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Mauthausen: commemorative ceremony highlights resistance

63 years ago, in May 1945, US troops liberated the Mauthausen concentration camp in Upper Austria. The main event in a series of commemorations was the liberation ceremony in Mauthausen itself, in which about 7,000 people from all over the world participated. This year's ceremony was dedicated above all to the resistance fighters imprisoned in Mauthausen.

The survivors of the camp and delegations from all over Europe, Asia, Australia and America made their entry into Mauthausen. Chief Rabbi Paul Chaim Eisenberg accompanied the delegation from Israel. Official Austria was represented by Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer, Minister of the Interior Günther Platter and Minister for Social Affairs Erwin Buchinger. High-ranking members of the Christian religious communities were also among the attendees.

The Mauthausen concentration camp was the final destination of death marches from all directions and the last stop of all those who died even after liberation. "This was (...) a place without humanity", Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer said in his speech. "Today it is a place conveying the message that fundamental dignity is inviolable everywhere and under all circumstances", Gusenbauer said.

None of those born later could comprehend the dimension of suffering at this place. It went beyond human imagination. This had been the intention of the technocrats constructing this perfidious annihilation machinery. It had been designed "to surpass all atrocities human beings were considered capable of based on a bureaucratic industrial master plan". "Since then we know that everything is possible. And therefore it is so important to warn all future generations by saying 'never again' in the spirit of the victims", the Federal Chancellor stressed.

The National Socialists held more than 200,000 people as prisoner in Mauthausen and its sub-camps. About half of them were killed or died from the after-effects of internment in the camps. The inmates were not only political opponents, "asocial people" and criminals but also foreign prisoners from Europe and overseas, war prisoners, Jews as well as Roma and Sinti.

Mauthausen became a symbol of the NS terror regime in Austria. ■

Health reform: review of bill

In the framework of the planned reform package for debt consolidation of the health insurance institutions and the health sector, the insurance institutions are to receive additional funds of about 2 billion euros by 2012. This was announced by Health Minister Andrea Kdolsky and Minister for Social Affairs Erwin Buchinger at the official presentation of the health reform bill on 14 May 2008. The main pillars of the by-no-means uncontroversial set of measures are possible individual contracts with doctors, the so-called "Au-idem" rules (the doctor prescribes the medical substance, the pharmacist selects the most inexpensive pharmaceutical product), the patient's receipt and the conversion of the Federation of Social Insurance Institutions into a holding company. Currently, the bill is subject to review. As an interim measure, the federal government assumes half of the debts of the health insurance institutions amounting to 450 billion euros. 600 million euros will be made available through cost-cutting measures (e.g. increased use of generic drugs).

The federal government backs the reform measures. Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer requested the reform critics to submit alternative proposals as well as to engage in dialogue and cooperation in the presence of reporters on 21 May 2008. ■

Asylum Court: President Harald Perl

Based on a decision adopted by the Council of Ministers on 21 May 2008, Harald Perl will be appointed President of the new Asylum Court. Perl headed the Independent Federal Asylum Senate (UBAS), which is being upgraded to an Asylum Court. Vice-President Volker Nowak also worked for UBAS. The Asylum Court will have 77 judges. 51 of them are taken over from UBAS, while 26 judges are to be appointed after a selection procedure. According to Gusenbauer, the Asylum Court provides a high level of constitutional guarantees and is the core of the new asylum procedure. The Asylum Court is the last instance for complaints against decisions of the Federal Asylum Office. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: "The Mauthausen concentration camp was the destination of death marches from all directions. It was the last stop of all those who died even after the liberation of the camp."

"Therefore it is so important to warn all future generations by saying 'Never again' in the spirit of the victims of this camp."

In the Mauthausen concentration camp and its sub-camps more than 100,000 people were killed or died from the effects of internment in the camps in the wake of the Holocaust.

Mauthausen became a symbol of National Socialist tyranny in Austria.

Federal President Fischer pays state visit to Turkey

Federal President Heinz Fischer paid a state visit to Turkey from 19 to 22 May 2008. He was accompanied by his wife Margit as well as Minister for Social Affairs Erwin Buchinger, Economic Minister Martin Bartenstein, Secretary of State Christa Kranzl and President of the Economic Chamber Austria Christoph Leitl. Moreover, a large trade, research and cultural delegation travelled with him.

After visiting the mausoleum of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Atatürk, Fischer held talks with President Abdullah Gül in the capital Ankara. Among the topics discussed were Turkey's possible EU membership, energy issues as well as the intensification of bilateral cultural and economic relations. Cooperation is to be strengthened in the energy sector, in particular with regard to the "Nabucco" gas pipeline. The project is being carried out under the lead of the Austrian company OMV. The goal is to transport gas from the Caspian region to Europe as from 2013 onwards. Other items on the agenda were the situation in the Middle East, where Turkey plays an important role as a mediator as well as the dialogue of civilisations and cultures. The controversial Ilisu dam project came also up for discussion. The project financing by Austria, Germany and Switzerland is subject to strict nature and culture conservation requirements.

The Federal President praised the dialogue with the Turkish representatives, which was "open and honest" despite diverging opinions. With regard to the discussion on Turkey's EU ambitions, Fischer emphasised that Austria was a "fair and calculable partner". The EU accession negotiations with Turkey should be "open-ended".

In his talks with Fischer, Gül pled in favour of Turkey joining the EU. It was important to inform the European population of the advantages of Turkey's EU membership. In this context, Gül highlighted the great economic potential of his country.

Both sides praised the friendly atmosphere of the meeting and expressed their common desire to intensify political and economic cooperation. Bilateral foreign trade was expected to register a record result of approximately 2 billion euros this year. The bilateral trade volume had

increased by 60% in the past five years, Austrian investments in Turkey by 800%, underlined Fischer.

Fischer also met with opposition leader Deniz Baykal and participated in Austrian-Turkish economic forums held in Kayseri, the capital of the province of Central Anatolia, and in Istanbul. Last but not least, talks with Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. were on the President's agenda in the city on the Bosphorus. ■

French President Sarkozy in Austria

In the framework of his "Tour des Capitales" ushering in the French EU Council Presidency, French President Nicolas Sarkozy will arrive in Austria on 30 May 2008. His official programme includes meetings with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer. ■

Minister of Defence Darabos in Israel

Norbert Darabos has been the first Austrian Minister of Defence in more than 30 years to pay an official visit to Israel (19 to 21 May 2008). According to a press release, this was seen as a "special signal" in the year of the 60th anniversary celebrations of the foundation of the state of Israel. In Tel Aviv Darabos and his counterpart Ehud Barak signed a declaration of intent to intensify cooperation.

The relations between Israel and Austria were "excellent today", the shadows of the Nazi regime had been overcome. Austria and Europe had a special moral and political co-responsibility in the region, both with regard to a secure Israel and a fair solution of the Middle East conflict, Darabos stated. Austria was prepared to play an active role in the peace process in the framework of the EU. Austrian "Blue Berets" had participated in missions in this region for decades.

The programme also included a visit to the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem. Darabos visited an Israeli base on the Golan Heights. In Jerusalem he paid a visit to the Austrian UN military observers and the Austrian hospice. He concluded his stay in Israel with a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. ■

Federal President Fischer: "Today Turkey is Austria's most important economic partner in the region."

The aim of the visit of Federal President Fischer to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. at the Phanar in Istanbul was to underline once more that Austria and the EU support the religious communities in Turkey and the recognition of the Patriarchate.

EURO 2008: Austria's economy and image are flourishing

"The economic effects of EURO 2008 are impressive", President of the Economic Chamber Austria (WKÖ) Christoph Leitl said on 19 May 2008 at the presentation of a study on the economic output of the large-scale sports event. The total value-added effects are estimated at 640.8 million euros. The European Football Championship is expected to create almost 13,400 jobs. The Minister of Finance will profit from value-added tax yield of 25 million euros in the wake of EURO 2008, Chancellor and Minister for Sports Alfred Gusenbauer stressed.

541 million euros (84.5%) of the total value-added will be recorded in the year 2008. According to a study commissioned by the Federal Chancellery and the WKÖ, the sales effects are likely to amount to 1.132 billion euros. The Federal Chancellor informed that the total budget of the football mass event was 133 million euros, covering for example the construction of stadiums and advertising expenses.

Although no special boom was expected, EURO 2008 was likely to trigger strong value-added and employment effects in Austria. According to another result of the study, these effects will account for 0.21% of the Austrian gross value-added.

The author of the study and chief economist of the Federation of Industrialists (IV) Christian Hammerstein explained that the economic effects of EURO 2008 were based on three pillars: investments in stadiums, spending by the fans and inflows from the current event budget.

WKÖ boss Leitl underlined the significance of the mega event for tourism and trade as well as Austria's image.

Guests from "high-income economies" such as Germany, Italy or France would spend an average of 205 euros per day and capita, fans from Romania or the Czech Republic about 150 euros. According to the forecast, the daily consumption of VIP guests in Austria is estimated at 350 euros. Hence, with an expected total of 472.3 million euros the most important value-added effect will be recorded in tourism.

Investments in stadiums are likely to result in a value-added of 111.26 million euros, the effects from the events budget will be about

57.18 million euros.

Based on the study, the labour market will also benefit from EURO 2008, creating about 13,400 annual jobs, most of them in tourism (10,699).

Besides economic stimuli, image gains are to be expected. Fairness, sportiness and peacefulness are to shape the trademark "Austria" in the future, WKÖ President Leitl emphasised. The estimated image and advertising value of the European Championship is 300 million euros. Chancellor Gusenbauer referred to an "additional experience factor". In the future Austria could not only present itself as a country of culture and winter tourism as well as a business location with a strong economic performance but also as an "extended party zone", above all for a younger target group, Gusenbauer stated. ■

Strong growth of Austria's economy

Austria's economic growth accelerated to 3.5% of the GDP in real terms during the 1st quarter 2008, after a 3.0% plus in the 4th quarter of last year. The GDP increased by 0.8% in real terms in the 1st quarter 2008 from the previous quarter (after a 0.6% plus in the last quarter 2007). Thanks to the sharp increase in value-added in industry and the building sector, another upturn was recorded, the Economic Research Institute (Wifo) explained in its quarterly quick assessment on 15 May 2008. Despite the strong euro and record oil prices, the economy grew in the entire euro-zone (+0.7% compared to the previous quarter). The growth engines were again industry, exports and the building sector. ■

AUA deal with Al Jaber failed

Saudi-Arabian investor Mohamed Bin Issa Al Jaber definitely cancelled his planned investment in Austrian Airlines (AUA). 42.75% of the Austrian flag carrier are held by the Republic of Austria. Now a strategic partnership is again given prominence. Strategic considerations will therefore be on the agenda of an extraordinary meeting of the AUA Supervisory Board in early June.

Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer do no longer exclude the possibility of a partnership between AUA and other airlines. However, the company should remain under "relevant Austrian control", Gusenbauer stated on 21 May 2008. ■

Austria will profit from value-added effects of EURO 2008 amounting to 640.8 million euros, 13,400 new jobs and a value-added tax yield of 25 million euros.

The EURO 2008 budget totals 133 million euros.

In the 1st quarter 2008 the Austrian economy recorded a year-on-year growth by 3.5% of the GDP in real terms.

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer: "Strong Austrian Airlines under relevant Austrian control are of strategic importance for Austria as a business location."

State Secretary Heidrun Silhavy presented "euro2008.help.gv.at"

Together with the federal government's EURO coordinator Heinz Palme and head of HELP.gv.at at the Federal Chancellery Harald Müller, State Secretary Heidrun Silhavy presented a Fan Help Internet Platform and a countrywide, multilingual service hotline. The information offered by the Federal Chancellery in cooperation with the initiative "Austria on the Ball" is directed primarily at foreign guests and consists in a compilation of the varied services of the public administration during EURO 2008, e.g. Lost & Found, security measures, travelling to Austria, emergency phone numbers, contact addresses. This visitors' service is supported by UEFA and by all Austrian mobile phone providers sending a welcome text message to the visitors.

"HELP.gv.at is the Austrian guide to the public administration of our country, registering three million page hits per month. Therefore, HELP.gv.at is also the ideal information platform for EURO 2008. HELP.gv.at is geared to the needs of the citizen and is highly customer-oriented. It is our desire to offer the football fans the necessary support when they want to or have to contact Austrian authorities. With the enhanced services of HELP.gv.at, which are made available in due time before the European Football Championship, we wish to meet three objectives benefiting above all our guests. First of all, we want to optimise the services offered to domestic and foreign fans, who are provided with a comprehensive range of information on this platform. We also want to reduce the burden on administration as information can be downloaded quickly from the Internet. The third effect is to facilitate regular services so as to prevent a loss of quality, e.g. due to longer waiting periods", Silhavy stated.

EURO 2008 has deliberately set itself the goal of providing barrier-free access suitable for people with disabilities to all events. This measure is to ensure that also people with disabilities can visit stadiums without having to overcome obstacles. "Football is uniting the people and must not exclude anybody. Therefore, I am personally very pleased that the goal of providing barrier-free access has been achieved also in the design of the information platform of the public

administration", the Secretary of State concluded. ■

EURO: Linz Palace Museum presents football history

In the framework of EURO 2008, the Linz Palace Museum (Upper Austria) presents a football exhibition focusing on the historical and cultural changes of this sport (open until 20 July 2008). The visitors may actively engage in sports in a so-called "SoccerArena". "Football – Stories and History" concentrates on Austria's football history, highlighting its development from a sport for middle-class citizens around 1900 to today's modern mass phenomenon. Early versions of this sport existed in China already 2000 years ago and later in Japan and Mexico. The footballers around 1900 wore caps and sashes but had no jersey numbers, which were introduced at a much later date. The first football match in Upper Austria has also been documented. It took place almost precisely 100 years ago in Bad Ischl (district of Gmunden).

The relation between women and football is another major theme of the exhibition. The show also traces the development leading to the official recognition of women's football and its relevance in the international arena. ■

EURO fever also in Bregenz

The football fans in Bregenz (Vorarlberg) are offered a wide range of entertainment programmes also outside the festival venue. In the lake facilities for example Europe's most modern "robokeeper", goal speed measuring and human table soccer are to attract visitors.

Human table soccer is the latest fun sport from the motherland of football. The game emulates the original table football, but in life size. The human players are attached to horizontal bars like in real table football. Both teams have a common logical target: the goal of the opposing team. This is not so easy as every player can move only in unison with the team, either to the left or right. This means all or none can win. Of course, this can be irritating to the footballers but will create a lot of fun for the spectators.

Furthermore, a world record attempt in continuous table football will be staged in Bregenz, and on Lake Constance a mini

Information Platform for guests during EURO 2008: www.euro2008.help.gv.at

In addition, a HELP Fan Hotline will be available across Austria during the European Football Championship: 0043/1/90 500 20.

Linz Palace Museum: "Football stories and history". Ending on 20 July. For more information call: 0043/732/77 44 19. www.schlossmuseum.at

Jewish Museum Vienna, Palais Eskeles, Dorotheergasse 11, A-1010 Vienna, www.jmw.at

EURO in Bregenz: www.v-ticket.at

www.essl.museum

“News from Austria“ no. 6/08 reported in detail about the renaissance of the Hakoah sports centre.

Speech of Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer: http://10.204.16.34/site/cob_28429/currenpage_0/5432/default.aspx

www.hakoah.at

A book tip: Hermann Körner, Lexikon jüdischer Sportler in Wien bis 1938. Mandelbaum Verlag: Wien 2008. ISBN 978-3-85476-265-2

European Championship will be held. U11 teams from Austria, Germany, Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein will compete against one another. The final tournaments take place on a floating pitch in Bregenz, Langenargen (Baden-Württemberg) and Romanshorn (Thurgau canton). An exhibition focusing on the history of football and a varied show programme round off the European Championship events on the lake stage of Bregenz.

To usher in EURO and as an official prelude to the accompanying programme in Bregenz, Austrian football legends, such as Herbert Prohaska, Toni Polster und Walter Schachner, competed with their German counterparts, e.g. Paul Breitner, Hansi Müller und Klaus Augenthaler, in the Casino Stadium on 24 May 2008.

The centre of the EURO 2008 euphoria in Bregenz is, undoubtedly, the lake stage. It will serve as a public viewing arena, where an audience of up to 5,000 fans can watch all 31 matches of the European Championship live on two huge screens. On the ZDF transmission days, the German TV channel will report live from the lake stage. ■

Jewish Museum Vienna: 100 years “Cheering Hakoah!”

In September 1923 Vienna’s football fans cheered. The Jewish football team Hakoah defeated West Ham United, the leading European team, with 5:0 in London. In 1924/25 Hakoah won the Austrian football championships and became the first Austrian team to tour the USA in 1926 and 1927. Hakoah (Hebrew: strength) was founded as a Jewish sports club in 1909. It comprises important divisions such as football, swimming, tennis, wrestling, water polo, handball, chess, track and field sports, table tennis, skiing and tourism. Hakoah produced numerous Austrian elite athletes, who were successful in European championships and the Olympic Games.

In 1938 after the takeover of the Nazis, Hakoah was dissolved, the assets of the association were seized and their sports grounds in Prater were “Aryanised“. After 1945 some repatriates tried to re-establish some divisions of the sports club. The new Hakoah centre was ceremoniously

opened only this spring, e.g. by Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer, Vienna’s Mayor Michael Häupl and President of the Jewish Religious Community (IKG) Ariel Muzikant.

The exhibition at the Jewish Museum Vienna, Palais Eskeles, Dorotheergasse 11, marks the 100th anniversary of the sports club under the motto ‘Hoppauf Hakoah!’“ (“Cheering Hakoah!”) and revives the past triumphs of Jewish sports. The valuable exhibits – hundreds of photos, flags, trophies and publications – are provided by Hakoah, private collections and the Pierre Gildesgame Maccabi Sports Museum in Israel. An adapted version of this exhibition will be on show at the Hakoah Sports Centre Museum as from 2009 to celebrate the 100th anniversary. ■

Minister Plassnik supports Israeli-Palestinian art

Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik recently opened the exhibition “Overlapping Voices – Israeli and Palestinian Artists“ at the ESSL Museum in Klosterneuburg near Vienna (Lower Austria). The Minister was full of admiration for the exhibited works of art created by 22 artists. They expressed what politicians were unable to state due to the limitations of diplomatic language: subjectivity and directness. “Artists contribute in a very special way to better mutual understanding“. The Foreign Minister has repeatedly shown interest in contributions to the peace efforts in the Middle East. In May 2007 she had organised a Middle East Women’s Conference in Vienna. She hoped that one day Palestinians and Israelis would be able to live in peace on the basis of a two-state solution, Plassnik stressed.

The exhibition of art from the conflict-prone region can be visited until 26 October 2008. At a symposium Israeli co-curator Tal Adler, whose project deals with the Bedouins in Negev, said that the subtitle of the show was misleading as the presentation of Palestinian art was limited to works by Palestinians living in Israel. This opinion was also held by singer and co-curator Amal Murkus: “Could you bring here an artist living in Gaza? He will not be granted a visa!“ The exhibition was curated by Karin Schneider and Friedemann Derschmidt of the Rites Institute in Vienna. ■

Kokoschka Prize to Kentridge

South African William Kentridge, who participated several times in documenta and Biennale, received the Oskar Kokoschka Prize 2008 at the University for Applied Arts on 21 May 2008. The presentation speech was given by Albertina director Klaus Albrecht Schröder. By selecting Kentridge (born in Johannesburg in 1955), the jury paid homage to an artist with a comprehensive oeuvre ranging from drawings, sculpture and sound installations to media art and film. Moreover, Kentridge deserves special mention for the social facet of his art and his political commitment, jury chairman Rector Gerald Bast stated.

The Prize was founded by the federal government in 1980 – the year of death of the painter Oskar Kokoschka, who had been born in Pöchlarn (Lower Austria) in 1886. The award with the highest prize money in Austria is granted to a visual artist in recognition of his/her oeuvre every two years. ■

Venice: Minister of Culture Schmied presented two curators

The show at the Austrian pavilion at the Venice Art Biennale 2009 will be curated by two women: “With Valie Export and Silvia Eiblmayr, I succeeded in putting in charge two outstanding personalities of the Austrian contribution. For the first time in history, the Austrian pavilion will be curated by two excellent women“, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied stated. The two curators are responsible for the artistic programme and the organisation of Austria’s presentation.

Valie Export was born as Waltraud Höllner in Linz (Upper Austria) in 1940. She was represented with her own works in the main programme of the 52nd Biennale in 2007 curated by Robert Storr. The media and performance artist created important contributions to 20th century art as from the late 1960s. Her works such as the “Grove and Grab Cinema“ are considered classics today and are still invoked by younger generations. Valie Export managed to combine multimedia art practices with feminist concerns. In 2007 a retrospective was dedicated to her at the Austrian Film Museum.

Silvia Eiblmayr born in Berchtesgaden grew up

in Upper Austria and lived for an extended period in Vienna. As an art historian, she conceived and organised numerous exhibitions and held several international teaching assignments. She has headed the gallery at Palais Taxis in Innsbruck since 1999. She also became familiar with Valie Export’s work as a curator and researcher. ■

Minister Hahn opened Austrian-Romanian Science Days

Recently, the Austrian-Romanian Science Days in Vienna were opened by Minister of Science Johannes Hahn and Romanian Minister for Education, Science and Youth Cristian Adomnitei.

The Science Days are supported by the Austrian Research Promotion Society (Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft / FFG). Their aim is to provide information on the latest developments of research promotion and educational policies of the two countries, their participation in the 6th and 7th EU Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, information on EU calls for proposals in the field of environment and energy as well as on instruments supporting mobility and cooperation. Cooperation in science and research between Austria and Romania has been intensifying over the last years. In August 2007 a declaration of intent on the promotion of human capital in South Eastern Europe was signed by Minister Cristian Adomnitei, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied, Science Minister Johannes Hahn and Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe Erhard Busek. ■

10th anniversary: Roland Batik’s Seibersdorf Palace concerts

The Seibersdorf Palace concerts – initiated by star pianist Roland Batik – offer a fine anniversary programme, including Academia Allegro Vivo (e.g. Haydn, Grieg) and a jazz concert of Woody Schabata, Wolfgang Puschnig and Roland Batik. The pianist, who presented the still unrivalled complete recordings of the piano sonatas of Joseph Haydn in 1999, will give a solo recital with works by Haydn, Beethoven, Debussy and his own, certainly jazzy compositions. ■

www.galerieimtaxi.spalais.at

www.labiennale.org

www.valieexport.org

www.rolandbatik.com

Seibersdorf programme and tickets:
http://www.marktgemeinde-seibersdorf.at/freizeit/musik/musikfestival_seibersdorf_08.pdf

Federal government intensifies anti-doping combat

The federal government takes three additional credible steps towards a serious combat against doping in sports. With the stringent amendment to the Anti-Doping Act adopted in the Council of Ministers on 21 May 2008, the hearing to select the head of the independent National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA Austria) and the extended anti-doping pilot project “The Transparent Athlete“ of the Austrian Cycling Association (ÖRV), Austria highlights the seriousness of the issue across the EU. The federal government doubles the total funds granted to NADA Austria for control, prevention and information to 1.2 million euros.

The combat against doping is a permanent process requiring permanent readjustment. This is for example put into practice in the Draft Federal Act Amending the Federal Anti-Doping Act 2007, the Drug Act and the Prescription Requirement Act. Austria has taken an uncompromising approach by adopting the new criminal law provisions on the marketing, administration and possession of doping substances exceeding a specific quantity as well as on blood doping. This amendment is to enter into force still before the beginning of the Olympic Games in Beijing, on 1 August 2008. In a second step, the technical standards of WADA as well as the recommendations and amendments to current laws proposed by WADA are to be incorporated in the Draft in autumn. ■

Integration Prize Sport awarded for the first time

Five extraordinary sports integration projects received the first “Integration Prize Sport” on 20 May 2008. More than 80 projects from all over Austria, from swimming to football and wrestling, had been entered to compete for the “Integration Prize Sport 2008“. The first prize went to the “Integration Sports Grounds” in Neudörfel in Burgenland. The jury decided in favour of this project in which all the village dwellers actively support the integration of “their” migrants. The four other prize winners – the swimming project “A true Viennese does not drown“, alluding to the title of a former popular TV series (ASV Vienna), the running sport

project “Muslim women running the women’s marathon“ (Association of Young Female Muslims in Austria), the multi-sports school project “Integration is a natural thing“ (Higher Technical Training Institute, 10th district of Vienna) and the football project “FairPlay & Integration“ supported by Toni Polster (ATSV Lenzing, Upper Austria) – scored points for addressing children and girls who would otherwise have no opportunity to practise sport.

The Integration Prize initiated by Secretary of State for Sports Reinhold Lopatka pays official tribute to voluntary workers. The Integration Prize Sport is offered by the “Association Promoting Integration by Sport“. It is supported by its project partners Caritas and the Austrian Integration Fund as well as the Economic Chamber Vienna and sponsors from the business community. By stepping up the funding from the sports budget, the scope and importance of the Integration Prize Sport will be increased. ■

For the first time in Austria: 2009 World Women’s Ice Hockey Championships B in Graz

The World Women’s Ice Hockey Championships B take place in Graz from 4 to 10 April 2009. At the congress of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) in Montreal/Canada, Austria was recently selected as the host country for the World Championships of Division I. The Austrian women’s team had successfully moved up from the third group in March. The selection of the Austrian Ice Hockey Association as the host has become possible thanks to a tripartite financing scheme of the Austrian federal government (City – Land – Federal Republic).

This will be the first time that World Women’s Championships are held in Austria. After the World Men’s Championship in 1973, Graz is “ice hockey championship city” for the second time. At the World Championships in Austria, the Austrians will compete with the Germans, Czechs, Slovaks, Norwegians and French. ■

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