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Commemorating the liberation of Mauthausen concentration camp

Leading personalities of the Republic of Austria commemorated the youngest victims of the Nazi regime under the motto "I have never been a child" and celebrated the Memorial Day against Violence and Racism on 5 May 2008. The ceremony held in commemoration of the 63rd anniversary of the liberation of the Mauthausen concentration camp took place in the festive hall ("Reichsratssitzungssaal") of the Houses of Parliament. Among the attendees were not only President Heinz Fischer, members of the government and Parliament and representatives of the religious communities, but also numerous Holocaust survivors.

In her statement Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer reminded of the fact that Austria had confronted its past only at a very late stage and "upon international request". President of the Federal Council Helmut Kritzingler stressed that those still having to live with the NS crimes should be supported. However, violence and racism were not "phenomena of the past".

The victims of National Socialism were commemorated also at Heldenplatz in Vienna, where Holocaust survivors and their families, who had been invited by Austrian pupils in the framework of the school project "A Letter to the Stars", gathered. The time witnesses reminded of the horrors of displacement. President Fischer, Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer praised the commitment of the pupils and the willingness of the victims to share their painful memories with young people. In 1945 Austria had been re-built by the people, who had sworn "Never again", Gusenbauer stated. But most importantly, Israel had been erected from the moral debris of the Holocaust and celebrated its 60th birthday this year. "I am happy and proud that you continue to live this idea 63 years after the end of WWII. and the liberation. I congratulate the state of Israel", the Chancellor said. ■

63 years of Second Republic

At a special session of the Council of Ministers on 28 April 2008 to mark the 63rd anniversary of the re-establishment of the Republic of Austria, Chancellor Gusenbauer criticised some anti-EU

agitators and warned against using fears and misguided resentments for political advantage.

The federal government commemorated Austria's Declaration of Independence from Nazi Germany on 27 April 1945. After seven years of NS dictatorship, a democratic Republic had been re-established in Austria, reflecting the spirit of the Constitution of 1920, Gusenbauer said. In 1945 Austria had existed as a state only on paper. It became a reality only thanks to the determination and will of its population. "The aim was to constitute the state as an antithesis to the criminal regime of the National Socialists", the Chancellor stated. He appealed to demonstrate humility vis-à-vis the victims of the Nazi regime. ■

Measures against sexual violence

In the Council of Ministers on 7 May 2008 the federal government reaffirmed its intention that the set of measures against sexual violence enshrined in the new Anti-Violence Act, on which far-reaching agreement has already been achieved, should enter into force on 1 January 2009. The measures include a sex offenders' database, court surveillance and longer terms for expungement. ■

Government agrees on non-smoker protection

On 30 April 2008 the federal government presented its resolutions on the protection of non-smokers. In 2009 a general smoking prohibition will enter into force in restaurants and bars. Under special conditions smoking will, however, be permitted in separate rooms. Owners of one-room premises smaller than 50 m² have the choice of designating them as non-smokers' or smokers' places. Young people have to be trained and employed in the rooms for non-smokers. ■

Constitutional Court: Gerhart Holzinger new President

On 1 May 2008 renowned constitutional judge Gerhart Holzinger (60) was appointed as president of the Constitutional Court, succeeding to Karl Korinek, who resigned for health reasons. Holzinger had joined the court in 1995. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "We all know the suffering National Socialism and its ideology caused to the whole country and to all of Europe."

In 1945 Austria was re-built by people who swore: "Never again."

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "Austria as a state became a reality thanks to the determination and will of its population."

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer visits Latin America

Accompanied by a large trade delegation, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer departed for his ten-day visit to Argentina, Brazil and Chile on 8 May 2008. The programme of his bilateral visits included talks with the respective heads of government. At the end of this trip to Latin America, Gusenbauer participates in the EU-LAC (Latin America and the Caribbean) Summit in Lima (Peru).

In Buenos Aires Gusenbauer was received by Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. Both sides stressed the need for political and economic integration between the two "blobs", i.e. Europe and Latin America. Gusenbauer called for climate protection measures in a lecture given in Spanish. Climate change was an issue reaching beyond national borders.

Gusenbauer also met with leading representatives of the economic sector, notably Viktor Klima. Today the former Austrian Federal Chancellor occupies the position of the General Manager of Volkswagen (VW) for South America.

The second stop of the Chancellor's visit is Brazil, where Gusenbauer holds talks in the capital Brasilia, e.g. with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (13 May 2008). This is the first official visit of an Austrian head of government to Brazil. Brazil is the by far largest market for Austrian products in Latin America. In 2007 the trade volume amounted to almost 1 billion euros. In Santiago de Chile Gusenbauer meets with Chilean President Michelle Bachelet on 14 May 2008. The item on the agenda of his trip to Latin America is the EU-LAC Summit in Lima on 16 May 2008. ■

60th anniversary of Israel – "The burden of history"

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the foundation of Israel on 14 May 1948, Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik reminded of the "burden of history" in the relations between Austria and Israel. "Many Austrians participated as perpetrators in the unprecedented crime and the breach of civilisation of the Shoa as well as the evil of the

expulsion of the intelligentsia", Plassnik stressed in a press release of 8 May 2008. The bilateral relations had been overshadowed for a long time by the crimes committed during the NS horror regime and Austria's late assumption of responsibility for the persecution, displacement and the killing of Austrian Jews during the Shoa, Plassnik stated. Today the two states were united by a "trusting partnership and a friendship able to withstand stress". By making a "sincere commitment to Austria's responsibility for the victims of National Socialism", a new chapter in the bilateral relations had been started.

With regard to the Middle East conflict Plassnik reiterated Austria's position that "a two-state solution fully guaranteeing the right of existence of the state of Israel" was indispensable to ensure sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians. ■

Federal President Fischer at Central European meeting in Ohrid

The heads of state and representatives of 17 Central European countries held a meeting in the Macedonian resort Ohrid from 2 to 3 May 2008. Austria was represented by Federal President Heinz Fischer. The deliberations focused on the European/Euro-Atlantic integration process as well as economic and energy issues.

Federal President Fischer underlined in his statement that the European unification process could be continued on the basis of the EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon. In addition, integration could be intensified at different levels, e.g. by economic cooperation and the possible enlargement of the euro-zone. ■

Federal President Fischer signed EU Reform Treaty

Austria has completed ratification of the EU Reform Treaty of Lisbon. The signature of Federal President Heinz Fischer on 28 April 2008 was the last stage of ratification according to the Austrian Constitution. Based on a press release of the President's Office, Fischer signed the Treaty "after thorough examination of all aspects". A referendum was not necessary in Austria as the Treaty of Lisbon did not entail a complete change of the Austrian Constitution. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer:
"European integration is not only useful for Europe but for all those wishing to cooperate with Europe."

The special steelworks of Sumaré near Sao Paulo (Brazil) is Austria's largest foreign investment in Latin America.

Foreign Minister Plassnik: "Our determined 'Never again' is a lesson from our history."

"Austria has been and still is a country of Jewish fate and of Jewish fates."

Significant increase in tax receipts in the first quarter 2008

Despite gloomier growth prospects, the tax receipts increased significantly between January and March 2008. In the first quarter 2008 the tax revenue of the Minister of Finance totalled about 14.7 billion euros, exceeding the level of the same period in 2007 by almost 6%. The receipts from corporate income tax and wage tax registered above-average growth. The Länder and communities were highly satisfied about income gains – their share in the tax yield climbed by almost one fifth, while the EU contribution rose by 17.5%.

The largest individual item in the tax statistics is value-added tax. It contributed almost 5.16 billion euros to the state coffers until March. However, as a consequence of the weak consumer demand only a moderate plus of 2.5% was registered.

The second largest source of income – wage tax paid by the labour force – has grown substantially. In the first quarter, the financial authorities reaped 4.88 billion euros from wage tax, this is 8.4% or 377.5 million euros more than in the same period 2007. Hence the income from wage tax surpassed all expectations of the Ministry of Finance, which had assumed a plus of 336.4 million euros – for the entire year 2008 – in drawing up the budget. The income tax of the self-employed registered a similar plus; it went up by 8.9% to 227.2 million euros. Experts expect continuing high tax receipts up to the end of the year, especially as the number of employees is likely to increase by another 1.5%.

Taxes on the income of enterprises grew most drastically – even though on a lower level. Until March corporate income tax contributed 1.12 billion euros; this is 16% above the level of the previous quarter and just below the plus of 158.5 million euros expected at year-end. ■

Major decline in unemployment also in April

Unemployment in Austria registered another significant decline at the end of April. Compared to April 2007, the number of registered unemployed decreased by 6.5% or by 14,301 persons to 205,074. ■

Ewald Nowotny new Governor of the Austrian National Bank

The federal government endorsed the new leadership of the Austrian National Bank (OeNB) in the Council of Ministers on 7 May 2008. The successor of the retiring National Bank Governor Klaus Liebscher will be former BAWAG boss Ewald Nowotny (63). Wolfgang Duchatzek remains as Vice-Governor. Böhler-Uddeholm chief Claus Raidl will be appointed as new president of the Office of the General Council.

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer referred to a unanimous decision of the government. Personalities enjoying high renown among politicians and experts had been appointed as the new leadership of the National Bank. Nowotny will assume office on 1 September 2008. ■

EU lifts Austria's import ban on GMO maize

Austria's anti-genetic engineering policy has suffered another defeat. The EU Commission in Brussels lifted the import ban on the two genetically modified maize varieties MON810 and T25 with immediate effect. The prohibition to cultivate GMO maize may for the time being remain in force. Domestic environmental organisations were dismayed, Minister of Agriculture Josef Pröll was "disappointed" about the EU institution, as a spokesman said.

Pröll expressed his regret about the decision of the European Commission. However, it had been ensured that the prohibition of cultivating GMO maize types was upheld. Brussels was expected to submit proposals for the co-existence of common and genetically modified plants. Key questions remained unsolved. ■

Austrians buy more Fairtrade products

Fairtrade products find more buyers in Austria. In 2007 sales rose by 27% to 52.8 million euros. Last year a total of 20 million Fairtrade products was sold, Fairtrade Austria manager Hartwig Kirner informed journalists on 7 May 2008. The largest increases were registered with fruit juices (+135%) and chocolate (+31%). The top seller was the Fairtrade banana (15.4 million euros). ■

In the first quarter 2008 the tax receipts of the Minister of Finance totalled about 14.7 billion euros, exceeding the level of the same period in 2007 by 6%.

The sales of Fairtrade products increased by 27% to 52.8 million euros in 2007.

Chancellor Gusenbauer presents football book "Seitenwechsel"

The football book "Seitenwechsel" ("Change-over") developed by the Federal Press Service and published by Bohmann Verlag was presented in the Federal Chancellery on 7 May 2008. Head of Department Samo Kobenter und Peter Plener had acted as the editors of the book. The texts of the book are not directly related to EURO 2008 but address numerous football topics in an unconventional way, e.g. football and politics, the role of oligarchs, football tactics changing over the decades, the judicial system and football, the role of the broadcasting media, the fascination of leisure kicking, the magical charisma of individual players and many other topics. A total of 25 authors participated, e.g. Franzobel, Egid Gstättnner, Pia Haschke, Martin Kušej, Wolfgang Maderthner, Manfred Matzka, Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, Johann Skocek, Ernst Strouhal, Wolfgang Weisgram and Ute Woltron.

In the framework of a panel discussion, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer presented the book together with Austria Wien coach Didi Constantini and Samo Kobenter. The Chancellor, a fan of champion Rapid, hailed the publication: "Each of the stories told here draws on the great enthusiasm for the game and a knowledge about its effects of cultural integration which is acknowledged also by the experts".

The book is illustrated with original, compelling black-and-white photos, e.g. by Wolfgang Sos, and with rare treasures from the pictorial archives of the Austrian National Library. ■

DVD box: Football Fever Austria

On the occasion of EURO 2008, the Film Archives Austria published their historically unique collection of film documents on the Austrian football history.

Three of Austria's profoundest experts in football history – Roman Horak, Wolfgang Maderthner and Helmut Pflügl – guide through Austria's fascinating football history and demonstrate the connection between the world of the leather ball and the country's cultural and contemporary history. They present football as an eternally popular mass phenomenon.

The DVD 1 "A cultural history of the Austrian

football" compiles footage that has partly been unpublished to date. Moreover, the DVD embeds memorable moments into an extensive narrative highlighting many astonishing facets of the Austrian football history. An interview with Otto Pammer, the legendary cameraman of the newsreel "Wochenschau", as well as live radio reportages of the 1959 football world championship with Heribert Meisel and Edi Finger complete the first part of the edition.

The DVD 2 "From the 'miracle team' to Cordoba – a chronicle of international matches" shows the highlights in the history of the international match from 1923 to 1978 in a total of 64 film reports, reviving former huge successes of the Austrian national team. Among the film documents published for the first time are the matches of the so-called 'miracle team' and the legendary "Annexation" match Austria vs. Germany in 1938. ■

Austrian Cultural Forum New York: exhibition about EURO 2008

The European Football Championship in Austria and Switzerland is a topic also in New York. The Austrian Cultural Forum presents an exhibition on the mass phenomenon football from 28 May to 13 September 2008. The show simply called "Bread and Football" alluding to the Roman "Panem et Circenses" displays works of artists ranging from Klaus Pobitzer to Spencer Tunick. It is rounded off by a one-week film programme. As from 11 June 2008, films like Michael Glawogger's "France, Here We Come!", Bobby Farrelly's "Fever Pitch" (based on Nick Hornby's novel) or Wim Wender's film version of Peter Handke's "The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty" will be screened. The Austrian-Swiss short-film reel "Eleven Minutes" celebrates its US premiere already on 30 May 2008.

In this exhibition at the Austrian Cultural forum New York the curators Trevor Smith and Jürgen Weishäupl (cultural coordinator of "2008 – Austria on the ball") explore the question if football is really a sport supposedly uniting the nations and bringing together people from all countries in friendly matches or rather a phenomenon of the global society, by which the attention of the mass is distracted from the real problems of the world and their own lives by games in stadiums, fan zones and on TV. ■

Seitenwechsel. (Changeover). Stories about football. A publication by the Federal Press Service of the Republic of Austria. Edited by Samo Kobenter and Peter Plener. Bohmann Verlag. Vienna 2008. 237 pages, 38 illustrations, 4 graphs, softcover. ISBN 978-3-901983-82-5. Price: 9.90 euros.

www.acfny.org

DVD box: Fußball Fieber Österreich (Football Fever Austria). Duration: 354 minutes (video), 192 minutes (radio sound). Two DVDs in a folder as a complete edition for 29.90 euros. ISBN-13: 978-3-902531-51-3

Available in the shops of Film Archives Austria www.filmarchiv.at, and specialised shops.

EURO: exhibition “International Match“ at Carinthian Museum of Modern Art

EURO 2008 gains entrance also to the Carinthian Museum of Modern Art (Museum Moderner Kunst Kärnten/MMKK). From 8 May to 29 June the exhibition “Länderspiel” (“International Match”) presenting paintings, sculptures and installations offers an artistic approach to the subject football. As MMKK boss Andrea Madesta stated at the press presentation, parallels between art and football cannot be denied. Both fields were characterised by competition and rivalry, both were governed by rules which were either implemented harmoniously or invalidated brilliantly.

Among the 21 works exhibited is a room installation by Stefan Banks, which he dedicated to the parting coach of Bayern München, Ottmar Hitzfeld, and which establishes a link to stars of the history of art. Maria Lassnig staged football as a fight between the genders, while Simon Patterson presents the saints as a team and the team as saints. Cornelius Kolig constructed his own version of table football, which the visitors may also give a try. Last but not least, Alina Kunitsyna drew football boots, which were obviously inspired in Albrecht Dürer’s “Praying Hands“. The exhibition is accompanied by an comprehensive programme, including lectures, a performance by an “art sport company”, jazz nights, a panel discussion and a theatre performance. EURO 2008 can be watched in the public viewing zone set up in the castle yard of MMKK from 7 to 29 June 2008. ■

Vienna: “Celebration of 1,000“ focuses on immigrants and emigrants in May

“Trees of knowledge” installed in central locations of Vienna, such as Minoritenplatz, Schottentor, Freyung, are to draw public attention to the knowledge potential of emigrants and immigrants, which is lost in the case of emigration and gained in the case of immigration (end of exhibition: 30 May 2008). The “Celebration of 1,000” organised under the patronage of Federal President Heinz Fischer and the aegis of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) highlights the

topic knowledge as a key resource. The – dead or living – personalities portrayed come from different fields ranging from culture, science and technology to art and sports. These eminent persons and their special knowledge represent all emigrants and immigrants. At the same time they are to reflect the approaches of society towards knowledge from 1900 to the present day. About 80 percent of those 1,000 personalities left Austria during the NS period.

The UNESCO World Day of Cultural Diversity on 21 May is to draw attention to the fact that a more responsible use of the resource “knowledge” is required. The programme of the festivity includes the unveiling of the sculpture “Pillar of Knowledge” by Helmut Margreiter, poetry readings at Café Central as well as at the great hall (“Alte Aula”) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften/ÖAW) and the evening event “Agenda Knowledge“ with a panel discussion, in which four personalities will participate who emigrated and (re-)immigrated. Among them are economist Kurt Rothschild and genetics researcher Josef Penninger. ■

At Vienna’s Danube Shipping Centre: “Boarding Pass to Paradise“

The Shipping Centre situated on Handelskai/Reichsbrücke in Vienna presents the exhibition “Boarding Pass to Paradise” from 15 May to 31 July 2008. It offers a mix between culture and contemporary history and was shown in Europe for the first time in the memorial of Theresienstadt (Památnik Terezín) in May 2005, sixty years after World War II. After that the show could be visited in Prague, Ostrava and Liberec in the Czech Republic.

The first part of the exhibition documents the dramatic escape of Jewish refugees by boat on the Danube to the Black Sea and their internment in Mauritius – a fact which has previously been hardly known to the public. The presentation is based on a historical perspective as well as the artistic interpretation of graphic artist and caricaturist Fritz Haendel and expressionist Beda Mayer. The second section of the exhibition presents the paintings of Peretz Beda Mayers created in Israel between 1945 and 2002. Fritz Haendel’s oeuvre ended in Mauritius in January 1945 with the suicide of the artist.

www.mmkk.at

“Fest der 1.000“ (“Celebration of 1,000”), from 30 April to 30 May in the city centre of Vienna:
www.festder1000.at

Beda Mayer (1906-2002) born in Hodonin (Moravia) first worked as a carpenter and nursery-school teacher before he became a graphic artist and book illustrator in Prague in the early 1930s. In September 1940 he was one of about 3,000 Jews fleeing from Bratislava to the Black Sea on the Danube passenger ship "Schönbrunn" coming from Vienna. The actual destination was Palestine. During his escape he met graphic artist and caricaturist Fritz Haendel born in Vienna (1919-1945). In Tulcea on the Black Sea the two continued their risky escape on the converted Greek coal steamer "Atlantik" bound for Haifa. The British authorities refused all refugees permission to stay in Palestine and deported them on a Dutch merchant ship to the island of Mauritius, where they remained interned until the end of the WWII.

"Boarding Pass to Paradise" (curator: Elena Makarova) was produced together with Památník Terezin and the Museum Ein Harod in Israel, where it is shown as from autumn 2008.

The exhibition is supported inter alia by the National Fund for Victims of National Socialism, the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria, the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture, the City of Vienna, the embassy of Israel and Saint-Gabain Rigips Austria GesmbH. ■

Vienna's Albertina shows fascinating "Plays of Form" by Paul Klee

Vienna's Albertina stages a comprehensive retrospective of one of the most important artists of the first half of the 20th century – Paul Klee (1879-1940). The show ending on 10 August 2008 displays a total of 151 pieces of art. It was motivated by the donation of works of the German-Swiss artist by Carl Djerassi. The professor emeritus of organic chemistry at Stanford University born in Vienna in 1923 became famous as the "father of the anti-baby pill". Djerassi gave 67 works of art to Albertina as a "promised gift". They constitute the central part of the exhibition and are supplemented by selected paintings from the collection of Albertina as well as from international museums and collections.

When Klee died in 1940, he left about 9,000 works, 1,000 of them had been created in the last five years of his life. His compositions have

become surprisingly popular although they are not open to simple interpretation. Klee appeals to the fantasy of the onlooker: "Art is not a reflection of the visible but makes visible".

Carl Djerassi owned a total of 160 works by Paul Klee. The second part of his collection has already been transferred to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In this way the researcher established a link between two important places of his life: Vienna – his place of birth – and San Francisco, which offered him refuge after emigration from the National Socialist Austria and where he settled down.

In the framework of the opening of the exhibition in Vienna, Carl Djerassi was awarded the Great Silver Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service to the Republic of Austria by Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer. ■

New Roman Museum in Vienna

From the late 2nd to the middle of the 3rd century about 30,000 locals and people from all parts of the Roman Empire lived in Vindobona (Roman name of Vienna).

During the Whitsun weekend a new Roman Museum – the "Römermuseum" – was opened in Vienna. It is situated at Hoher Markt (1st district of Vienna), where about almost 2,000 years ago the dwellings of Roman officers were located. The ruins which are considered the most important remains of the Roman period in Vienna, were already shown in the basement of this wing of the building. Now about 300 archaeological finds – utensils and cult objects, figures, toys, statues of gods – are on display. The former Roman settlement is visualised with the aid of 3-D technology.

Vienna Museum invested in its new outpost approximately 780,000 euros. About 30,000 visitors are expected annually. ■

Albena Danailova - concertmaster at Vienna State Opera

Violinist Albena Danailova, 33, born in Sofia, will become a concertmaster at Vienna State Opera on 1 September 2008. She will be the first woman to occupy this position in the history of the opera house. Alongside with three other concertmasters, she will lead the performances of the orchestra as the first violinist. ■

Shipping Centre in Vienna: Boarding Pass to Paradise. From 15 May to 31 July 2008. Further information and guided visits: Agentur Milli Segal. Tel.: 0043/1/9687266; info@millisegal.at

Römermuseum (Roman Museum): www.wienmuseum.at

Albertina in Vienna: "Paul Klee. FormenSpiele". ("Paul Klee. Plays of Form"). Running until 10 August 2008. www.albertina.at

About Carl Djerassi: www.djerassi.com

Blessing of Pope Benedict XVI. for EURO 2008

Pope Benedict XVI. wishes Austria all the best for the European Football Championship (EURO) 2008. Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka, Sports Bishop Franz Lackner as well as ÖFB (Austrian Football Federation) President Friedrich Stickler and team player Sebastian Prödl participated on behalf of Austria in the general audience in Vatican on 7 May 2008. The great interest of the Holy Father in sport was palpable in the meeting: "The Holy Father is still very aware of Austria after his visit at the beginning of this year and wishes us a championship free from violence and uniting the nations", Lopatka stated after a personal conversation with Benedict XVI. The Pope was given a white football with the EURO logo, an art print (limited edition) by Christian Ludwig Attersee, a handmade statue of St. Peter by a Tyrolean artist and a limited CD edition of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. After the general audience, the Austrian EURO delegation met with Cardinal Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone, the head of government of Vatican state. The ardent Juventus fan and former football commentator of Radio Vatican and co-commentator of the Italian TV channel RAI is looking forward to the European Championship and in particular to Italy's matches with eager anticipation. The Church will organise numerous activities in Austria during EURO 2008. Christians of the Church and Free Churches of the two host countries cooperate under the motto "Church 08". With a "small EURO" for youth football teams, fan work in the fan zones of Vienna and the other seven host cities as well as an ecumenical service at St. Stephen's Cathedral (Vienna) on the eve of the EURO final tournament, the Church will be highly visible in Austria during EURO 2008. ■

All of Austria plays tennis

After the Football Association, the Tennis Association registers the second highest number of members in Austria. By launching the mass sports initiative "All of Austria plays tennis", the Austrian Tennis Association (Österreichischer Tennisverband/ÖTV) focuses especially on new talents to ensure the leading position of its elite.

For a good elite always needs a broad base. With its Action Day on 3 May 2008, the Tennis Association gives a strong impetus for bringing more kids and teens to Austria's tennis courts. The sensational figures recorded on the first Action Day in 2007 – 620 participating associations, more than 25,000 interested people and 2,000 tennis course and membership registrations – were exceeded this year. ■

Football talents benefit from Gymnastics Association

The launch of a joint project of the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) and the Austrian Association for Gymnastics (ÖFT) marks the beginning of a fruitful cooperation to the benefit of Austria's young football talents. "This outstanding project of two specialised associations is an important step in promoting talents. For gymnastics is one of the most versatile types of sport combining in unique way the basic movements of all sports", Secretary of State for Sport Reinhold Lopatka welcomed the pilot project of ÖFB and ÖFT. It has been designed for a period of two years (2008/2009) and will be funded with 70,000 euros annually by the Secretariat of State for Sport. The aim of the project – which is unequalled in Austria for embracing different sports associations and sports branches – is to promote the motor skills of domestic football talents in an optimal way. Footballers should not be turned into gymnasts but the findings of gymnastics, which is a basic sport just like track-and-field sports or swimming, should be applied to the athletic aspects of football and the risk of injuries is to be reduced. Moreover, the Secretariat of State for Sport will intensify measures promoting basic sports throughout Austria by strengthening cooperation between schools and sports associations. Hence, children will start experiencing movement already at nursery age. ■

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