# News from Austria

No. 03/08

**HOME AFFAIRS | EUROPE**
Federal government: climate protection is a global challenge

**EUROPE | INTERNATIONAL**
Vienna: Arab ambassadors thanked Federal President Fischer

**ECONOMY**
2007 record of foreign start-ups in Austria

**CULTURE | MEDIA | SCIENCE**
herz:rasen – the football exhibition

**SPORTS POLICY**
Austrian federal government united in the combat against doping

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

## Federal government: climate protection is a global challenge

"The Austrian federal government supports the climate protection goals of the European Commission, underlining at the same time that – in view of the great contribution Austria has made in the past – it must be a top priority to ensure the fair distribution of the burden and to safeguard the competitiveness of the Austrian industry, and consequentially jobs."

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer responded with firm commitment to the recent climate protection package of the European Commission after the Council of Ministers on 23 January 2008. However, they criticised that the same requirements will be imposed on the Member States without taking into account their past progress made, for example, in boosting the use of renewable energies. In this field Austria ranked fourth in an EU comparison. Austria's consumption of renewable energies exceeded the target of 20% for the entire EU already now (currently 23%), stressed Gusenbauer. These previous achievements of individual states with high climate protection standards were to be taken into account when setting national targets, especially since climate protection was a global challenge.

Brussels plans to reduce the CO2 emissions of the EU-27 by one fifth by 2020 from the level of 1990. At the same time the share of energy from renewable sources (water, wind, sun, biomass) is to be increased from 8.5 to 20%.

Austria is required to cut its emissions in the areas of transport, buildings, agriculture, waste, etc. by 16% by 2020 and raise its share of green energy to 34%. However, the federal government demands a fair distribution of the burden among the Member States and presented Austria's official position on 24 January 2008. Excessively stringent measures would have an adverse effect on Austria as a business location, on industry and the respective employment segments. Finally, it was crucial to take into account consumer interests. As a pioneer in the field of renewable energy sources in the EU, Austria started from a high level in climate protection.

The recent eco proposals of the European Commission would cause considerable extra expenses to the Member States and could lead to a relocation of the steel industry from Europe to, for example, China, where in the production of one ton of steel 50% more CO2 are released than in Europe. According to the position paper, the Austrian federal government in general supported the objectives of the EU Commission, which played a globally leading role in the climate and energy policy. ■

## Minister for Women Bures: EU gender report is a clear mandate

Minister for Women's Affairs Bures: "We have a joint responsibility for active equality policies. The reduction of the income gap, better job opportunities for women and the reconciliation of family and working lives are the yardstick of success for the federal government, regional governments, the economy and universities."

Minister for Women's Affairs Doris Bures described the latest EU gender report for the period 2001 to 2006 as a "mandate to act for the government": "Austria's women deserve to be among the top", stated Bures in a press release on 25 January 2008. In close cooperation with the economy, a package promoting women is to be adopted.

Financial funding is to be tied to women's promotion schemes in companies. Firms offering job re-integration of further training programmes as well as childcare facilities to their female staff are to be given preference. "Economic growth and wealth are only possible by taking advantage of the potential of women", emphasised the Minister for Women's Affairs.

Furthermore, Bures pled for a "real focus on girls" in reforming the apprentice funding scheme called "Blum bonus". Thus the access of girls to men-dominated technical jobs with better career and income opportunities is to be facilitated. Furthermore, Bures wants to achieve equal opportunities for women at universities (e.g. as University Board members).

According to the EU gender report, Austria has a higher income gap and less women in top jobs than the EU average. The EU Commission considers the "reconciliation of professional, private and family lives" as the key element in achieving equality between women and men. The flexibilisation of the childcare allowance system had been the first step of the government in this respect, explained the Minister. The next move would be to create more childcare facilities. ■

## Minister of the Interior Platter presented integration report

Migrants in Austria need more support in the fields of language learning, education, labour market and housing. This was the core conclusion of the integration report presented by Minister of the Interior Günther Platter on 22 January 2008.

A set of measures is to be adopted before the summer. One strategy will consist in making increased use of teachers with a migration background in nurseries and schools. ■

## Vienna: Arab ambassadors thanked Federal President Fischer

The ambassadors of the Arab states accredited in Vienna thanked Federal President Heinz Fischer for strongly condemning the anti-Islam statements of Susanne Winter, a municipal politician of the FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) in Graz. The speech of the Austrian head of state at the New Year's reception for the diplomatic corps (on 15 January 2008; see News from Austria, No. 02) demonstrated that Austria was committed to a "peaceful and respectful dialogue of cultures, religions and civilisations", stressed Algerian Ambassador Taous Feroukhi in her capacity as the doyenne of the Council of Arab Ambassadors in a statement submitted to the Austrian Press Agency (APA) on 21 January 2008. With statements like "That was not the voice of Austria", the Federal President had distanced himself very clearly from the verbal attacks of the politician from Graz against Islam and the prophet Muhammad as a person.
The chairwoman of the Council of Arab Ambassadors also welcomed the legal steps taken against this "racist position", which could provoke intolerance and Islamophobia. Feroukhi appealed to the leaders of the parties represented in the Austrian Parliament to take a common stance condemning "systematically and publicly all extremist statements regarding religion or race, in particular those directed against Islam and Muslims". The diplomat also highlighted the efforts of the Austrian federal government to integrate the Muslims living here. ■

## Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer at World Economic Forum in Davos

On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer warned against "overacting" on 25 January 2008. He clearly rejected the interest rate reduction of the European Central Bank. Neither Austria nor Europe had to be afraid of a recession. ■

## Foreign Minister Plassnik in the Middle East

On 3 February 2008 Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik left for a six-day trip to the Middle East, taking her to the Lebanon, Israel, the West Bank and Syria. Plassnik's Middle East trip takes place in a period of aggravating crises and conflicts in the region. The Lebanon, the first stop of the Foreign Minister, has been without a head of state since November 2007. In Beirut Plassnik will met with anti-Syrian Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, whose Cabinet is supported by Europe and the USA.
Other meetings have been scheduled, e.g. with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Plassnik's counterpart Tzipi Livni as well as Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, Syria's head of state Bashar al-Assad and Grand-Mufti of Syria Ahmad Bader Hassoun. ■

Ambassador Taous Feroukhi: "The Council of Arab Ambassadors thanks Austria for its commitment to a peaceful and respectful dialogue of cultures, religions and civilisations."

## Chad mission: farewell to Austrian troop

The EU's mission in Chad started with a two-month delay (due to lacking transport vehicles). On 29 January 2008 a farewell ceremony was held for Austria's 160-men-strong troop by Minister of Defence Norbert Darabos. The EU mission was a humanitarian mission, underlined the Minister of Defence in his statement: "This is about the women and the children." The advance unit of the Federal Army had departed for the crisis region on 30 January 2008. ■

## Worldwide commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust

On 27 January 1945 the NS concentration camp Auschwitz was liberated by the Soviet army. In accordance with a UN resolution, the anniversary has been commemorated every year after 2005 as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day to honour the six million victims. On this occasion, numerous politicians all over the world warned against re-writing history, persecution, racism and discrimination. Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer reminded of "our duty to take a stand against anti-Semitism and the denial or playing down of the Holocaust". Prammer also stressed the "permanent obligation" of political alertness.
Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik explained: "The Holocaust did not start in Auschwitz." After WWII. the Europeans started to live in democracies and states governed by the rule of law and the respect for human dignity. ■

## 2007 record of foreign start-ups in Austria

In 2007 more than 200 international companies moved to Austria. The volume of investments increased by more than 70% to 394.3 million euros.

Austrian Business Agency (ABA), the state-owned company providing consulting services for business start-ups in Austria, lured more than 200 international companies to Austria in 2007. One third came from Germany. The investment volume amounted to 394.3 million euros; this is a plus of more than 70% compared to 2006. Austria welcomes the fact that the foreign start-ups are not the result of costly subsidies. Only seven companies had received public funding for moving to Austria, explained ABA head Rene Siegl at the press conference presenting the results of last year on 21 January 2008. To pocket subsidies was "not the motivation of companies establishing premises in Austria", stated Siegl. A "low one-digit million amount" had been granted. In Austria cases like the planned closure of the Nokia plant in Bochum (Germany) did not occur.

Minister for Economic Affairs Martin Bartenstein underlined that enterprises not complying with the arrangements would have to repay the subsidies. He was not in favour of a recent proposal of EU Industry Commissioner Günter Verheugen to abolish governmental subsidies.

In 2007 201 companies opted for sites in Austria, i.e. 32% more than last year. As a result, 2,087 new jobs were created.

ABA takes advantage of EURO 2008 to intensify advertising for Austria as a business location. Besides billboards at airports, ads are placed in foreign newspapers. ■

## Chancellor Gusenbauer: inflation rate has to be reduced

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer expressed his concern about the high inflation rate of about 3.6% in December 2007. The inflation rate of the recent months had to be reduced to an average level and efficient solutions had to be searched for jointly, said Gusenbauer (interviews with "News"/31 January and "Standard"/ 28 January 2008). In particular the recipients of lower incomes or pensions and families suffered under the impact of surging prices for food and energy.

At government level measures are considered to cushion price hikes, e.g. a freeze of fees and one-time payments or automatic exemptions from prescription fees to help those earning incomes below the top-up benefit threshold of 747 euros. A package to reduce the burden is to be developed within the next weeks.

In Parliament on 30 January 2008 the head of government expressed his understanding for the insecurity among pensioners and promised "considerable" pension increases for 2009. This year 150 million euros more had been spent than earmarked in the budget law, informed Gusenbauer.

The continuing favourable development in the labour market has been welcomed. In January the unemployment rate dropped by 9% year-on-year to 268,752 jobseekers. ■

## EURO 2008 means 11,000 new jobs

The European Football Championship EURO 2008 is expected to create 11,000 new jobs in Austria, including 6,000 permanent positions. Furthermore, an increase in economic growth by 0.15 percentage points is likely to be recorded. These are the findings of a study presented by the Economic Chamber Austria (WKÖ) and the Public Employment Service (AMS) on 29 January 2008. ■

## Russian Gazprom acquires stake in OMV gas trading platform

Russian gas monopolist Gazprom acquires a 50% stake in the OMV gas trading platform in Baumgarten (Lower Austria). The aim is to develop this transit hub into Central Europe's largest gas trading platform. The respective agreement was signed in Vienna on 25 January 2008. One third of all Russian natural gas supplies to Western Europe are already handled through Baumgarten. ■

## Sheik Al Jaber plans to invest in AUA

Saudi-Arabian Sheik Mohammed Bin Issa Al Jaber wants to become a strategic investor of Austrian Airlines (AUA) with 150 million euros. Intensive negotiations are being conducted. In Vienna the Saudi-Arabian billionaire owns "Grand Hotel", "The Ring" and "Hotel Schwarzenberg". ■

## herz:rasen – the football exhibition

Austria and Switzerland are feverishly awaiting the European Football Championship EURO 2008 (from 7 to 29 June 2008). The interactive show "herz:rasen – the football exhibition" will be opened already on 4 April 2008 (ending on 6 July 2008). On a total of 2,000 $m^2$ the exhibition explores the phenomenon "football" with a focus on the European football of the past 20 years. It provides insights about football players and fans, heroes and scenes, venues, techniques – on the pitch or those used in training and for media presentation – and, last but not least, of the transformation of football into a pop culture spectacle. Between artefacts of the game and fetishes in the living rooms, football is covered with photo and film documents of historical and contemporary media.
The interactive show was conceived by the "2008 – Austria on the Ball" team and the Technical Museum Wien (TMW). ■

## Exhibition on Viennese football: "The elegance of football"

The Vienna City and Land Archives as well as Vienna Library present the joint exhibition "The elegance of football" ("Die Eleganz des runden Leders": 5 June to 26 September 2008) devoted to the great era of Viennese football between 1920 and 1965.
The show is curated by Alfred Pfoser, director of Vienna Libraries and historian Wolfgang Maderthaner, expert for football and popular cultures of modernism in Vienna.
The three exhibition venues focus on different thematic aspects. While the Information Centre on the ground floor of Vienna's City Hall accommodates the major part of the show, the Vienna City and Land Archives at Gasometer display the biographies of legendary personalities of the Vienna football scene. Football as a cultural and media phenomenon is in the limelight at Vienna Library. After World War I. Viennese football gradually became "absolute world class".
After the 1920s great kickers like Josef Uridil, Matthias Sindelar, Rudolf Hiden, Walter Nausch, Willi Hahnemann and, later, Ernst Happel or Gerhard Hanappi reached the status of legends, which they enjoy to the present day. ■

## Vienna: Karl-Renner Prizes 2007

Vienna's Executive Councillor for Culture Andreas Mailath-Pokorny presented the prizes of the Dr. Karl-Renner Foundation of the City of Vienna for the year 2007 at Vienna's City Hall on 22 January 2008. "I am pleased that we can pay tribute to the work of important organisations by awarding this prize". "Reporters without Borders", "Independent Iranian Women in Austria (GIF)" and "Wiener Tafel" were NGOs characterised by their unbureaucratic and efficient commitment to freedom of the press and diversity of opinion, to integration as well as the combat against poverty. "Reporters without Borders Austria" were founded in 1998. Headed by its proactive President Rubina Möhring, its mission is to fight for the respect of the right to freedom of the press and diversity of opinion. GIF has operated as an association that is independent from political parties and religious communities since 1986. It supports migrants and their families in cooping with their life situations in Austria. "Wiener Tafel" is an independent environmental and social association founded in 1999 bridging the gap between the throw-away society and the poverty society by collecting and distributing food surpluses: More than 60 organisations receive up to two tons of foodstuffs per day. ■

## Diagonale 08: leitmotif Africa

The Festival of the Austrian Film – Diagonale 2008 – takes place in Graz from 1 to 6 April 2008. It spotlights important topics of the present – migration, living in foreign countries or as a foreigner in one's own country. The leitmotif is Africa. The festival does not want to present it as the "black" continent but – according to the programme – "as a country with which we all want to, should and must deal a lot and whose people we can get to know more profoundly through films". Hence, the opening film screened in the Helmut List Hall in Graz focuses on an art event, which allowed many people in the European region to learn more about African culture: "Back to Africa" is a documentary by Othmar Schmiderer. Five circus performers, who were enthusiastically acclaimed by the audience of André Heller's circus show "Africa! Africa!", were filmed on their way back home.

www.technischesmuseum.at

www.k-haus.at

www.oesterreich-am-ball.at

The elegance of football: Die Eleganz des runden Leders – Werkstatt-Verlag publishes the catalogue accompanying the exhibition, ed. by Roman Horak and Wolfgang Maderthaner. They also authored another important book: Mehr als ein Spiel. Fußball und populare Kulturen im Wien der Moderne. Löcker Verlag. Vienna 1997. ISBN 3-85409-276-8

The artists are presented in their personal, family, social and cultural environment, the issue "workplace Europe" is approached from a different perspective.
The festival concentrates on "media education /moving images" with the concrete aim of incorporating the medium film to a greater extent into curricula at educational, training and teaching level. In the framework of the programme section "Transnational identities: talking to one another, living together" Diagonale does not only focus on Africa but also on the former Yugoslav states neighbouring Austria. Cooperating for the first-time with the Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF), three feature films from the repertoire of the SFF and two documentary film programmes are shown.
At the Presentation of the Austrian Film cinematic works are screened that were released in Austrian cinemas in 2007. The programme selected – from more than 500 entries – is rounded off by historical and international specials. A new section of the Diagonale festival is titled "Love/Work/Cinema".
Diagonale continues its cooperation with the international short film festival "VIS/Vienna Independent Shorts" and the Slovenian "DokMa Festival Maribor", from whose programmes some documentaries were selected. In the year of EURO 2008 Diagonale also forms an alliance with the festival "Short Film Days Winterthur" (Switzerland), which has been planned for a long time. However, this cooperation has hardly anything to do with football but aims at a comprehensive cultural exchange between Austria and Switzerland. ■

www.diagonale.at

www.wienmuseum.at

www.diefaelscher.at

## New opera house in Ljubljana built with Austrian engineers

Dutch architects (Willem Jan Neutelings and Michiel Riedijk), a German acoustics specialist, a Slovene investor and the Austrian engineering office "Vasko+Partner" – a truly "EUropean team" – build a new opera house in Slovenia's capital Ljubljana. It is integrated into a complex of apartments, shops and offices and is expected to be inaugurated in 2012. The entire building complex called "Novi Kolizej" has been financed privately and comprises a 75m-high office tower, a 63m-high housing tower, a restaurant at a level of 40m with a view on the city as well as 1,100 garage parking spaces. It is expected to cost 180 million euros.
"Vasko+Partner" claim to be among Austria's largest general engineering consultancies with 170 employees and 7 international branches. ■

## Wien Museum Karlsplatz: Nagoya – the emergence of a Japanese metropolis

There is hardly another country where urbanisation is progressing as fast as in Japan. Nagoya is the best example of this phenomenon. Founded 400 years ago as a feudal fortress town, where ten thousands of Samurai lived, the fourth largest city of Japan is today the centre of a densely populated industrial region with about 8 million inhabitants and company groups such as Toyota or Brother. The fast transformation of Japanese urban culture between tradition and Western influence is the subject of the exhibition "Nagoya – the emergence of a Japanese metropolis", staged at Wien Museum Karlsplatz from 7 February to 4 May 2008. It brings outstanding and valuable exhibits to Vienna, from art treasures to relics of urban every-day life. ■

## Austrian film "The Counterfeiters" nominated for Oscar

For the first time since 1987 (Wolfgang Glück's "38 – Auch das war Wien") an Austrian feature film has been nominated for the "Foreign Film Oscar", as the "Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film" is commonly referred to. The concentration camp drama "The Counterfeiters" by Stefan Ruzowitzky was co-financed by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) The work previously winning prizes and premiered at Berlinale 2007 was selected from a total of 63 non-English language candidates as one of the five nominees announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on 22 January 2008. The film with Karl Markovics in the leading role was produced by Vienna-based Aichholzer Film together with its German partner magnolia Film. It competes under the English title "The Counterfeiters" with contributions from Israel, Poland, Kazakhstan and Russia. The award ceremony of the 80th Academy Awards will take place on

24 February 2008.
The film "The Counterfeiters" was subsidised by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) under the film/TV agreement and produced in 2006. It was shown in the Austrian cinemas in spring 2007. The successful production has been sold to more than 60 countries. The film script is based on the memories of Holocaust survivor Adolf Burger. It tells the drama of a workshop of money counterfeiters, which the Nazis had set up in the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen near Berlin with the help of the prisoners. ■

## Ingela Bruner – first rector of a state university in Austria

The University of Natural Resources and applied Life Sciences finally realised what Austria had waited for in the past 643 years. Mechanical engineer and science manager Ingela Bruner, 55, born in Sweden, has become the first rector of a state university in Austria. The researcher, who presented no "Habilitation" (qualifying paper for lecturing at university), rejects access restrictions to university, plans to strengthen teaching and further develop the university at four different sites. In a discussion on women's quotas at universities in the context of her inauguration she told reporters that gender parity in appointments should be enshrined in the law. Bruner stated that Austria had a lot of practice in this field, mentioning the Austrian social partnership as an example. The new rector will adopt a new approach to appointments. Vacancy announcements for professorships in related subjects are to be published simultaneously. This would make it possible to recruit several persons and entire teams at the same time.
Against the background of the inauguration of Bruner and her vice-rectors, three new funds were established, which have been endowed with 950,000 euros for teaching as well as grants for student projects and young researchers.
The new rectorate has already sent the appropriate signals. Women were selected for the positions of the head of library, the head of the Teaching Centre and the first professor's chair.
Ingela Bruner also innovated university fashion. New, simple gowns – the gown of the rector has a stand-up collar and a large hood – were created by Austrian designers Wendy & Jim, alias Hermann Fankhauser and Helga Schania. The internationally renowned duo has presented its fashion at the prêt-à-porter shows in Paris since 1999.
President Heinz Fischer hopes that Bruner's inauguration of will have a "signalling effect". The universities were advised to take advantage of the potential of women.
Minister for Science Johannes Hahn praised Bruner for being "above all an excellent science manager".
Minister for Women's Affairs Doris Bures hopes that "women in leading positions will become the rule – not only at universities. (...) Future legislation is to ensure that at least 50% of all candidates for university board members nominated by the responsible bodies are women". Bures stressed once more her proposal for the forthcoming amendment of the University Act. This was important as the university board members were decisive in selecting the rectors. ■

## Josefstadt premiers a play by Bertolt Brecht

As theatre manager Herbert Föttinger stated in a recent issue of the magazine "News", Theater in der Josefstadt will premiere the play "Die Judith von Shimoda" in the next theatre season. It was created during Brecht's Finnish exile in 1940 and has been known only as a fragment with few dialogues and drafts of scenes for a long time. In 2006 the Finnish stage adaptation was discovered in the estate of co-author Hella Wuolijoki. The Frankfurt-based Suhrkamp publishers edited the work on this basis. The play will be directed by Heribert Sasse. ■

## Akademietheater: applause for Breth's production of "Motortown"

Simon Stephen's "Motortown" had already been presented in the version of the London production at Wiener Festwochen 2006. Now director Andrea Breth developed the first, exciting Austrian production of the play. Nicholas Ofczarek plays a "war hero" returning from Basra (Iraq), who – traumatised by his mission – turns into a dangerous weapon for his environment. He harasses, tortures and finally coldheartedly kills a young coloured girl (Asztou Maraszto). "Motortown" is a London suburb, where the large Ford plant was located. ■

Simon Stephens, born in 1971, worked for some time as a history teacher in London's "Motortown".

Wiener Akademie-theater:
Tel. 0043/1/51444-4145

## Austrian federal government united in the combat against doping

The Austrian federal government pledged its support for the combat against doping. This struggle requires ongoing adjustments and campaigns. The current discussion about allegations of systematic "blood doping" in Austria has shown that tightening legislation, e.g. the Drug Abuse Act (Arzneimittelgesetz/AMG), could be helpful in the anti-doping combat. At interministerial meetings in autumn 2007 the weak points were pinpointed and a need for action was identified. After a bill was submitted by the Ministry of Health initiated by the Secretariat of State for Sport, Parliament also presented a four-party proposal for a resolution, calling upon the federal government to prepare comprehensive legislative measures to extend and tighten anti-doping provisions. This legislative initiative is to include above all a ban on blood and gene doping as well as on owning doping substances enshrined in the criminal law. Legislation has to be tightened to conduct a criminal prosecution (especially in cases of blood doping) against those working with the athletes, e.g. trainers, coaches or doctors. The aim is to discuss bills that are fit for practical application so as to ensure that existing loopholes will be closed still in spring 2008. These regulations will make it possible to create the necessary legal framework for the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) Austria starting operations on 1 July 2008 as well as to provide a sound legal foundation for its activities. Thus the Austrian coalition government continues its united and unrelenting struggle against doping in sport. ■

## The future of sport in Europe

The combat against doping, racism and violence, common rules for professional sport as well as the autonomy of sports clubs were the topics explored at the meeting of sports ministers from Great Britain, Luxembourg and the Secretaries of State for Sport from France, Germany, Spain and Portugal held at the invitation of IOC President Jacques Rogge in Lausanne. The attendees discussed the future of sport in Europe after the official recognition of sport in EU legislation (in the Treaty of Lisbon) and the presentation of the "White Paper on Sport" by the European Commission. It was agreed that in the future the leading IOC representatives would disucss sports issues with the working group of EU ministers of sport and secretaries of state to achieve a coordinated common approach. The next meeting will be held in Ljubljana in March as Slovenia currently holds the EU Presidency. In concrete terms, questions regarding the autonomy of sports clubs, the anti-doping combat and joint activities in the field of professional sport were addressed. Measures to protect under-age athletes as well as action programmes against racism and violence in sport are to be launched. For the first time EU funding will become available for this purpose. ■

## Vienna Opera Ball turned the spotlight on EURO 2008

This year the Vienna Opera Ball turned the spotlight on EURO 2008. Besides the traditional Fächerpolonaise, a "football ballet" performance was given in the opening ceremony. Dancers with a ball on their heads competed playfully in a match. Sports enthusiast and star tenor José Carreras enchanted the ball guests with Italian songs by Nicola Valente and Furio Rendine. Federal Chancellor and Minister of Sport Alfred Gusenbauer and Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka welcomed numerous football eminencies from the participating countries as the "heralds" of EURO 2008, among them Franz Beckenbauer, who had been responsible for the successful 2006 Football World Cup in Germany, Otto Rehhagel, the German coach of European champion Greece, and last but not least Member of the Swiss Federal Council and Sports Minister Samuel Schmid as the representative of EURO 2008 co-host Switzerland. The ball-goers had an opportunity to admire the revamped EURO trophy – named after former UEFA Secretary-General Henri Delaunay – displayed on a pedestal. ■

The Vienna Opera Ball 2008 – for the first time organised by Desirée Treichl-Stürgkh – was held in the night from 31 January to 1 February 2008.

**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 VII/2, 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.