trading point on the Danube river to a city under the patronage of Hitler, to an industrial site with all the negative effects and risks and finally to an economically successful, modern high-quality environment. At the presentation in Linz on 19 November 2008, Festival Manager Martin Heller emphasised that he did not only want to realise a cultural festival but also an urban development programme. An additional goal was to create networks for all those interested in culture, i.e. the population of the city and the region, in which they could participate intensively. The festival is to have long-term effects reaching far beyond the year 2009.

The programme includes numerous premieres at global and national level. Emphasis is also placed on cooperation. Moreover, existing cultural institutions such as the Bruckner Festival, the Sound Cloud, Ars Electronica, the Festival of Regions or the Crossing Europe Film Festival will be involved. The municipality, the regional and federal governments make available 20 million euros each. Moreover, the EU promised funding amounting to 1.5 million euros, while private partners and sponsors might contribute about 10 million euros.

The Linz Year will be kicked off officially on New Year’s Eve, e.g. with a “rocket symphony“ and large fireworks on the banks of the Danube river. On 1 January 2009 the exhibition “Best of Austria“ – showcasing pieces of art from 30 Austrian collections and museums – will be opened at the Lentos Art Museum, followed by the premiere of a new symphony by Philip Glass and the inauguration of the new, enlarged Ars Electronica Center (AEC).

The premiere of the music theatre production “The Book of Disquiet“ by composer, film and stage director Michel van der Aa will also be performed at the beginning of the year. The work

is produced in cooperation with Klaus Maria Brandauer and the Bruckner Orchestra from Linz conducted by Dennis Russel Davies. The performance takes place at “Hafenhalle“, which has been specifically created for Linz09 and will be used for various other productions as well. It will be the venue of the festival “Theaterlust 1: Schneesturm“ (“Stage Pleasure 1: Snowstorm”), whose second part will follow in summer. The festival stars artists like Luk Perceval and the group Superamas.

Contemporary history is one of the key themes of Linz09. The exhibition “Cultural Capital of the Führer“, which had been opened in September, is on show at Schlossmuseum until March 2009. Furthermore, the project “in situ“ is launched to raise awareness of the history of the National Socialist persecution and annihilation policy in public space with the aid of temporary symbols.

At a programme presentation in Israel (Tel Aviv) on 24 November 2008, representatives of the Capital of Culture Linz drew attention to the fact that efforts to confront the NS past are intensified by realising a number of cultural projects. Israeli artists agreed to cooperate and present themselves in Linz 2009 in different projects.

Public space is also the setting of various events staged under the motto “Art for All“. The city’s landmark Pöstlingberg will be declared “Holy Mountain” and offer 20 works of installation art and interventions by domestic and international artists in summer. The project “Höhenrausch“ (“High-Altitude Euphoria”) invites to a tour across the roofs of the city centre of Linz.

The highlight of 57 music projects is “Hörstadt“ (“Acoustic City“), focusing on the acoustic environment and the call for zones free from sound pollution. Plenty of media art is presented as from summer onwards, e.g. in the virtual trip around the world “80+1“ at the AEC or the show “See this sound“ at the Lentos Museum.

Another programme section focuses on European culture outside the EU. The project “Extra Europe“ is devoted to three non-EU countries – Switzerland, Norway and Turkey. Artists of all disciplines will participate in a several-week festival, ranging from film and modern music to comics and dance. Young people from these three countries, Austria and the Czech Republic will discuss culture and Europe at the “European Youth Parliament Forum“. In 2009 Linz will share the title “European Capital of Culture” with Vilnius. A total budget of about 70 million euros has been made available. www.linz09.at ■

Art Report 2007: increased art funding

In the recently presented “Art Report 2007“ Minister of Education Claudia Schmied came to the conclusion that “the year 2007 was a good year for art. The first Art Report drawn up during her term of office (which started on 1 March 2007) shows a slight budget increase for art subsidies from 87.84 million to 88.48 million euros (plus 640,000 euros). If the special subsidy for renovating the Bregenz Festival Centre of 6.7 million euros is deducted from the total funding of 2006, the art budget even rose by more than 7 million euros in 2007 from the level of 2006. According to the report, more money was allocated above all to the film sector (20.74 million vs. 17.09 million euros in 2006).

The ranking of the arts in the budget is led by visual arts, with 20.58 million euros, followed by film/photography/video and media art with 19.07 million euros. 12.55 million euros were earmarked for festivals and cultural mass events.

Based on the Art Report 2007, the Austrian Film Institute (ÖFI) is the number one on the list of individual institutions subsidised most heavily (cumulated payments), with a budget of 13.01 million euros for managing film funding throughout Austria. Theater in der Josefstadt benefited from the same amount as in the previous year, i.e. 8.5 million euros. The Salzburg Festival received 5.66 million euros, Vienna Volkstheater 4.88 million euros and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra 2.49 million euros. The Bregenz Festival is ranked sixth with 2.19 million euros. ■

Reopening of the Museum of Ethnology

After an almost four-year renovation, the Vienna Museum of Ethnology has reopened some parts of its permanent collection and three special exhibitions on 18 November 2008. The beginning is made with the South Asian and South Eastern Asian section (20% of the entire collection).

According to Museum Director Christian Feest, this is a “more extensive preview of what we are planning for the long-term future“. Wilfried Seipel, outgoing Director-General of the Museum of Art History, of which the Museum of Ethnology forms part organisationally, described the partial reopening as a step “which has long been waited for and eagerly anticipated”.

However, more time will pass before the entire Museum is reopened. To finance the revamping of the other 14 thematic sections, “at least five million euros” are still needed. But – besides renovated premises for the administration, enlarged storage areas and new restoration workshops – at least one part of the permanent collection could be presented. In parallel, three new special exhibitions are to lure visitors to the Ethnology Museum situated in Heldenplatz.

The “images of Gods“ from South and South Eastern Asia as well as the Himalaya Region are presented in a glittering showcase – on the first floor in large new glass cases and with a new light and labelling system. Out of a total of 30,000 pieces of art only 0.1% are currently on show. The works cover a period of 2,000 years, in each section the spotlight is turned on one aspect of religious practice, e.g. burial rites in China, Shintoism in Japan, Buddhism in Eastern Asia or Shamanism in Korea. Apart from an altar for Buddha, Vishnu and Brahma (20th century), auxiliary spirits, dance costumes and home altars, Pakistani slate reliefs dating back to the 2nd or 3rd century, ancient Buddha statuettes as well as figures from Burma (19th century) are displayed.

The special exhibitions focus on contemporary art in Sri Lanka (“Artful Resistance“) – a mixture between an ethnographic review, pop art and abstraction –, on black and white photos of Tibet by Barbara Krobath titled “See Tibet now“ (in the framework of the European Month of Photography) as well as the presentation of artistically woven and knotted ribbons from the collection of Gerhard Foitl. This show – “Straps & Bands“ – will receive a permanent home in the Museum. The special exhibitions are open until 2 March 2008. www.ethno-museum.ac.at ■

Common regional exhibition of Tyrol, Bolzano and Trient

“The path leading to freedom seems to be a labyrinth“ is the motto of a common exhibition of the provinces of “Old Tyrol“, which will be staged in the fortifications of Franzensfeste, north of Bressanone (South Tyrol) from 9 May to 30 October 2009. The organisers of the show are the Land Tyrol as well as the two provinces Bolzano (South Tyrol) and Trient (Trentino). 200 exhibits are presented in 86 exhibition rooms. South Tyrol’s Governor Luis Durnwalder underlined at the presentation of the common projects in Bolzano on 19 November 2008 that

the exhibition was not directly related to the commemoration year 2009, reminding of the Tyrolian freedom fights led by Andreas Hofer against the Bavarians and French. Based on the current plans, the exhibition will address eight themes illustrated with objects of every-day life and commissioned works. The concept was developed by launching an ideas contest. www.lab09.net

Five exhibitions are devoted to Andreas Hofer in 2009, e.g. at the Tyrol Palace near Merano, the Regional Museum of Tyrol "Ferdinandeum" in Innsbruck and the Museo Storico in Trient. www.1809-2009.eu ■

15 years of Jewish Museum Vienna

The Jewish Museum situated in Vienna's city centre is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year. The premises in Palais Eskeles were inaugurated on 18 November 1993 by Vienna's recently deceased former Mayer Helmut Zilk and his counterpart from Jerusalem Teddy Kollek. In his overview of the past on 17 November 2008 Director Karl Albrecht-Weinberger stated that since the opening about 1.2 million visitors had been welcomed to 150 exhibitions.

The programme of the anniversary week (17 to 23 November 2008) comprises a number of special projects and events, including an Open Day. A commemorative publication has also been issued. A new permanent loan can be admired for the first time: the bicycle of Theodor Herzl, the founder of political Zionism.

Herzl's "Velociped" had been made available to the Jewish Museum by the Altaussee Literature Museum, explained Museum head Albrecht-Weinberger. He described the exhibition rooms as an important place of commemoration and remembrance.

Vienna's Executive Councillor for Culture Andreas Mailath-Pokorny pointed out that in the opening year 1993 there had only been "an emerging awareness of Austria's role in National Socialism". The Jewish Museum was a visible sign of the efforts to find a different approach towards history. "The history of the culture of this city would be inconceivable without the Jewish contribution", Mailath-Pokorny stated.

The Museum's treasures predominantly come from collections of the Jewish Religious Community (IKG), including exhibits of the first Jewish Museum (which was forcefully closed in 1938) as well as objects from those synagogues

and houses of prayer in Vienna that were still existing after the November pogrom. A selection was displayed during the anniversary week. On 20 November 2008 Michael Heltau read from Joseph Roth's novel "Radetzky March".

The annual programme for the season 2009 will – just like in the past – cover a wide range of themes. Among the projects are a show about the displaced composer Hanns Eisler ("Individualist and Collectivist"), a cultural-historical analysis of Jewish Alpinism ("Have you seen my Alps?") as well as a multimedia confrontation with stereotypes ("typical! Clichés about Jews and Others"). The current Torberg exhibition has been extended until 8 March 2008. www.jmw.at ■

80th birthday: the unknown Hundertwasser at Vienna's KunstHaus

The world-famous Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser (1928-2000) would have celebrated his 80th birthday on 15 December of this year. To mark the occasion, KunstHaus Vienna stages the exhibition titled "The unknown Hundertwasser", displaying works which have never been shown (in Austria). The exhibits presented until 15 March 2008 include an airplane model, early youth paintings and a boxing gown for Henry Maske. This selection is to present new facets of the eccentric multi-talent to the public.

Hundertwasser was the "best known Austrian artist of the post-war period – and the most controversial", said Joram Harel, a close friend, former KunstHaus director and curator of the show, at a press conference on 19 November 2008. Bernd Lötsch, the Director of the Museum of Natural History (NHM) and an old friend of Hundertwasser, stated: "Only very few have really understood Hundertwasser". An international symposium at the NHM (11 to 13 December 2008) is to fill this information gap. Hundertwasser was "still topical", Harel said.

With his vivid colours, flowing shapes and uneven floors, "the organic" is the key to his oeuvre. The "spiral painter" was a "great thinker of cycles", Lötsch explained not only with regard to the legendary humus toilette. Besides photos and architecture models, the exhibition – mainly composed of works from international private collections – presents unknown works. Less emphasis is placed on Hundertwasser's role as an activist fighting against the Hainburg power plant or a pioneer of the ecology movement.

www.kunsthawien.at ■

Old Minister of Defence and new Sports Minister Norbert Darabos

The Federal Minister of Defence, who had been a member of the Cabinet of Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, was re-appointed to the same office by Chancellor Faymann and sworn in on 2 December 2008. In addition, he became Sports Minister, taking over the tasks of the outgoing Chancellor and of Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka, who changes to the Ministry of Finance.

In an interview with the Austrian Press Agency (APA), Darabos promised to draw a clear line between his two fields of activity. He wanted to launch a structural discussion in Austrian sport, to widen the sphere of responsibility of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) – including the prosecution of doping offenders – and to introduce criminal prosecution for doping abusers in the aftermath of Bernhard Kohl's case, who was banned for two years for doping after having become third in the Tour de France. Darabos intends to plead with the other European sports ministers for an EU-wide approach.

After the APA interview and an interview with the daily "Kurier", which also revolved around doping, were published, the Austrian associations for track-and-field sports (ÖLV) and cycling (ÖRV) stated unanimously that they fully supported the proposals of the new sports minister. The ÖLV informed that a "reasonable and moderate procedure" was required to "incorporate new measures into the existing legal system". It was inconsistent that prison sentences could be imposed on doping offenders, while fraudulent managers were only fined. The exclusion of doping offenders from public aid should cover really all aspects of support. The entire legal framework had to be adjusted. While legal provisions had to be tightened on the one hand, more effective protection mechanisms had to be introduced for athletes on the other hand, as failures of the control system could not be excluded despite utmost care.

The ÖRV stated in a press release that it had called for the criminal prosecution of doping offenders for many years: "Now this demand could become a reality soon. In the latest Anti-Doping Act a clause was enshrined that the doping instigators will be sanctioned under criminal law. We hope that the new Sports Minister will comply with our request that also the athletes themselves should be punished for

doping offences under criminal law. To threaten only the doping instigators has proven to be rather toothless, as the most recent example of Kohl shows". In the interrogation Bernhard Kohl refused to name the instigators, who had caused "tremendous damage to sport", as Minister Darabos put it. ■

Outgoing Chancellor Gusenbauer pays tribute to EURO 08 winner Spain

"For the first time in the history of the European Football Championships not only the winning team is awarded a trophy. As a lasting souvenir of the great success of the national team, a special trophy is conferred on the victorious country", outgoing Chancellor and Minister of Sport Alfred Gusenbauer stated at the award ceremony "Trophy for the Winning Country" in Madrid on 29 November 2008. The idea for this statue had come up in one of the projects of "2008 Austria on the Ball" and was realised in cooperation with the Swiss artist Sylvie Fleury and the Tyrolian company Swarovski.

The statue was presented in the presence of former President of the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) Beppo Mauhart to the Spanish delegation, consisting of Spain's Vice-Football President Vicente Munoz, Madrid's Mayor Alberto Ruiz Gallardon and the Spanish Secretary of State for Sport Jaime Lissavetzky, the Austrian Ambassador to Spain, Ulrike Tilly, and the German Ambassador Wolf-Ruthart Born at the Consejo Superior de Deportes in Madrid.

"UEFA EURO 2008 was a great success for Austria", Gusenbauer said. A total of 620,000 people watched the 16 matches. More than 2 million visitors crowded the fan zones of the four host cities Vienna, Klagenfurt, Salzburg and Innsbruck during EURO. Including the audience of public viewing organised throughout Austria, the total number of visitors was probably more than 3 million. More than 8 billion people watched the matches on TV. "Austria welcomed many Spanish fans. I also think that many Austrians kept their fingers crossed for the Spaniards in the final tournament", Gusenbauer said, who is a declared fan of the Spanish lifestyle as well as of Latin American and Spanish literature – some years ago, on his explicit request, he met with author Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, who impressed him very much. ■