

# News from Austria

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Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer: "The occupation was another step to WWII, causing misery to millions of people."

"All political actions after 1945 must therefore be understood as an antithesis to the National Socialist criminal regime. A common approach must be reached despite different political positions."

For the full text of the speech of Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer on 12 March 2008 see: [www.bka.gv.at](http://www.bka.gv.at)

Vice-Chancellor Molterer: "One must be able to see one's own solution models also from the perspective of the other."

"12 March 1938 was the gloomiest day in our history."

Federal President Fischer: "Austrians were both victims and perpetrators."

"The key to political bridge-building is to know what is acceptable to the other person, one's partner and one's opponent."

Speaker of Parliament Prammer: "The myth of Austria's status as a victim is a fiction of history."

## Austria commemorates 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Anschluss"

The "Anschluss" ("annexation") took place on 12 March 1938. German troops crossed the Austrian border and integrated Austria into Hitler Germany. Then Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg had resigned on the eve of the event under the pressure of German ultimatums. On 15 March 2008 Hitler delivered his notorious speech to a cheering crowd of 250,000 people at Vienna's Heldenplatz and announced that the "Ostmark" ("Eastern march", i.e. Austria) would become part of the German Reich. The entry of German troops marked the beginning of an unprecedented terror against Jews and all dissidents. Based on estimates, no less than 70,000 to 80,000 people were arrested in the first six months.

On 12 March 2008 the heads of the Second Republic commemorated the events 70 years ago in the historic meeting hall of the Reichsrat in Parliament. The participants approved the historical analysis, according to which Austrians were both victims and perpetrators of the NS regime. The speakers also highlighted the context of contemporary history and the present climate in the coalition government. The events of the interwar period should be seen as a warning for today's generations.

The annexation, NS dictatorship and the loss of Austria's sovereignty had been a prelude to World War II, entailing persecution, misery for millions of people as well as exploitation, reminded Chancellor Gusenbauer. The head of government warned against "political duels" as well as "lacking tolerance and readiness for dialogue". "Internal disintegration" and "political failure" in the First Republic had led to the "Ständestaat" (corporative state) and finally the capitulation to the Nazis. "The dark phases of our history showed "where the use of offensive language can lead to", said Gusenbauer admitting that in the past months "the words" had not been selected very carefully. One should be more careful so as not to undermine the credibility of politics, warned the Chancellor.

President Heinz Fischer demanded that Austria had to address and come to terms with history. Austria had been a victim of the Nazi's "military aggression" under international law but this had been facilitated by a "considerable number of

fanatic National Socialists" in Austria. Fischer demanded "more energy for constructive work" in politics. ■

## Wiesenthal Institute at Palais Strozzi

The federal government pledged to establish the "Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies" in the Council of Ministers on the anniversary of Austria's "annexation" to Nazi Germany. The institution will be accommodated in Palais Strozzi in Josefstädterstraße (Vienna) as from 2011. The Federal Republic, the City of Vienna and the responsible sponsoring association will each assume one third of the running costs. ■

## Court President Korinek resigns

On 12 March 2008 Karl Korinek (67), President of the Constitutional Court, announced his resignation taking effect at the end of April. He explained his decision by health problems after a cardiac infarct and bypass surgery. His successor has not yet been named.

Korinek has been President of the Constitutional Court since 2003, which he joined in 1978. He exercised his office as the supreme judge with incorruptibility and scrupulosity, for which he has won respect and great renown. ■

## Regional election in Lower Austria: absolute majority for ÖVP

At the regional election in Lower Austria on 9 March 2008, the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) led by Governor Erwin Pröll won an overwhelming majority, while the Social Democrats (SPÖ) faced an all-time low. Based on the preliminary result (excluding postal votes) the ÖVP received 54.3% of all valid votes, the SPÖ 25.6%, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) 10.5% and the Greens 6.8%. Distribution of the seats in the regional parliament (Landtag): ÖVP 31, SPÖ 15, FPÖ 6, Greens 4.

## Election in Tyrol on 8 June 2008

The regional elections in Tyrol will take place on 8 June instead of 5 October 2008, announced Governor Herwig von Staa (ÖVP) and his deputy Hannes Gschwentner (SPÖ) on 13 March 2008. ■

## Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer at EU summit in Brussels

At the traditional spring summit of the EU heads of state and government in Brussels on 13 and 14 March 2008, Austria was represented by Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Vice-Chancellor and Minister of Finance Wilhelm Molterer as well as Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik. The meeting was chaired by incumbent EU Council President, Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Jansa. A union between the EU and the non-European countries bordering the Mediterranean was agreed on. The Mediterranean Union is to be based on the existing Barcelona process between the EU and Northern Africa and to provide fresh impetus to bilateral relations. Details are to be presented at the planned EU special summit in Paris on 13 July 2008. Chancellor Gusenbauer underlined the importance of the fact that all EU Member States would participate on an equal footing. All states bordering the Adriatic Sea, among them Croatia, Montenegro and Albania, were invited to participate as well. The Barcelona process has so far been the framework for cooperation between the EU and Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, the Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the Palestinian autonomous regions and Turkey.

A tight timetable for implementing the common climate protection goals was adopted. The negotiations are to be concluded positively by the end of 2008. Binding requirements for cutting greenhouse gas emissions and minimum shares of renewable energy resources have to be laid down within one year. One measure consists in reducing emission certificates for the industry and making them more expensive. In this context, Austria, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic and Great Britain won a first victory with regard to their demand for granting early free allowances for emitting a specific amount of CO<sub>2</sub> ("CO<sub>2</sub> emission certificates") to energy-intensive industries (steel, aluminium, paper and chemical industries). The risk that these energy-intensive industries are relocated is explicitly mentioned in the final declaration. "Adequate measures" are envisaged for the revised EU emissions trading scheme as from 2013 if the negotiations about an international climate protection agreement fail. According to the summit conclusions, a global climate protection

agreement would be the best solution. Gusenbauer welcomed the result explicitly.

The EU heads of state and government pledged their support to Austria with regard to the couple from Salzburg kidnapped in Tunisia.

## 60 years Israel: ceremony at Vienna's city hall

In the 60<sup>th</sup> year of the existence of the independent state Israel the traditional fundraising event for Israel was opened ceremoniously on 6 March 2008 at Vienna's city hall. About 600 guests from the Jewish community as well as the political and economic arena participated in the biggest "Magbit" ceremony ever organised in Vienna. Money is collected for the Israeli foundation fund Keren Hayesod ("United Israel Appeal"). In his festive speech Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer stressed that as the place of birth of the Zionism of Theodor Herzl Austria had to assume "a consistent position, also with regard to its role in the Middle East". In any case, a solution of the Middle East conflict had to take into account the "vested right of Israel to live in safety, freedom and within internationally recognised borders", said Gusenbauer.

Former Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky had been the first to reject "Austria's very comfortable role as a victim" and had "initiated a retroactive act of liberation" from the NS period. "It is a personal concern of mine to ensure in Austria a basic consensus founded on the recognition of Israel and the Jewish population in our country", emphasised the Chancellor. ■

## Morten Kjaerum new Director of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency in Vienna

The international human rights expert from Denmark, Morten Kjaerum (50), was appointed director of the EU's Vienna-based Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) on 7 March 2008. Kjaerum will assume office on 1 June 2008 and head FRA in his first term of office for five years. He was congratulated by the Chancellor. With this step, the "functioning of this important institution" was finally ensured and a sign of the EU as a community of values had been given, said Gusenbauer. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "The EU considers a global agreement on climate protection the best solution."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "It is a personal concern of mine to ensure in Austria a basic consensus founded on the recognition of Israel and the Jewish population in our country."

## Government adopts infrastructure package and rules for carers

The federal government adopted the legal framework for expanding infrastructure by 2013 in the Council of Ministers on 5 March 2008. Within the next six years, 18.8 billion euros will be invested in expanding the railway system, explained Minister for Transport Werner Faymann. Ten railway projects would be implemented ahead of schedule, while three projects were slightly delayed. Additionally, three new railway projects and four new expressways would be realised in Lower Austria and Burgenland. 60 million euros on average were available per year for eliminating slow-down sections in the railway network.

Between 2008 and 2013 about 10.7 billion euros will be invested in expanding the railway system; 8.1 billion euros are earmarked for motorways and expressways. Railway boss Martin Huber stated that after completing Vienna's central railway station, the Lainz tunnel, the Wienerwald tunnel and the four-track western railway section by 2013 travelling from Vienna to Salzburg would take just below two hours and the distance between Vienna and Munich could be covered in three hours.

In the Council of Ministers on 5 March 2008 the coalition partners agreed on a "solution fit for the practice of carers providing care services during 24 hours a day", as Minister for Social Affairs Erwin Buchinger and Minister of Health Andrea Kdolsky put it. New tasks are added to the responsibilities of the 24-hour care providers. They will be allowed to wash and feed patients, to perform medical tasks after adequate training, e.g. giving insulin injections. The new regulation will take effect on 1 April 2008 but does not cover free-lance carers. Parliament will pass a respective resolution on 13 March 2008. ■

## Government adopted package on rents to combat inflation

Minister of Justice Maria Berger and Minister for Economic Affairs Martin Bartenstein presented a package on rents for combating inflation in the Council of Ministers on 11 March 2008. It was adopted by Parliament only two days later, on 13 March 2008. Thanks to the new "Rental Anti-Inflation Act", on 1 April 2008 basic rents will

not rise by 3.6% but only by 2.2%. Instead of using the December inflation rate as an adjustment factor, this year the annual average of the Consumer Price Index 2007 is used as a basis. About 350,000 households with basic rents are affected. For monthly rents of 500 euros, the annual cost savings are 92 euros. ■

## OECD: tax burden in Austria increased despite reforms

Despite the tax reforms 2004 and 2005, in Austria the financial burden resulting from wage taxes and social insurance contributions has not decreased but increased. This is the result of a study published by the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) on 11 March 2008. Low and average income earners as well as families and sole parents are affected most. Austria is among the countries with the highest taxes on gainful activities, ranking fifth in an international comparison. Only Belgium, Hungary, Germany and France register higher income tax rates of up to 55.5%. In Austria taxes and social insurance contributions accounted for 48.5% of the total labour costs last year.

One of the reasons is that social transfer benefits (childcare allowances, family allowances) are not adjusted to inflation. Another cause mentioned by the OECD is cold progression, i.e. the fact that the progressive tax system is not adjusted to inflation. Out of the 30 OECD members 17 countries have automatic inflation adjustment. Moreover, the report criticises that deductions for higher incomes are relatively moderate. These findings and the high inflation rate (recently 3.2%) encouraged Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer to realise his plans of an advanced tax reform 2009. ■

## Saudi Arabian billionaire Al Jaber invests in AUA

On 12 March 2008 the Supervisory Board of the listed Austrian Airlines (AUA) gave the green light for the equity participation of Austro-Arabian investor Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber. Jaber wants to invest 150 billion euros in the framework of a capital increase, for which he will receive approximately 20% of the AUA shares. ■

18.8 billion euros are invested in expanding the railway system in Austria by 2013.

The basic rents are raised by 2.2% instead of 3.6%. This benefits about 350,000 households.

Chancellor Gusenbauer opened State Opera exhibition on year 1938

On 10 March 2008 Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vienna State Opera director Ioan Holender opened the exhibition “Die Wiener Staatsoper und der ‘Anschluss’ 1938“ (“Vienna State Opera and the ‘Anschluss’ in 1938”) in the Gustav Mahler Hall of Vienna State Opera. The show developed by historian Oliver Rathkolb and State Opera dramatic advisors Andreas and Oliver Lang demonstrates that the opera house was not a safe haven during the NS period. Moving documents, photos, reports of time witnesses and explanatory texts document how Jewish colleagues – conductors, singers, dancers – were dismissed, displaced and murdered in concentration camps. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer stated by way of introduction: “While there are still many institutions hoping to pass unnoticed through the anniversary years, I explicitly welcome the fact that Vienna State Opera has been prepared to face its history – even if it is ever so hurtful“. After WWII. the opera house quickly became the cornerstone of the recovering Republic of Austria’s self-image. “While Austria was seeking to re-establish its identity, the opera house was perceived as the victim of the total war and the opening of old wounds was avoided. On the contrary, the opera house served to dress the wound“. Vienna State Opera had been completely “burnt out” even before the bombs of the allied forces. It was much earlier that the artists and staff but also a large audience had been driven away.

Vienna State Opera director Holender referred to an “extraordinary day in this opera house“, thanked the exhibition-makers and considered it “a special signal that Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer himself had come to inaugurate the exhibition“. The aim of the show was not to blame somebody personally but “we only want to shed light on the dark history“. ■

Heldenplatz in Vienna: thousands of candles in the “night of silence“

On 12 March 2008 – the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “Anschluss” (“annexation”) of Austria to Hitler Germany – about 1,500 people commemorated the 80,000 Austrian victims of the NS regime in

Vienna’s Heldenplatz, lighting countless candles forming a “sea of light”. Besides former Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, a delegation of the federal government participated in the commemorative ceremony: Chancellor Gusenbauer, Women’s Minister Doris Bures, Minister of Justice Maria Berger, Minister of Education Claudia Schmied and Secretaries of State Heidrun Silhavy and Christa Kranzl. Vranitzky stated in an impressive speech: “All those standing here may say: We defeated the criminal Adolf Hitler. But let’s be on the alert, we have to defeat him again and again. And this is what we will do“. Vranitzky also pointed out that “despite the difficult situation in the concentration camps something evolved“, namely the idea of European unification and how a peaceful Europe could be created. “It is my duty to thank you for having strengthened the European unification process“, the former Chancellor told the audience. Thanks to European unification, it had become possible to live in peace and “to live in a way showing that inhumane excesses belong to the past“. ■

After 70 years: new HAKOAH Sports Centre in Vienna’s Prater

HAKOAH – meaning “strength” in Hebrew – was founded in 1909 by Jewish students not admitted to the students’ societies. It was also an expression of the growing self-confidence of liberal Jews and the changed attitude towards physical exercise. After the end of WWI., HAKOAH became very popular and developed into the most important Jewish sports association. To an even greater extent than in the late phase of the Habsburg monarchy, Vienna had become a city of immigrants. For in the new nation states the conflicts between different nationalities were becoming fiercer, including pogroms and displacement. In the interwar period Vienna became the destination of a Jewish refugee movement, above all from Galicia. About 200,000 Jewish citizens lived in Vienna up the 1930s. HAKOAH flourished and numerous sections for individual sports disciplines were founded. In the football season 1924/25, the HAKOAH football players won the Austrian championship title. One of the football stars was Béla Guttmann, later a kicker of the New York Giants and a legendary coach in

[www.staatsoper.at](http://www.staatsoper.at)

[www.lettertothestars.at](http://www.lettertothestars.at)

[www.hakoah.at](http://www.hakoah.at)

Speech by Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer at HAKOAH opening: [http://10.204.16.34/site/cob\\_28429/currenpage\\_0/5432/default.aspx](http://10.204.16.34/site/cob_28429/currenpage_0/5432/default.aspx)

Brazil and of Benfica Lisboa, the discoverer of Eusébio. According to Ferenc Puskás, he played a decisive role in popularising the 4-2-4 system, which Brazil's outstanding team with Didi, Vava, Pelé, Garrincha practised so marvellously in 1958. In the interwar period HAKOAH offered a unique combination of intellect and sports. With thousands of active athletes, HAKOAH was not only the club with the highest number of members in the world, but the HAKOAH square in Vienna's Prater had also become a meeting place of the Viennese Jewish society and of liberally minded people. Among the famous HAKOAH-ians was the writer, outstanding swimmer and water polo player Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979), an ardent fan of the Austrian miracle team around Matthias Sindelar. After Sindelar's early death in January 1939 – interpreted as suicide by Torberg, who regarded him as a symbol of the annihilation of the proud Jewish club culture by the Nazis – he wrote one of the most beautiful sports poems in literature during his exile in the USA, "Auf den Tod eines Fußballspielers" ("Ballad on the Death of a Footballer").

In 1933 the political situation started deteriorating and it became increasingly difficult to practise sports regularly. Many HAKOAH-ians left Vienna during this period. In 1938 the property of the association near the Ernst Happel stadium was confiscated by the Nazis ("Aryanised" as they called it). The name HAKOAH was expunged from public records in 1941. The systematic annihilation of the Jewish population followed.

After World War II., some Jewish repatriates, who were by no means received with open arms by the official Austria, tried to revive HAKOAH Vienna. Although the Jewish population in Vienna was only small after the Holocaust (then about 6,000 people), some sections of HAKOAH were newly established.

The obstacles to SC HAKOAH Vienna were removed only very late in history, when the "Agreement of Washington" governing restitution was concluded in 2002 and the Ministry of Finance stopped using the plot of land in Prater. The Jewish Religious Community (IKG) acquired the estate and rented it to HAKOAH. The modern Karl Haber Sports Centre was built on about 20,000 square metres, i.e. one third of the original surface. It includes a

multi-purpose hall, stands for about 260 persons and various outdoor facilities, e.g. tennis courts, track and field facilities, a lawn for sunbathing. The Jewish school in Castellezgassee as well as the Maimonides home for the elderly lacking capacity are also moving to Prater. The educational centre for 600 children will consist of a kindergarten, a primary school and a grammar school. The opening of the building complex has been scheduled for September.

Eminent personalities participated in the ceremonious opening of the new HAKOAH, e.g. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer, Vienna's Mayor Michael Häupl, IKG President Ariel Muzikant, HAKOAH President Paul Haber, who is the new founder of the sports centre and an expert in sports medicine, as well as Austria's multiple European champion in swimming Markus Rogan. Acting as a fundraiser, he tried to collect the lacking money for a swimming pool. Häupl said that with HAKOAH he wished to recover "some of the Viennese culture which we had here before NS barbarism". Chancellor Gusenbauer explained that the federal government fully supported this "open social centre of Viennese sport, ready for people of all religions and all social backgrounds".

"L'Autriche vivante": Joseph Roth during his exile in Paris

"L'Autriche vivante" ("Austria is alive") were the headlines of the French paper "Ce Soir" on 6 April 1938, some weeks after the "annexation". The article addressed an event in Paris, where not only German writer Heinrich Mann but also a prominent Austrian stood up for the country annexed by Hitler: Joseph Roth, author of "Radetzky Marsch" ("Radetzky March") and "Legende vom Heiligen Trinker" ("The Legend of the Holy Drinker"). An exciting show at Vienna's Literaturhaus (ending on 28 May 2008) covers Roth's exile in Paris, where he had to flee to from the Nazis in 1933 and where he died in 1939. With interviews, previously hardly shown documents, photos, caricatures by Bil Spira and above all original French newspaper articles, the exhibition provides far-reaching insights into the last years of Roth's life and of his environment in Paris. The ardent fighter was deeply affected by Austria's "annexation" and died from the effects of an alcohol addiction. ■

Famous books by Friedrich Torberg, e.g. "Der Schüler Gerber/The Examination" (film adaptation by Wolfgang Glück), "Die Tante Jolesch/Aunt Jolesch" as well as translations of the books of Ephraim Kishon.

[www.literaturhaus.at](http://www.literaturhaus.at)

## Kreisky Prize: Chancellor Gusenbauer praises quality and diversity of subjects

The Kreisky Prize for the Political Book 2007 was awarded at the Bruno Kreisky Forum on 7 March 2008. The first prize went to Alaa al-Aswani for his novel "Der Jakubijân-Bau". The "Prize of Acknowledgment" was conferred on Christine Ockrent and Sandrine Treiner for their "Schwarzbuch zur Lage der Frauen", while the publishing house from Mühlviertel "Edition Geschichte der Heimat" received the special prize recognising the achievements of publishers. In his presentation speech Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer reiterated that all prize winners "excelled in combining quality, topicality and a diversity of subjects". The prize awarded this year for the 15<sup>th</sup> time enjoyed "great international reputation" and had become a type of "quality seal" for the readers, conforming to the quality standards of Bruno Kreisky.

The Chancellor stated that with his novel the winner of the first prize Alaa al-Aswani "had succeeded in presenting an exciting and at times depressing kaleidoscope of the Egyptian society". The other prize-winning work "Schwarzbuch zur Lage der Frauen" – a 'black paper' on the situation of women – was described by Gusenbauer as an "impressively comprehensive attempt at depicting the situation of women in society and in the global context". The Chancellor also paid tribute to the heroic one-man company Franz Steinmassl behind "Edition Geschichte der Heimat", which is "deeply committed to the history of a region".

Alaa al-Aswani, who is not only an author but also a dentist with a practice in Cairo, explained in his thank-you statement that he felt honoured to receive the prize granted in the name of Bruno Kreisky. Kreisky had "upheld the values of justice for all the people". To strive for democracy was a "basic need of humankind", the lack of democracy was a "serious disease" leading to numerous negative symptoms. ■

## Unique in Vienna: Tutankhamen and the World of the Pharaohs

The Vienna Museum of Ethnology, which forms part of the Museum of Art History (Kunst-

historisches Museum/KHM), presents "Tutankhamen and the World of the Pharaohs". The exhibition running until 28 September 2008 displays 140 treasures from the tomb of the famous pharaoh and other archaeological finds of Egyptian antiquity. The sensational show organised by National Geographic, Arts and Exhibitions International und AEG Exhibitions in cooperation with the Egyptian Supreme Council of Antiquity and the KHM is shown in Europe exclusively in Vienna. Record figures have already been registered in the advance ticket sales; about 50,000 tickets have been sold since December 2007.

Tutankhamen was one of the last Egyptian kings of the 18<sup>th</sup> dynasty rising to power in an important, conflict-ridden period of the Egyptian history. The teenage king died aged 18 or 19 in the ninth year of his rule (1323 B.C.) under mysterious circumstances. His almost intact tomb was discovered in 1922 by British researcher Howard Carter.

In the first six sections, the exhibition, structured around different themes, focuses on the life of Tutankhamen as a pharaoh and the position of the king in Ancient Egypt. Amazing exhibits can be admired, e.g. of the period of Chefren, whose impressive pyramid is the only world miracle of Antiquity preserved to the present date, as well as of Queen Hatshepsut, who later ruled Egypt, and Psusenne I, whose golden funerary mask holds the visitors spellbound. ■

## Rush on "New Middle School"

In the next school year about 3,500 pupils will start to attend a new type of secondary school, the so-called "New Middle School" ("Neue Mittelschule/NMS"). Minister of Education Claudia Schmied was "very proud" about the high number of registrations. Based on a rough assessment, 30 to 40 percent of the children qualified for attending higher secondary schools. Registration with NMS model schools differed regionally. While in Carinthia the demand exceeded capacity, the three Styrian model schools still admit pupils. This is not so surprising as Styria offers the greatest supply of NMS study places (in total 1,500). In Burgenland demand varies locally. In Vorarlberg the NMS still admit pupils, while the only NMS in Upper Austria has been overbooked. ■

Bruno Kreisky Prize: Alaa al-Aswani: Der Jakubijân-Bau. Lanos-Verlag. Basel 2007.

Christine Ockrent, Sandrine Treiner (ed.): Das Schwarzbuch zur Lage der Frauen. Pendo-Verlag. Munich 2007.

"Edition Geschichte der Heimat": <http://members.aon.at/fsteinm2/>

Tutankhamen: tickets available also at: [www.tut.khm.at](http://www.tut.khm.at)

## Integration Prize for Sport 2008

“Integration is, indeed, one of the most important tasks of sport“, said Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka at the presentation of the “Prize for Integration Through Sport 2008“. The aim of the newly created prize category is to highlight the importance of sport in integrating migrants in Austria and to present successful models to the public. Prizes will be awarded for the best sports activities, events and projects contributing towards integration. The Integration Prize is promoted by the “Verein zur Förderung der Integration durch Sport“ (“Association Promoting Integration Through Sport”) with the support of Caritas and the Austrian Integration Fund. The latter is in charge of raising the awareness of the prize in the municipalities and in schools. A jury selects the four best sports projects and initiatives in the field of integration from all entries. Competition documents can be downloaded from [www.sport.austria.gv.at](http://www.sport.austria.gv.at) and [www.integrationsfonds.at](http://www.integrationsfonds.at). The deadline is 1 May 2008, the award ceremony will take place in mid-May. ■

## Sales plus for sports articles retail trade in super sports year

The Austrian sports articles retail trade can look forward to reaping a significant sales plus of more than five percent in the super sports year 2008, in which the European Football Championship (EURO) and the Olympic and Paralympic Summer Games in Beijing will take place. This corresponds to almost 15 percent of the total sales of the sector in 2007. According to the Economic Chamber Austria, this year the sale of fan articles, football outfits and footballs will account for approximately 300 million euros. The Olympic Games will contribute another 3 to 5 percent to the annual sales. In 2007 the sales revenue of sports retailers rose only by 2 percent to 1.333 (2006: 1.307) billion euros from the prior-year level. The sports article sales on the entire market rose insignificantly by 2.5% to 2.167 (2006: 2.114) billion euros. ■

## Anti-Doping Charter signed for EURO 2008

By signing the Anti-Doping Programme for

UEFA EURO 2008 at a workshop organised for the 16 participating associations in Vienna on 12 March 2008, UEFA assumes a pioneering role within the international football family. Urine and blood samples are taken for the first time at a football world championship. In total about 300 doping checks will be performed, unannounced checks in the training camps of all teams will be a priority already in the preparatory phase. The first results of the unannounced training checks will be available before the beginning of EURO 2008. ■

## “SPORT:DIALOGUE“: joining forces in the combat against doping

“The combat against doping will be won together or not at all. Athletes, coaches, sports clubs, doctors, sponsors, organisers, the media and politics are called upon to wage this battle jointly and with determination in the interest of the future of sport“, this was the unanimous tenor of the “SPORT:DIALOGUE“, in which German doping expert Werner Franke as well as Olympic medallists and sports officials Trixi Schuba and Toni Innauer participated. The “SPORT:DIALOGUE“ is a contribution of the Secretariat of State for Sport to current sports policy issues. The 68-year-old former track-and-field athlete and trainer is one of the most renowned German cell and molecular biologists and is Germany’s researcher committed most firmly to the combat against doping. With the new 2007 Anti-Doping Act and NADA Austria, the Austrian federal government credibly established Austria’s position as a strong advocate of anti-doping policy based on legal safeguards. By doubling the funds for doping checks and information to 1.2 million euros and providing for more severe criminal sanctions under the Drug Abuse Act, to be adopted by Parliament still before the summer, the federal government has taken another crucial step. ■

[www.sport.austria.gv.at](http://www.sport.austria.gv.at)  
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