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Austria ratified EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon

The National Council (upper house of Parliament) ratified the EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon on 9 April 2008. Austria was the eighth country to incorporate the Reform Treaty into its national legislation. The Treaty creates a new legal foundation for the enlarged EU-27 and makes it more capable to act. It will enter into force on 1 January 2009 after ratification by all the EU Member States. Ireland will be the only country holding a referendum (12 June 2008).

The new legal framework was ratified with the two governing parties, i.e. the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), as well as the Greens in opposition voting in favour. The Freedom Party (FPÖ) and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ) were opposed and criticised harshly that no referendum had been held before ratification.

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer described the European Union as a "success story, which we wish to continue writing today". Austria was the "investor number one" in the new EU Member States, reaping the strongest growth from Central and Eastern Europe. "Let's say yes to this successful path which is leading to more wealth and jobs in Austria", said Gusenbauer.

The allegation of the FPÖ and BZÖ that the Reform Treaty was being forced on Austria was rejected by the Chancellor: "Absolutely nothing forces us to approve this Treaty. We want to ratify it because we consider it a necessary and important step for Europe."

Austria had taken advantage of the opportunities arising from EU enlargement, Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer stressed too. The Austrian economy is already earning 125 billion euros with exports. "Of course, this is inseparably linked to the European development", Molterer expressed his support for European integration.

One day before ratification, the Federal Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor as well as Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik and Minister of Justice Maria Berger had emphasised in a joint press conference that Austria's success story in the EU would continue. Ratification of the Reform Treaty was only another step to make the new Europe of 27 more efficient, which was of vital interest to Austria "for we benefit from our membership more than any other country", the

head of government underlined.

The considerably more decisive turning-point had been the Maastricht Treaty. On its basis more than 60% of the population had voted in favour of Austria's accession to the EU in 1995. The Treaty of Lisbon had no "fundamental new quality" but incorporated important additional elements, such as basic rights or climate protection as "a prerequisite for enforcing global agreements", Gusenbauer said.

Austria's neutrality would not change after ratification: "We make our contribution to peace and security". Where and to what extent was decided exclusively by Austria, the Federal Chancellor stated.

Among the innovations of the EU Reform Treaty are a permanent Council President, a new foreign representative, wider EU responsibilities in internal affairs and justice, measures to strengthen the European Parliament and the national Parliaments as well as enforceable fundamental rights. ■

Social partners presented health reform concept

The presidents of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) and the Economic Chamber Austria (WKÖ), Rudolf Hundstorfer and Christoph Leitl, respectively, submitted the social partners' health reform concept to the federal government on 10 April 2008. Both sides vehemently excluded insurance contribution increases and benefit cuts. Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer described the social partners' paper as a "first important step", Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer considered austerity measures in the health system to be one of the "most important tasks" of the present government.

To contain the health insurance deficit amounting to no less than 355 million euros only in the current year, the social partners intend to restructure the health system radically. As from 2012 onwards, 600 million euros are to be saved annually, especially in the fields of medication, doctors and administration. As an interim aid up to 2012, the Federal Republic is to provide several 100 million euros. The government leaders plan to involve doctors, the health insurance institutions, hospitals and the Länder into the process. The reorganisation package is to be adopted by 2010. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "We want to strengthen Europe, and this will make Austria stronger too."

Information on the EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon, including the full Treaty text, can be downloaded from: www.bmeia.gv.at

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Patients will not be affected by the reforms in the health system. We know that we reached the end of the flagpole as far as insurance contribution increases and patient co-payments are concerned."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer pays official visit to Finland

On 14 April 2008 Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer departs for a short trip to Helsinki. The programme of his official visit includes talks with his Finnish counterpart Matti Vanhanen and President Tarja Halonen focusing on subjects like the climate change and the situation in the Western Balkans as well as in Kosovo.

Another issue expected to be raised is cooperation between the two countries in international crises and the recent request that Austria should strengthen its role as a mediator in Chad together with countries like Finland and Sweden, the Chancellor's office announced in the preliminaries of the visit. ■

Jordan's royal couple visiting Austria

On 9 April 2008 Jordanian King Abdullah II., accompanied by his wife Queen Rania, paid an official visit to Austria. The programme included political talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer. Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik met with her new Jordanian counterpart Salaheddin Al-Bashir.

In the evening, the monarch participated in the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Austrian special police force Cobra in Wiener Neustadt, whose special drills were studied by him in depth in 1994.

After a meeting with Federal President Fischer, Abdullah II. thanked Austria explicitly for its long-term engagement in the Middle East peace process and expressed his hope for a future "fruitful role" of Austria in the framework of the EU.

The monarch reported about a "critical phase" in the Middle East peace process which is likely to face serious challenges in the next months. President Fischer shared this view and also referred to the peace process initiated by the USA in Annapolis in 2008. The Austrian President was invited to pay a state visit to Jordan in November.

In memory of his father King Hussein, for whom Austria had always had "a place in the heart", King Abdullah spoke about a "long and warm friendship" shared by Austria and Jordan. ■

Slovenian President Türk pays first formal visit to Vienna

On 7 April 2008 new Slovenian President Danilo Türk met with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer during his first formal visit to Vienna.

The conflict over bilingual topographical signs in Carinthia that has been unsolved for years could not strain the relations between Austria and Slovenia, Türk and Fischer stressed. Both sides referred to the best relations "in history". As far as additional bilingual topographical signs in Carinthia are concerned, Fischer explained to continue working towards the full realisation of the rights of the Carinthian Slovenes enshrined in Article 7 of the Austrian State Treaty and confirmed by Constitutional Court judgements. ■

Minister of Defence Darabos visits Austrian troop in Chad

On 7 April 2008, Minister of Defence Norbert Darabos travelled to Chad, where he will pay a three-day visit to the Austrian EUFOR contingent. At present 153 Austrian soldiers are deployed in the capital N'Djamena and in the eastern region bordering the Sudanese crisis region Darfur. Talks were held by Darabos with government representatives and opposition politicians of Chad. They asked Austria to act as a mediator during the reestablishment of democracy and human rights in Chad. Darabos agreed to lead exploratory talks with the neutral Finland and Sweden.

The Minister reaffirmed his commitment to humanitarian missions under the UN flag and pled for extending the EU mission originally ending on 30 June to March 2009. ■

Gusenbauer calls for debate on a Holocaust "culture of memory"

On the occasion of the general assembly of the Austrian Friends of Yad Vashem in Linz on 8 April 2008, Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer called for an "in-depth debate about our culture of memory", clearly illustrating Austria's approach to coming to terms with the Holocaust. At the same time, the Chancellor stressed the need for the Israeli NS memorial Yad Vashem as a place of memory. ■

King Abdullah II.: Austria has adopted a balanced and friendly attitude in the Middle East peace efforts. I hope that this attitude will be fruitful also in the European Union."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Our culture of memory requires an in-depth debate across society."

"There are still many who do not even want to remember."

EURO 2008: high value-added for Austria's economy

EURO 2008 will contribute an additional GDP growth of 0.21% to Austrian tourism.

The net value-added during EURO 2008 will amount to about 539 million euros; roughly 1 million additional hotel nights are expected.

The number of jobseekers declined by 11.5% in March 2008.

The favourable economic effects of the European Football Championship (EURO) 2008 in June are likely to surpass all expectations of the domestic economy. Austria will benefit from an additional value-added of about 600 million euros in tourism, the media and telecommunications sector.

While last year SportsEconAustria (SpEA) – an institute set up on the initiative of the Federal Chancellery – still assumed an economic plus of 0.15% of the GDP, it now predicts an additional growth of 0.21% for tourism alone (This year tourism is expected to grow by a total of 7%).

Additional effects, such as accompanying family members of the stadium guests or visitors of the “public viewing“ zones, had originally not been taken into account in the estimates, SpEA head and leading economist of the Federation of Industrialists (IV) Christian Helmenstein explained to reporters on 10 April 2008. A review of the Football World Cup in Germany had also shown that the stadium guests had not only spent an amount in the country (250 euros) that was four times above the estimate but that they had also stayed significantly longer than assumed (six days on average). The estimated minimum stay of the EURO match visitors in Austria was now adjusted to four days.

Based on the latest data, the net value-added from tourism during EURO 2008 is likely to amount to about 539 million euros. Additional sales in tourism will total 1.008 billion euros, and roughly 1 million number of additional hotel nights are assumed. The football event is expected to create more than 10,000 jobs, including about 6,000 on a sustainable basis. The media and telecommunications industry will register a value-added plus of 57 million euros.

Helmenstein expects the host countries Austria and Switzerland to reap also clearly sustainable image gains. After the Football World Cup 2006, Germany moved up in the Nations Brand Index. This entailed an image effect of about 480 million euros. Austria and Switzerland would benefit from sustainable image gains worth approximately 250 million euros.

According to manager of the Austrian Tourist Office (ÖW) Petra Stolba, 7 to 10 billion people would watch the largest sports event in the

Austrian history and third largest in the world on TV. About 15,000 reporters, 250 camera-teams and 650,000 stadium guests were expected. With the exception of Great Britain, the six most important countries of tourist origin were represented. Advertising concentrated on Austria as a tourist destination and business location. ■

Unemployment decreased in March for the 25th time in a row

In March the number of jobseekers dropped by 11.5% or 27,259 people to 210,459. Especially sharp declines were recorded in the building sector, industry and tourism. The total unemployment rate decreased for the 25th time in a row in March. Employment rose by 2.6% or 85,000 to 3,384,500 persons.

The unemployment rate based on EU criteria recently stood at 4.1% (last year: 4.5%). Based on the national calculation method, it declined to 5.8% compared to 6.8% in February and 6.7% in 2007. Minister for Economics Martin Bartenstein expects an unemployment rate of 3.9% - and consequentially full employment – for 2010. ■

Government adopted contractor liability for the building sector

The federal government decided to introduce “contractor liability” in the building sector in the Council of Ministers on 9 April 2008. Social Minister Erwin Buchinger referred to a “milestone in social policy“. The aim of the new law (planned entry into force: 1 January 2009) is to contain social fraud in the building sector.

Similarly to the value-added tax practice, the contractor of building services will be liable for social insurance contributions. In general this is the main contractor having accepted a construction contract and subcontracting some services to other companies. According to the new rules, the main contractor will be liable with 20% of the wages to ensure that the subcontractor pays the social insurance contributions for its workers. The contractor is exempted from this obligation if it transfers automatically 20% to the social insurance institution or if it subcontracts enterprises from the “list of companies exempted from liability“ (companies active in construction for three years without arrears of contribution). ■

Austria and Israel intensify research cooperation

Austria and Israel will intensify cooperation in the field of science and research. This is the outcome of an official visit to Israel by Minister of Science Johannes Hahn. The main goals are to increase the mobility of students, graduates and fledgling researchers as well as to promote cooperation in basic research. To this end, an Austro-Israeli Science Day is to be held in Vienna in the current year. ■

Great Austrian culture festival in North Rhine-Westphalia

Up to July the German Land North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) will be the venue of Austria's largest cultural festival ever staged abroad. The 200 events in eight cities organised by "scene: österreich in nrw" deliberately focus on contemporary trends in all branches of art in the Alpine Republic beyond the waltz and the Sacher cake. An overview of contemporary literature and art, filmmaking, dance and music between classical music, jazz and electronic music is offered in Bielefeld, Bonn, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Essen, Hagen, Cologne and Münster. In Dortmund electronic art is presented with sound collages in a first encounter with the European capitals of culture Linz (2009) and the Ruhr district (2010).

In addition, the Essl Museum (Klosterneuburg/Lower Austria) has taken 60 works of Austrian contemporary art to NRW. In Bonn a German-Austrian ensemble presents "Die letzten Tage der Menschheit" ("The Last Days of Mankind") of Karl Kraus. Karin Beier from Cologne will show her successful Shakespeare production of Vienna Burgtheater "Measure for Measure". On 18 May 2008 Dortmund gives a "feast for all the senses" with a guest performance of a ballet by Landestheater Linz.

Young pianists from Austria perform at the Beethoven House in Bonn and Junge Philharmonie Salzburg gives a guest performance in Bonn. A tribute to jazz from Austria – with a fusion of Alpine folklore, Vienna Beat and electronic music – will also be paid, especially in Düsseldorf, Cologne and Bonn.

Experimental and topical documentaries highlight critical Austrian positions. But also

feature films are included in the programme, presenting for example Ulrich Seidl's "Import/Export" (in the presence of the director) in Bonn as well as Barbara Albert's latest film "Fallen" ("Falling"). Dortmund and Münster also offer an up-to-date Austrian children's and youth film programme developed for schools.

Numerous excellent Austrian writers have the honour of participating in the festival of NRW and invite to a literary *tour d'horizon*, e.g. Karl-Markus Gauß, Thomas Glavinic, Josef Haslinger, Alois Hotschnig, Michael Köhlmeier, Robert Menasse, Gerhard Roth, Raoul Schrott, Franz Schuh, Marlene Streeruwitz and Josef Winkler. ■

Online encyclopaedia of Vienna University against gaps in knowledge about EU

According to a Eurobarometer survey, only 41% of the Austrians think to know how the European Union (EU) works. Political scientists of Vienna University are of the opinion that the inadequate knowledge about the EU is one of the main reasons for the lacking acceptance of the Union in the population. Therefore a new electronic EU encyclopaedia based on Wiki was developed by students of political science in seminars at Vienna University. The political scientists were not satisfied with the quality of other online encyclopaedias. They want to draft "generally comprehensible entries based on European research findings" for their new online encyclopaedia. The basic structure of EU Wiki is expected to be available by the end of June. The online encyclopaedia can be used as a source of information, discussion and reflection on EU-relevant subjects even at the current stage. ■

Mourning for painter Josef Mikl

Josef Mikl, one of the most influential representatives of Austrian post-war art, died of cancer aged 78 on 29 March 2008. He was laid to rest in the cemetery of Döbling on 3 April 2008 in the presence of the closest family members. He became known to a wide public in the wake of the renovation of a sumptuous hall ("Großer Redoutensaal") at Vienna's former Imperial Palace Hofburg after a fire. His work consists of a ceiling painting and 22 individual

www.scene-festival-nrw.de

On 25 June 2008, EU Wiki will be presented to the public:
<http://euwiki.univie.ac.at>

paintings in red and yellow, depicting famous writers and their work.

The artist born in Vienna in 1929 won renown as the most important protagonist of the Informel style in Austria. However, Mikl always rejected to be associated with a specific style. A retrospective of his comprehensive oeuvre, which is not limited to painting but also encompasses sculpture, drawings and literary works, had been staged at Kunsthalle Krems (Lower Austria) in 2004.

Former Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel showed himself deeply affected by the death of Josef Mikl and highlighted “the creative, witty and courageous“ mind of the deceased. Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied paid tribute to the “genius“ Mikl, who had to face “strong animosity before the value of his work was recognised“. Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer described him as an “unorthodox thinker who did not want to fit into categories“. ■

Homage to Marina Abramović, Jonas Mekas and Nobuyoshi Araki

At the annual reception for the members of the Austrian Curia for Science and Art on 1 April 2008, Federal President Heinz Fischer awarded the Austrian Badge of Honour to performance artist Marina Abramović born in Belgrade in 1946 and film director, writer and curator Jonas Mekas born in Lithuania in 1922, who is one of the most important protagonists of the US avant-garde cinema. Japanese photographer and filmmaker Nobuyoshi Araki, who is famed as the chronicler of modern Japan, was also elected to the Curia for Foreign Art. As he was unable to attend, he will accept the award at a later date.

During the 1970s, Abramović taught at the Academy of Visual Arts in Novi Sad, in 1975 she participated in a performance of Hermann Nitsch. In 1997 she received the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale for her video performance installation “Balkan Baroque“ staged in the Yugoslav pavilion of the Biennale. It addressed the artist’s origins in Serbia and Montenegro and the Balkans conflict.

Jonas Mekas launched the magazine “Film Culture“ (1954-1996), which had a decisive impact on the development of the *film d’auteur* (films directed by the authors) in the USA. In 1958 Mekas started to write film reviews for the

New York city magazine Village Voice. In 1962 he created – together with Emile de Antonio – the independent Film-Makers’ Cooperative for experimental filmmakers. The Anthology Film Archives founded by Mekas in 1970 accommodate the world’s largest collection of avant-garde film art. Although his narrative films and documentaries are held in high esteem, Mekas is best known for his diary films, e.g. his enchanting “Reminiscences of a Voyage to Lithuania“ (1972). In Lithuania Jonas Mekas is also highly appreciated as a poet.

Nobuyoshi Araki, born in Tokyo in 1940 won fame in the genre of nude photography. After his studies at Chiba University, he worked for an advertising agency. In the 1970s his photos published in the avant-garde comic magazine “Garo“ caused a furore. Araki invented the term “photo I“ for changes between fiction, truth and desire. He took photos of his surroundings daily, almost manically. In Japan his works were often censured for “obscenity“. One of his most famous models is singer Björk from Iceland, who admires his works. Araki produced the photos for her album “Telegram“ (1996). ■

Vienna: Oskar Kokoschka’s late work

Vienna Albertina presents an overview of Oskar Kokoschka’s late work from 1934 to his death in 1980. O.K. was born in Pöchlarn (Lower Austria) in 1886 as the son of a goldsmith’s family from Prague. The show (ending on 13 July 2008) comprises about half of his oeuvre. His widow Olda Palkovská Kokoschka donated many sketch books (predominantly drawn with colour pencils) to the museum. Therefore about 90 works on paper, often very unadorned and delicate, come from Vienna Albertina. The exhibition highlights this important period in his artistic creation with a total of 44 paintings and about 160 water colours and prints. More than half of the exhibits belong to Albertina. With more than 1,200 works, it boasts one of the largest Kokoschka collections in the world.

The show traces the restless life of the artist, which came to resemble an odyssey through the war-ridden 20th century Europe. From 1933 to 1938, O.K. was represented together with his avant-garde, Dadaist and expressionist colleagues in almost all “Schandausstellungen“

Marina Abramović:
www.imdb.com/name/nm0009127/

Jonas Mekas:
www.imdb.com/name/nm0577263/

The Anthology Film Archives:
www.anthology-filmarchives.org/

Nobuyoshi Araki:
www.arakinobuyoshi.com/

Oskar Kokoschka. Exile and new home 1934-1980:
www.albertina.at

(“Shame Exhibitions”, as the Nazis called the shows of “Degenerate” artists).

Klaus Albrecht Schröder tried to reposition Kokoschka’s late work in a show at Kunstforum in 1991. During the boom of abstract art after 1945 artists like Kokoschka or Picasso had been regarded as hopelessly old-fashioned. Later the protagonists of the new “wild“ and figurative painting, e.g. the Leipzig School, considered them visionaries of postmodernism. ■

Premiere at Vienna State Opera: Dornhelm’s film portrait of Karajan

To mark the 100th birthday on 5 April of Herbert von Karajan, Robert Dornhelm’s sensitive film portrait “Karajan oder Die Schönheit wie ich sie sehe“ (“Karajan or Beauty as I see it”) was premiered at Vienna State Opera on 30 March 2008. The documentary produced by Unitel Classica – originally founded by Leo Kirch and Karajan 40 years ago – and MR-Film for the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) and the German TV channel ZDF forms part of a special programme devoted by the ORF to Karajan. Vienna State Opera Director Ioan Holender presented his opening remarks to about 700 invitees, among them the conductor’s widow Eliette von Karajan: “He conducted 263 performances in this opera house and set new standards unlike any other. 44 years have passed since the end of his term as a director, which lasted eight unforgettable years and was very important for this opera house and for our country”. Robert Dornhelm’s film about the unique artist Karajan does not exclude his problematic dark sides during the NS period, for which he was punished with a prohibition to exercise his profession up to 1947. ORF Director General Alexander Wrabetz stressed the special presentation of the film which had been broadcasted by ORF and 3sat on 4 April 2008. Unitel producer Jan Mojto thanked the obviously very moved Eliette von Karajan “for her confidence”, which had made it possible to obtain access to the private archives. ■

Vienna: Watzlawick Ring of Honour to theological sociologist Berger

The theological sociologist Peter L. Berger born in Vienna in 1929 was awarded the 2008 “Paul

Watzlawick Ring of Honour“. Berger had to leave Austria as a child in 1938. He went to the USA, where he studied and taught inter alia at the University of North Carolina. From 1958 to 1963 he did research at the Hartford Theological Seminary. Since 1981 he has been a professor of sociology and theology at Boston University. In 1985 he also became Director of the Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs. His work “The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge“ (1967), written together with Thomas Luckmann, is considered a standard work of social theory.

The Watzlawick Ring of Honour offered by the Vienna Medical Chamber has been awarded for the first time. It is to be granted to high-ranking scholars committed to an interdisciplinary dialogue between the humanities and natural sciences as well as between technology and social studies. The ring was designed by students of the master class of architect and designer Paolo Piva at Vienna University of Applied Arts. As Berger said after the award ceremony in Vienna’s city hall, he was astonished about the debate of a “post-secular society” conducted in German theological sociology. Today Europe was “the only continent to which the term ‘secularisation’ was really applicable”. There were “early signs” that this fact was “changing slowly” but to speak of a “return of religion” was inadequate. The secularisation thesis of Max Weber linking social modernisation to a decline in religiousness had to be modified. The “best sociological example” of this necessary correction were the USA, where religion and modernism did not exclude one another. ■

Minister of Culture Schmied: “one million” to improve film education

Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied will make available one million euros for “seven projects for more and better film education“.

According to a concept developed jointly with the Austrian Film Institute (ÖFI), the young audience is the main target of the measure. For example, discussions with time witnesses at Austrian schools will help to improve the understanding of Stefan Ružowitzky’s Oscar-winning film “Die Fälscher” (“The Counterfeiters“). ■

World record by Markus Rogan: first world champion from Austria

In the final of the men's 200m backstroke at the world short course swimming championships in the Manchester swimming arena on 13 April 2008, Markus Rogan won his first gold medal in world championships. He is the first world champion in Austria's history of swimming.

Rogan outrivaled US star Ryan Lochte with a world record time of 1:47.84. This means Rogan was 1.21 seconds faster than Lochte's short course record in 2006 and improved his own European record by a remarkable 2.02 seconds. The total number of medals earned by the Austrian Swimming Federation (OSV) in Olympic Games, world and European championships rose to 75 thanks to the new double European champion of Eindhoven. So far Rogan has won 27 medals – 9 gold, 14 silver, 4 bronze – at international large-scale events. The OSV owes more than one third of its spectacular medal record to him. Markus Rogan seems to be closer than ever to the dream of his life, i.e. to win Olympic gold. ■

Historic weekend for Austrian judokas

Austria's judokas were also responsible for a historic moment. Ludwig Paischer from Salzburg and Sabrina Filzmoser from Upper Austria won the European champion titles at the European Judo Championships in Lisbon. Paischer was crowned European champion already for the second time (after Bucharest 2004). Filzmoser was not less successful and could finally celebrate her first great title. Austria currently holds 25 European championship gold medals. Athletes of the Austrian Judo Federation (ÖJV) earned 96 medals for Austria. ■

EURO 2008 on the Internet – all information for football fans

The official website of the European Championship (EURO) 2008 will inform millions of football fans on the Internet about the tournament. UEFA expects a total of 1.2 billion page hits, for which 130 reporters, correspondents, producers, camerapeople and interpreters will become active. The input will

exceed the dimensions of previous football tournaments. The homepage can be viewed in ten languages and will transmit all 31 games by live video stream. In addition, it will offer live reports (text and image), the latest news, exclusive interviews and blogs, fantasy games and prize competitions, an online fan shop, huge archives, etc. Moreover, www.euro2008.com is to become the first point of contact for fans coming to Austria and Switzerland and searching for information on the host countries and venues as well as for travel information. ■

Vienna City Marathon under the motto "Running Against Poverty"

The 25th edition of the Vienna City Marathon (VCM) on 27 April 2008 will definitely be the marathon with the largest number of participants. So far more than 26,000 applications have been registered, exceeding last year's record number already now. The motto of this year's Vienna City Marathon is "Running Against Poverty" and its sponsor will be the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). ■

Treaty of Lisbon ratified: sport becomes a European subject

On 9 April 2008, the Austrian Parliament ratified the Treaty of Lisbon (TOL). This treaty is a milestone in sport. For the first time in history sport becomes a "European" issue. Article 149 of the Reform Treaty reads: "The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function." And also for the European economy sport is a top seller. Sport in a wider sense generates value-added effects of 407 billion euros per year in the EU area, corresponding to a share of 3.65 percent in the GDP. 15 million people owe their jobs to sport. ■

www.euro2008.com

Except for the relay marathon (fully booked for 2,000 teams), registration for all competitions is still possible:
www.vienna-marathon.com

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