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Federal government adopts anti-violence package

The federal government adopted an anti-violence package on 17 September 2008 in the last session of the Council of Ministers before the parliamentary election (28 September 2008). The respective Bill had been preceded by negotiations of several months between Minister of Justice Maria Berger (Social Democratic Party) and Minister of the Interior Maria Fekter (People's Party). Both sides were very pleased about the result. However, the package will be adopted by Parliament only after the election. Berger hopes that the new rules will enter into force already in 2009, regardless of the future government composition.

The main objectives of the new anti-violence package are stronger victims protection and severer punishment for sexual abuse. In cases of domestic violence or stalking it will, for example, become easier to issue court injunctions. In addition, offences of violence committed several times are recognised as an independent criminal offence. This will make it possible to sanction offenders maltreating family members during a prolonged period of time. In addition, victims' rights in civil law will be strengthened analogously to those in criminal law. Victims will also receive financial support both in civil and criminal proceedings.

In the future sexual offenders will face harsher punishment and longer periods before their criminal record is erased. Based on the new provisions, sexual offenders may be placed under court surveillance and prohibited to exercise specific professions and occupations. ■

Pensions: consensus on one-time bonus

After a pension summit with representatives of the interest groups for senior citizens on 16 September 2008, the Chairman of the People's Party (ÖVP), Vice-Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer, and the Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, (SPÖ) Werner Faymann, announced that pensioners would receive a one-time bonus. No amount was mentioned. Negotiations will be continued.

The first round of negotiations on pension increases and anti-inflationary measures ended without concrete results. Minister of Finance

Molterer insisted on a statutory pension adjustment of 3.2%, SPÖ boss Faymann and the interest representations of senior citizens demand (in addition to the one-time payment) a 3.4% pension adjustment based on the pensioners' price index instead of the statutory increase by 3.2%. ■

Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer holds reception for Muslims

To mark the end of the Islamic month of fasting Ramadan, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer invited to a great evening reception for Muslims. The Iftar meal breaking the fast was hosted by Gusenbauer in the state rooms of the Federal Chancellery on 17 September 2008. Among the guests were members of the Islamic Religious Community (IG) as well a representatives of other religious communities. Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer referred to a "sign of respect, of co-existence, of peace and dialogue". Omar al-Rawi, responsible for integration in the IG, stressed that 330 guests were invited, who reflected the "wide spectrum of Islam in Austria". ■

National Council election 2008: postal voting for the first time

Not only Austrian expatriates but all Austrians, i.e. also those voting in Austria, will for the first time be able to vote by post in the forthcoming National Council election. Voters may apply for the ballot paper orally or by mail, fax or in some cases even by filling in a form on the Internet with the municipality keeping the respective electoral register. The deadline ends about one week before the election (written applications until 24 September, oral applications until 26 September, 12 a.m.). Expatriates and travellers may request ballot papers through the Austrian representative offices and do not have to bring witnesses for postal voting.

A ballot paper is a sealable envelope with the official voting paper and a gummed election envelope, which has to be closed after voting and has to be put back into the ballot paper. The ballot paper must also be sealed and provided with an affidavit. It has to be received by the competent electoral district authority by mail or through the Austrian representation no later than on the eighth day after the election (6 October 2008) at 2 p.m.

See also: <http://www.bmi.gv.at/wahlen> or <http://www.wahlinfo.aussenministerium.at> ■

Fischer, Gusenbauer, Plassnik at UN General Assembly in New York

On 20 September 2008 Federal President Heinz Fischer departed for a several-day visit to New York to participate in the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly, which had been opened on 16 September 2008. The annual General Debate will begin on 23 September 2008. The heads of state and government and/or foreign ministers of all 192 UN members will participate in the two-week meeting. Austria is represented by Federal President Fischer. On 24 September 2008 Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik will present their statements.

Gusenbauer pays a working visit to New York from 23 to 26 September 2008. His official programme includes the UN high-level meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the annual meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative as well as bilateral meetings.

With his trip to New York Fischer wants to underline the "great importance of the UN for peace-keeping and dialogue". One of the main objectives of his visit to the UN headquarters is to lobby for a non-permanent seat of Austria on the Security Council for which Austria is competing with Turkey and Iceland. Gusenbauer and the Foreign Minister are campaigning vigorously for Austria's candidacy. On 17 October 2008, the decision will be taken which country will get a non-permanent seat on the Security Council as the representative of the Western European group for the period 2009/10. Austria had occupied this position in the highest UN institution twice, in 1973/74 and 1991/92.

Others items on the agenda of the Federal President are a meeting with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, participation in an Africa summit as well as numerous bilateral talks, in particular with heads of state from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

This year the UN's main topics are Africa, development aid, the combat against poverty and hunger as well as climate change. ■

Chairman of the African Union meets with Chancellor Gusenbauer

The heads of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, held a working meeting with Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer in

Vienna on 9 September 2008. The talks focused on development aid, in particular the UN Millennium Goals (reduction of poverty and hunger), cooperation between the EU and the AU as well as the relations between Austria and Africa. Austria's candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council was also discussed.

With regard to the "Millennium Development Goals", Gusenbauer and Ping agreed that it was necessary that the nations continued to devote their full commitment to the goals defined despite the difficulties in achieving them. This was about the "combat against poverty, against hunger and for a decent living standard for all people". Both statesmen will participate in the UN high-level meeting on the "Millennium Development Goals" in New York on 25 September 2008, where deliberations on measures to achieve these development goals will be held. Austria also participates actively in the EU's Africa strategy to promote peace, security and energy supply. Ping thanked for Austria's contribution to security and stability in Chad. ■

Four Austrians participate in EU's Georgia mission

At their meeting in Brussels on 15 September 2008, the EU foreign ministers decided to second 200 observers to Georgia. Foreign Minister Ursula Plassnik announced that Austria would be represented with three policemen and one human rights expert. ■

Austrian OSCE head in Kosovo

The Austrian diplomat Werner Almoner was appointed new head of the OSCE mission in Kosovo on 18 September 2008. Almoner has been Austrian ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2005. ■

Austria assumes important function in the Mediterranean region

Austria assumes its first important function in the Mediterranean region. The member of the Federal Council (2nd chamber of Parliament), Stefan Achenbach (Green Party), will be appointed Chairman of the Energy and Environment Committee of the Euro-Mediterranean Assembly in March 2009. ■

US financial crisis: Gusenbauer calls for world financial organisation

In view of the current crisis in the international financial markets, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer pled for a financial market regulation at international level. Politics faced the task of “finding a suitable framework which would make it possible to take measures against these adverse developments at an early stage“, Gusenbauer explained at a joint press conference with the financial market expert Willi Hemetsberger on 19 September 2008. Europe required adequate instruments to limit the damage and to prevent further crises. An economic policy programme coordinated across Europe was required to control the economic effects of the current crisis – and this was needed “as quickly as possible“, Gusenbauer stated.

The American/international financial market crisis had clearly shown that the principle of self-regulation had failed. Not only the investors, who consciously accepted high risks, had to cope with the financial loss but also people “who were affected without their fault“, the Federal Chancellor criticised. To prevent situations of this type, “a stricter regulation of the financial markets was indispensable” in the future. A “reasonable regulation” should consist in a legally binding, globally valid framework, similar to the WTO’s minimum standards for global trade, Gusenbauer explained. This idea was supported by financial markets expert Hemetsberger. He called for an “international regulatory authority to supervise large financial organisations, representing a systemic risk”. According to Gusenbauer, such a world financial organisation had to have the power to sanction and could be incorporated into the International Monetary Fund.

Moreover, it has become clear once more that “people’s retirement provision must not depend on speculative market fluctuations” and that the state had to be reliable. The state had the task of providing adequate security in vital questions such as pension provision, financing long-term care and health care, the Federal Chancellor stressed.

With regard to the global effects of the financial crisis on the European economy, Gusenbauer pled for an economic policy programme to be implemented quickly. Growth was expected to slow down, some EU Member States were already facing recession. “Therefore we have to discuss a programme for stabilising the cyclical

development already now”, Gusenbauer stated. However, this made only sense if the European countries coordinated their measures. The key elements for stimulating the economy mentioned by the Federal Chancellor were public infrastructure investment, research and development as well as climate protection and environmental technologies. At the same time tax decreases were required to stimulate consumption and strengthen the purchasing power.

Full employment achieved

With an unemployment rate of 3.4% in the second quarter 2008, the objective of achieving full employment in Austria has been reached, Minister for Economics Martin Bartenstein informed the Austrian Press Agency (APA) on 19 September 2008. In the first quarter, the unemployment rate was still 4.2%. This trend might reflect the after-effects of the strong economic growth of last year. In contrast to 2007, the employment plus was above all based on an increase in part-time work. The Minister for Economics assured that the government’s objective of “full employment“ had become a reality. Based on the Eurostat method of calculation, this is the case when the unemployment rate is below 4%. The available data of the Austrian Statistical Office (Statistik Austria) have not yet been adjusted for seasonal effects.

However, Austria was not an “island of the blessed”. The future development of the labour market would to a great extent also depend on the situation in Germany and the other neighbouring countries, Bartenstein stated. ■

AUA sale: three big players

As several Austrian dailies informed on 16 September 2008, three bidders had prevailed in the battle for the Austrian Airlines (AUA). German Lufthansa, Air France/KLM and the Russian S7 were shortlisted. The best bidder will be selected on 28 October 2008. The Austrian state holding company ÖIAG will presumably continue to hold a blocking minority.

In the wake of the capital increase adopted on 15 September 2008, AUA issued 2.45 million of new shares, and the proceeds from this share issue totalled about 17.4 million euros. Hence, the shareholders of the diversified holdings have a greater say than in the past. ■

Venice Biennale: Chancellor Gusenbauer about Austria's contribution

In the framework of the opening ceremony of the Venice Architecture Biennale on 12 September 2008, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer presented the Austrian contribution: "In Austria great importance is attached to social housing. This successful tradition was started in the "Red Vienna" (referring to the majority held by the Social Democrats in Vienna in the period 1918 to 1934) after the foundation of the First Republic. It did not only revolutionise the public housing policy but also life in this city. Urban housing is the topic of the future but has not yet been made a general priority in modern innovative architecture. Therefore I do welcome the fact that the subject housing is in the spotlight of the Biennale".

The Chancellor then addressed the new problems arising in modern social housing: "Today we face new challenges in the context of migration, integration as well as cultural and social diversification. New architectural approaches to social housing may help to find answers to pressing questions of the present. I am therefore an enthusiastic advocate of a new social architecture and plead for new urban design strategies". The quality of flats was also an important basis for successful social co-existence: "Ultimately, it is impossible to plan a neighbourhood worth living. In many cases it depends on the willingness of the individuals concerned, from which additional challenges may arise. Instead of more electronic surveillance and additional private security services, social housing has to help ensure the co-existence of and encounters between people of the most diverse ethnic origins. Above all measures like the creation of meeting areas and green zones but also room for privacy and retreat may facilitate co-existence".

The Austrian contribution to the Venice Biennale under the motto "Before Architecture – Vor der Architektur" showcases the works of Josef Lackner (1931-2000, architect and professor at Innsbruck Technical University) and of "PAUHOF Architekten" (Michael Hofstätter, born in 1953 and Wolfgang Pauzenberger, born in 1959).

The third section of the exhibition is devoted to the theme "housing". It has been designed by architecture theoretician Werner Sewing.

<http://www.labiennale.at/2008/> ■

Parliament: "Republic.Exhibition 1918/2008" to mark 90th anniversary

To mark the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Austria, the show titled "Republic.Exhibition 1918/2008" is presented in the Austrian Parliament from 12 November 2008 to 11 April 2009. On 12 November 1918, at the end of World War I., the Republic "German-Austria" was proclaimed in front of the Parliament building in Vienna. It was founded as a parliamentary democracy on the territory of the former Danube monarchy (just like many neighbouring countries). The show highlights the foundation years up to 1920 but also addresses the key events of the 1930s, the NS dictatorship, the occupation period, the Second Republic after 1945 and European Integration. Other themes spotlighted are parties and politics, economy and social affairs, education and art, society and religion.

The exhibition has been conceived by historians Stefan Karner and Lorenz Mikoletzky. They developed an extensive programme by involving numerous researchers, complementing the show with expert meetings and discussions. Special guided visits are offered to pupils. In addition, the "Democracy Workshop" of Parliament offers workshops focusing on modern history. The volume of contributions about the 90th anniversary of the Republic "Österreich. 90 Jahre Republik" (Studienverlag, Innsbruck 2008, ISBN 978-3-7065-4664-5), edited by Karner and Mikoletzky, is highly recommendable. It describes the development based on numerous themes, e.g. politics and democracy, economy, social affairs/education/science, churches and religious communities, art and culture, Austria in international settings. Introductory remarks were authored by President Fischer, Chancellor Gusenbauer and Vice-Chancellor Molterer. The Chancellery is not only a sponsor of the exhibition – besides the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture and the Ministry of Science and Research – but also supports the exhibition management and the architects. The exhibition display panels were produced in the internal joinery. The IT Department is in charge of the technical infrastructure, soft-/hardware. The Legal Department contracted the service providers, the State Archives manage budget and personnel, the Federal Press Service is responsible for PR. All activities are supervised by the Exhibition Board headed by the Chancellery's Chief Executive Officer Manfred Matzka.

www.republikaausstellung.at ■

Literature was his life: commemorating Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler

The football book "Seitenwechsel" developed by the Federal Press Service and published by Bohmannverlag on the occasion of EURO 2008 was presented by Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Director-General of the Federal Press Service Samo Kobenter (one of the editors) in early May. Among the authors who had been invited to the Federal Chancellery was ordinary professor for German language studies at the University of Vienna Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler, a fan of the football club "Rapid Wien" and the doctoral supervisor of our head of Department.

At the "Austrian Days", a festival featuring contemporary literature and music from Austria in Ukraine, Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler was supposed to hold a Paul Celan seminar at the University of Lviv in mid September.

The editor of Heimito von Doderer's diaries and co-editor of the complete works of Thomas Bernhard quoted Bernhard: "Everything is ridiculous when you think of death". On Sunday 7 September 2008, Schmidt-Dengler (aged 66) died unexpectedly from pulmonary embolism. Since 1996 he had headed the Literary Archives of the Austrian National Library, developing them into one of the most important literary institutions of the German-speaking area. The Austrian "Scholar of the Year" was the driving force behind the acquisition of Peter Handke's handwritten manuscripts, notes and information collected for his works by the National Library in December 2007. The "estate" of the living author included the story "Die morawische Nacht" ("The Moravian Night"), which then had not been published but later won critical acclaim. The deceased promoted his latest project – a Literature Museum in the Austrian National Library – until his death. This year he was to receive the "Critics' Prize" at the Frankfurt book fair. 99 bottles of wine and a complete edition of Heinrich Heine's works would have been the enjoyable prize.

Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler was born as the son of a sausage manufacturer in Zagreb on 20 May 1942. Two years later the German-speaking population was evacuated, the family went to Styria, then moved to Vienna. At grammar school Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler had no plans to study German language and literature. "I loved literature but precisely for this reason I did not want to study it. I thought that is an area I reserve for my private life". But he changed his

mind. His major became classical philology and he wrote his doctoral thesis about Aurelius Augustinus' "Confessiones". Professor of German studies Werner Welzig looked for an assistant with a profound knowledge of Latin and chose the specialist in classical philology. His love for the ancient Greek, especially Homer, and the Romans lasted. In 1974 he qualified for lecturing at university with a paper about the effects of ancient mythologemes in the era of Goethe. He established cross-references between ancient and modern dramas in his lectures, which can be read up in the excellent book "Bruchlinien. Vorlesungen zur österreichischen Literatur 1945 bis 1990" (Residenz Verlag, Salzburg and Wien 1995). This work clearly highlights a quality of the deceased praised by Nobel Prize Winner in Literature Elfriede Jelinek. He had "not only loved and repeatedly analysed the famous authors and also taught his students to appreciate them" but was also committed to the "margins of literature", "the outsiders who are actually most important in every literature, in every art, e.g. Marianne Fritz, Werner Kofler, Herbert Wimmer and others". Schmidt-Dengler was also in favour of placing greater emphasis on socio-historical aspects in literature studies. An overview with a generally stronger socio-historical approach is offered in "Österreichische Literatur 1945-1998. Überblicke, Einschnitte, Wegmarken" (Haymon-Verlag, Innsbruck 1999) by German language specialist Klaus Zeyringer (born in Graz in 1953). He and Schmidt-Dengler partly cooperated in publishing works about Austrian literature.

The rather small, slightly peculiar German language expert enthused countless students in overcrowded lecture halls with his brilliant rhetorical skills. In the last years of his life he also published commented critical editions of the works of Fritz von Herzmanovsky-Orlando and Albert Drach. He was interested in all new linguistic developments. In a newspaper he even hailed the word coinage by the German pop band "Tokio Hotel".

Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer was deeply moved by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler's early death: "For me like for thousands of other Austrian students he was a teacher and a personality stimulating the intellect. He was aware of the power of language and eloquently opposed the powerlessness of passivity in public discourse. He was one of the European intellectuals advocating education in an exemplary way. International German studies lost one of the best in this discipline". ■

Charity concert in Vienna: water for the Kenyan village Emis

The region around the city of Eldoret (western Kenya) is one of the country's most densely populated areas. 1,000 people live here on one square kilometre. The population is growing very fast. The village of Emis with about 7,000 inhabitants, situated near Eldoret, suffers from a lack of water. The women and children of the village often walk up to eight hours a day to get water at a water filling station. They feel lucky when the water is not polluted. Besides, in Kenya every sixth child dies before reaching the age of five. Almost half of the fatalities among small infants are attributable to diarrhoea.

There is clean water, which could save lives, safeguard the education of children and health of many people, at a depth of about 120 metres. The construction of a single well costs about 3,000 euros.

In the parish church of St. Brigitta (Brigittaplatz, 1200 Vienna) a charity concert was held under the motto "Water for the village of Emis" to collect donations for this poverty-stricken region in Africa. Every cent donated is spent directly on the construction of a well. All the people involved worked in an honorary capacity – from the Church to the district authority of Brigittaplatz. The musicians performed for free. Among those participating in the concert were singers Erika Janda Waschek, Brigitta Matheis, Wolfgang A. Schatzl, pianist Ksenia Mavleeva, pianist Wolfgang Leidenfrost, cellist Marina Novikova, violinist Sorjana Zuppan Lysak and Ion Scriparu, organ player Wolfgang Reisinger and the Choral Society of Viennese Butchers led by choirmaster Karl Wilhelm-Hagemayer and the folklore group Kenya with the KEFA Women Group Choir.

About 20 sponsors contributed to the humanitarian project. The priest of the parish of St. Brigitta, Father Thomas Kigen from Kenya, was supported by companies, radio stations, the Vienna Economic Chamber (WKO) and the film distributors "Pool-Filmverleih".

The memorable concert was organised by musician Wolfgang A. Schatzl, who also moderated the event and described the precarious situation in the diocese of Eldoret. He was supported actively and affectionately by Helga Schartner.

Everybody was deeply touched by Otto Maurer's film "Über Wasser" ("About Water) about the African region suffering from a lack of water. The

concert programme was very varied with music by Händel, Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Massenet and Kenyan folklore.

The charity concert was under the aegis of the ambassador of Kenya Julius K. Kandie, who attended the event and entertained the guests.

To date about 4,500 euros have been donated for the construction of the well. Erste-Bank, account no. 05336864, bank reference number 20111, Project "Water for the village of Emis". ■

Venice Biennale 2009: presenting Austrian artists

The curators of the Austrian contribution to the Venice Art Biennale 2009 have been announced some time ago. Together with Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied, Silvia Eiblmayr and Valie Export, they presented the artists who are to develop pioneering projects on 15 September 2008: Elke Krystufek, Dorit Margreiter as well as Franziska and Lois Weinberger.

Minister of Culture Schmied explained that the two curators had developed an excellent artistic programme for Austria's presentation. As Eiblmayer outlined, the artists were united by "a common interest in structures, which they question, analyse and translate into another – i.e. an artistic – language". Export stressed that this was the first time since 1999 that female artists were shown.

The budget for Austria's presentation at the Venice Biennale amounts to 400,000 euros, "50,000 euros more than last time", emphasised Minister Schmied. ■

New York: President Fischer opened show on 1968 and gender strategies

Federal President Heinz Fischer opened the show "Cutting Realities – Gender Strategies in Art" at the Austrian Cultural Forum in New York on 21 September 2008. It establishes links between the cultural revolution of the 1960s with works exploring gender relations. The works of the 15 participating artists and groups are on loan from the art collection of the Erste Bank group, which specialised in art from Central and Eastern Europe. Besides Fischer, Nobel Prize winner in medicine Eric Kandel gave a speech. Fischer stayed in New York to attend the UN General Assembly. ■

Gusenbauer: Austria benefited from opportunities offered by EURO 2008

“During the European Football Championship 2008 we experienced numerous football highlights and a wave of enthusiasm. After a football party lasting three weeks, our country presented itself as the perfect host and as an excellent organiser. This was made possible by the untiring efforts of the great number of people active for EURO, who often worked on a voluntary, unpaid basis. Today I would like to thank you most cordially for you have decisively contributed to making EURO 2008 a huge success“, Federal Chancellor and Minister of Sports Alfred Gusenbauer stated at a festive EURO event held in “Redoutensaal”, a former ballroom, of Vienna’s Hofburg Palace on 19 September 2008.

Among the 700 guests were not only the people working for EURO but also the former coach of the national team, Josef Hickersberger, German football legend Franz Beckenbauer, Swiss ambassador Oscar Knapp, President of the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) Friedrich Stickler, former ÖFB President Beppo Mauhart, ORF Director-General Alexander Wrabetz, Vienna’s Executive Councillor for Sports Grete Laska, goalkeeper Helge Payer and sports manager Peter Schöttel.

The Chancellor explained that – in cooperation with many domestic organisations – a positive image of Austria had been presented in the world. In general, the Austrian host cities were applauded for the organisation, security, beauty and atmosphere of the championship.

The Chancellor placed special emphasis on the excellent cooperation with Switzerland. Thanks to this mass sports events, the two countries had come even closer.

The news reports about EURO had shown the whole world that Austria was a country of culture, of hospitality and good atmosphere. “The reports presented our country as an attractive tourist destination. We expect numerous medium- and long-term effects for our economy. According to the Economic Chamber Austria (WKO), the world’s third-largest sports event generated a value-added of 641 million euros and created 12,000 additional jobs“. Gusenbauer also thanked former ÖFB President Beppo Mauhart, under whose leadership Austria had been selected as a co-host.

Franz Beckenbauer, who has been living in Austria for many years, praised Austria and Switzerland for their excellent performance as hosts. “This championship has been under a lucky star from the very beginning, both countries had made a very good impression in realising EURO. Everything worked excellently, it was a wonderful football party. I am sure that EURO 2008 will go down in history as one of the best European championships ever“. ■

Austria’s athletes triumphed in the Paralympics in Beijing

The 13th Paralympic Summer Games in Beijing came to a successful end with six medals for Austria and a splendid farewell party. With 4 gold medals, 1 silver medal, 1 bronze medal our top athletes in disabled sports can look back on a favourable result. Four gold medals were won for the Austrian team by Andrea Scherney (long jump), Andreas Vevera (table tennis), Wolfgang Schattauer (hand bike) and Thomas Geierspichler (marathon). One silver medal was earned by Wolfgang Eibeck (individual time trial / road cycling), while Geierspichler (800 meters) was awarded another bronze medal. The outstanding athletes do not only share a success story but also had to overcome personal crises and muster the courage to face a new life with the help of sports. This has made them great role models.

www.oepc.at ■

Day of Sport is to motivate people of all ages to do more exercise

After last year’s record attendance (more than 350,000 visitors), Austria’s most popular open air sports event invites to another presentation of Austrian sports at Heldenplatz in Vienna on 27 September 2008. The Day of Sport – held for the eighth time – motivates people to become active as part of the exercise and health promotion initiative “Fit for Austria”, e.g. with 120 sports taster facilities giving the visitors the opportunity of trying numerous new sports. More than 300 sport stars of all disciplines, Olympic medal winners, world and European champions participate. The spotlight is turned on all Austrian medallists of the Olympic Games in Beijing as well as the successful athletes with disabilities of the recent Paralympics.

www.tagdessports.at ■