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Chancellor Faymann: "Crisis must lead to value change in Europe"

Numerous studies expect a dramatic increase in unemployment figures for autumn. In an interview with the magazine *News* (issue of 9 April 2009), Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann commented on this forecast. He drew attention to the justified concerns of people who had never speculated but were now faced with unemployment, becoming victims of the crisis caused by unscrupulous Wall Street bankers. "Therefore the political players will have to use all financial resources to counteract this trend all over Europe – and in Austria as well. We also accept an increase in the public deficit during this period to keep the crisis as short as possible", said Faymann. Moreover, a very watchful eye would be kept on the pay of managers. By no means was it possible to return to the old routine. "The crisis must lead to a value change all over Europe", demanded the Federal Chancellor.

Faymann rejected the call of the industry for a wage freeze – affecting also civil servants. He was generally against telling the workforce that the purchasing power was important on the one hand and demanding a wage freeze on the other hand. However, many reforms were necessary that had to be realized quickly, e.g. in the educational system, the health sector and in administration. As a slimmer public sector was less costly, more funds would become available, stressed Faymann. ■

Speedier administrative procedures

On 14 April 2009 the government decided to launch an anti-red-tape campaign to speed up administrative procedures. In a first step, a one-stop-shop procedure should be introduced for all contacts with the authorities concerning birth, marriage and death. ■

Unemployment is increasing but in March less jobless than in February

In March 2009 271,127 people were registered as unemployed in Austria, i.e. about 30,000 persons less than in February (301,695). Compared to March 2008, unemployment rose, however, by almost 29%. If the 62,880 jobseekers undergoing training are added, 334,007 people were without job in March.

Moreover, the number of vacancies registered with the Public Employment Service dropped by 30.5% to 27,439. According to preliminary data, employment declined by 0.9% or 32,000 to 3.36 million employed persons. The unemployment rate rose by 1.7 percentage points year-on-year to 7.5% (national statistical method). The decrease from the previous month signalled at least some "spring awakening", stated Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer with cautious optimism in a press interview on 31 March 2009. Other European countries such as Germany failed to register this seasonal decline in unemployment, which had been typical in the past. Nevertheless, the situation in the labour market was not expected to relax in the near future, confirmed the Minister for Social Affairs.

According to Hundstorfer, one of the groups affected most severely were young people. In March about 44,000 young people in the age group 15 to 24 years were jobless. This was a plus by 39% compared to March 2008. Thanks to restructuring the budget of the Public Employment Service, 120 million euros had become available for this target group. The federal government wanted to use these funds for offering all young unemployed people an employment, a training programme or a subsidised job within the next six months, said Hundstorfer.

After the Council of Ministers on 31 March 2009, Minister of Finance Josef Pröll underlined that in March the building sector had started to recover after the winter break despite the economic crisis. The Council of Ministers approved the new framework for infrastructure projects (2009 to 2014). The volume of investments earmarked for road and rail construction projects totalled 22.5 billion euros. In this way, annually 50,000 jobs were to be safeguarded, emphasised Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann. ■

Austria on the OECD's "grey list"

The OECD's "black" list of tax havens does no longer exist. Five days after its publication, all countries concerned – Costa Rica, Uruguay, the Philippines and Malaysia – agreed to comply with the OECD tax standards. This was announced by OECD chief Angel Gurría in Paris on 7 April 2009. They were placed on a "grey" list of countries recognising but not yet fully implementing the international OECD standards, alongside with Austria, Luxembourg, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. ■

Chancellor Faymann welcomes Obama's call for a nuclear-free world

US President Barack Obama's disarmament plans and his appeal for a world without nuclear weapons have received mainly positive reactions from all over the world and also the Austrian government. At the large-scale EU-USA summit in Prague on 5 April 2009, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann described Obama's commitment to a "world without nuclear weapons" as "very positive". These announcements were a good sign, above all for Austrians active in the peace movement and advocating disarmament, stated Faymann.

Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger was also confident that the USA would really accede to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Vienna is the seat of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organisation, which will have the task of monitoring the planned international nuclear test ban. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has not yet entered into force as nuclear weapons nations like the USA, China, India, North Korea, Pakistan and Israel have not signed it. ■

Liechtenstein's new head of government Tschüscher in Vienna

The new head of government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, Klaus Tschüscher, met with Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in Vienna on 6 April 2009. Key topics discussed at the meeting were banking secrecy, the development of the labour markets as well as environmental protection issues. The programme also included talks with Minister of Finance Josef Pröll. Both sides praised the "good understanding" between Liechtenstein and Austria.

Tschüscher assumed the office of Prime Minister in mid-March, five weeks after the parliamentary elections. Before that he had been Deputy Prime Minister. ■

Serbia's President Tadic pays visit to Austria

During his official visit to Vienna, Serbian President Boris Tadic held talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann on 7 April 2009. The statesmen discussed issues such as Serbia's rapprochement

to the EU and bilateral economic relations. Austria is the EU's largest investor in Serbia. Based on information from Belgrade, Austrian banks control one third of Serbia's financial sector.

Federal President Fischer reaffirmed Austria's support for Serbia's rapprochement to the EU, which had come to a standstill due to Belgrade's lacking cooperation with the UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. Serbia's aim was to become a full member of the European Union, said Fischer.

In a joint press conference held after his meeting with Tadic, Federal Chancellor Faymann referred to "very open" talks focusing on the current global economic crisis". Both sides stressed the close economic ties between Serbia and Austria. Stressing the importance of coordination and cooperation especially during an economic downturn, Faymann underlined: "This is a prerequisite for taking advantage of common market opportunities in a subsequent economic upswing." The Federal Chancellor also emphasised Austria's longstanding support for Serbia on its way to the European Union.

Boris Tadic also stressed the great significance of EU integration for his country. In addition, he considered Serbia "part of the solution" for the problems on the Western Balkans. ■

"Alliance of Civilisations": Foreign Minister Spindelegger in Istanbul

Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger invited the UN Alliance of Civilisations to hold its annual meeting scheduled for 2012 in Vienna. Dialogue among the cultures and religions was one of the "main challenges of our time", emphasised Spindelegger at the second annual conference of this forum for advancing understanding among Western and Muslim societies in Istanbul on 6 April 2009.

The Alliance was founded by Spain and Turkey in 2005 and is under the aegis of the UN. At present, 83 countries and 17 international organisations are members. ■

Austria ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions

On 2 April 2009, Austria became the sixth country to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). ■

Minister Pröll plans 10-billion-euro guarantee for company loans

Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll wants to provide impetus to banks in doing their job and that is to extend loans to companies. To this end, he announced plans to introduce a 10-billion-euro federal government guarantee. This amount will come out of the 100-billion-euro banking package and will be earmarked for credit guarantees, informed Pröll at the opening of the 43rd Spring Trade Fair of Dornbirn on 2 April 2009.

The Minister of Finance admitted that he was not satisfied with the volume of loans extended to companies. "Credit extension is very sluggish", stated Pröll. It was not possible to meet the requests of the industry that the Federal Republic should offer guarantees for bonds as the risk was too high. "We have therefore adopted a new approach in the framework of the banking package", explained Pröll. The necessary amendment was being prepared at full speed. The guarantee of the Federal Republic would certainly pave the way for better conditions. The banks would be responsible for extending credits and conduct the usual rating procedures. But the Federal Republic would also seek to safeguard its interests, assured the Minister. This solution was not more costly and would help to overcome the standstill in credit extension, said Pröll.

A survey presented by the Austrian National Bank (OeNB) on 9 April 2009 also confirmed that domestic companies faced increasing difficulty in obtaining loans. Not only was the spread increasing but the banks also demanded more collateral, while granting only short-term financing facilities.

Despite the crisis, the demand for credits and credit extension had still grown by 8% on average in the second half of 2008. In January and February of this year, the credit volume even increased by 7.7 and 6.3%, respectively. According to the OeNB, growth from the prior-month level was, however, slowing down; in February the monthly rate of change stagnated. ■

5.6 billion euros of government capital for banks to date

The first phase of the government capital injection plan for domestic banks has been completed. Numerous financial institutions have issued bonds

guaranteed by the Federal Republic in the last few weeks. Minister of Finance Josef Pröll therefore presented the interim results of implementing the federal government's 100-billion-euro bank rescue package on 8 April 2009. 5.6 billion euros out of the 15 billion euros earmarked for equity support have been disbursed to date; 4.6 billion euros had already been paid to the banks affected, stated Pröll. The difference corresponded to Erste Group, where the final total amount depended on the contribution of private investors to the capital injection. A decision would be taken by the end of April. The other banks affected are the Carinthian Hypo Group Alpe Adria, Volksbank AG and Raiffeisen Zentralbank. No concrete talks had been held with Bawag, only informal contacts. As far as Bank Austria was concerned, it was necessary to clarify which amount would be contributed by the Italian parent UniCredit, explained the Minister. Currently, there were no signs that the government capital of 15 billion euros for the banks was insufficient. However, renegotiations were possible, said Pröll.

The second part of the government's bank aid package covers various guarantees. 10 billion euros have been earmarked for increasing guarantees for savings deposits. 20.8 billion euros out of the remaining amount of 75 billion euros have been disbursed to date, including 9 billion euros for covering guarantees by Clearingbank, which had been set up to promote interbank lending. The remaining difference has been earmarked for bank bonds, for which the Federal Government guarantees interest and principal payments. The respective volume would be further increased. However, the banks were not given a gift, stressed Pröll. The Republic was entitled to dividends from the capital injections and to fees for guarantees. Furthermore, for every euro of capital aid the banks had to extend two euros in loans in the next three years. ■

Scrapping premium: 10,000 requests

The premium for scrapping old cars ("eco-premium"), which became effective on 1 April 2009, has led to run on car dealers and car registration authorities. Shortly after the Easter holidays almost 15,000 requests have been filed. Nearly half of the total of 30,000 cars covered by the premium budget have been sold. If the allotted amount of 45 million euros is exhausted before 31 December 2009, the scrapping campaign will end earlier. ■

Lower Austria's Exhibition 2009: bridge building between Austria and Czechia

This year the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain will be celebrated. Lower Austria commemorates the event in the framework of its courageous and fascinating exhibition titled "Austria. Czechia. divided – separated – united". Cross-border exhibition programmes devoted to this theme will be staged from 18 April to 1 November 2009, the venues are Horn and Raabs (Waldviertel) and Telč (former German name: Teltsh, southern Bohemia).

The exhibition of the Land of Lower Austria has been prepared thoroughly over a period of two years. Numerous Austrian and Czech scholars have jointly developed the programme for the three exhibition venues under the academic guidance of university professor Stefan Karner, head of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on War Effects, and by Michal Stehlik, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University of Prague.

The exhibition focuses on the turbulent history of two neighbours: Austria and Czechia, spotlighting the regions Waldviertel and Vysočina. The exhibits of the show have been selected from state archives and museums of Austria and the Czech Republic as well as private collections.

Kunsthau Horn concentrates on 20th century history – from the common history "without borders" in the royal and imperial monarchy under the Hapsburgs, independent development after 1918, the horror of the NS period, the "Cold War" and the "Prague Spring of 1968" to the lifting of the "Iron Curtain" and Austria's and Czechia's membership in the European Union.

The exhibition in Raabs, a small town in the northeast of Lower Austria, addresses the border situation. Visitors may for example reflect on a checkpoint of the "Iron Curtain" from the inventory of the Museum of Lower Austria. In Czech "Austria" is "Rakousko" – the country beyond Raabs. After the end of "WWII.", about 3 million German-speaking inhabitants were displaced from Czechoslovakia. Based on German data about 130,000 people died from violence, while according to the Czech about 40,000 persons were killed (Source: Markus Zwettler: "Grenzerfahrungen" [Border Experience], Wiener Zeitung, Kulturfrühling 2009 [Cultural Spring 2009]). A fatal incident occurred near Gmünd in the death zone of the "Iron Curtain" still in 1988.

The mental "borders in our heads" are presented in Raabs: ideologies, nationalism, culture and religion may produce these borders. Besides symbols of separation, examples of how to overcome borders are shown.

In Telč the spotlight is turned on common cultural creations of Austria and Czechia: from music and literature, the visual and performing arts to architecture. Gustav Mahler, Josef Hoffmann or Egon Schiele are only some of numerous artists whose life and work were inseparably linked with the two countries.

In the last few decades, people started again to build bridges. Tourism is booming in this gorgeous, wide landscape arousing growing international interest as a "wellness oasis".

On the initiative of Governor Erwin Pröll, a total of about 22 million euros was invested in the region by mounting this first cross-border exhibition of the Land of Lower Austria. The investment volume covers inter alia the cost of realising the exhibition, construction measures as well as accompanying investments, e.g. road construction, infrastructure and the protection of monuments. The expenditure seems to be justified in the light of an estimated value-added of 30 to 40 million euros for the Waldviertel's tourist and economic sector. A major part of the investments was used for renovating Kunsthau Horn and Lindenhof Raabs, making it possible to preserve two historically valuable buildings for the future.

The exhibition of the Land has ticket partners offering reduced admission to visitors presenting their tickets for the exhibition of the Land of Lower Austria (and vice versa). Among them are the Abbey of Altenburg, the Abbey and Nature Park of Geras, Rosenberg Palace, Krahuletz Museum and Nostalgia World Eggenburg, Herbs Club "Weidinger Centre", Thaya Valley Nature Park, the Kollmitz ruins, the museums of the City of Horn and the wine route train "Reblaus-express". Ticket partners in the Czech Republic include the Palace of Telč, the Gustav Mahler and Josef Hoffmann residences, the Palaces of Dačice and of Vranov. Other important highlights are the numerous cross-border cultural projects of the region, e.g. the international chamber music festival "Allegro Vivo" or the dance/theatre festival for a young audience "Szene bunte Wähne", the culture networking project between Waldviertel and Bazilika Budweis, the "Fratres Cultural Bridge" or "Together", a platform for intercultural youth projects in the border region. www.noe-landesausstellung.at ■

Styriarte: "The dignity of humankind"

The motto of the Styrian festival styriarte 2009 (running from 26 June to 26 July 2009) is "The dignity of humankind". Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) wrote the memorable verses in his poem "Die Künstler" ("The Artists"): "The dignity of man into your hands is given, protector be! It sinks with you! With you it is arisen!" The attitude of the representative of German classical period and enlightenment, denounced as old-fashioned only a short time ago, is trendy again. Art is to purify people and strengthen humanity. The programme of styriarte 2009 explores this idea – in Elisabethan England, the slums of Charleston, Ottoman Jerusalem or in Vienna in the period before the revolution of 1948 ("Vormärz").

This year the birth and death anniversaries of many pioneering composers are commemorated, e.g. the 350th birthday of Henry Purcell, the 250th death anniversary of Georg Friedrich Händel, the 200th death anniversary of Joseph Haydn and the 200th birthday of Felix Mendelssohn. The four masters, who have always been included in the festival programme, are the highlight of this year's styriarte. Remise Mariatrost will for example present Purcell's "King Arthur" and Haydn's "Il mondo della luna", the adaptation for young people is by Johanna von der Deken. Händel dominates the programme staged in Stefaniensaal. The Academy of Ancient Music conducted by Paul Goodwin and with singers Nuria Rial (soprano) and Sonia Prina (mezzo-soprano) presents "Ein Fest für Händel" ("A Party for Händel"). It comprises the "Music for the Royal Fireworks" as well as overtures, arias and duets of "Orlando", "Theodora", "Giulio Cesare". Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who celebrates his 80th birthday in 2009, will have the artistic responsibility for a total of nine performances in Graz and in Stainz. He conducts Händel's oratory "Jephtha" and "The Dettingen Te Deum". At the Helmut List Hall in Graz the maestro conducts a five-night concertante performance in English language of George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" with a brilliant cast of black singers. Bess is played by Measha Brueggergosman, who interprets the Cabaret Songs of Arnold Schönberg on her sensational debut CD (Deutsche Grammophon). Porgy is sung by Jonathan Lemalu, who gave the raging Rodomonte in Haydn's "Orlando paladino" under Harnoncourt

at Theater an der Wien; in "Jephtha" he also plays Zebul of the Old Testament – obviously these "miracle singers" can sing everything. Serena and Sportin Life are played by Angela Simpson and Michael Forest.

The "Jerusalem" night – with music and texts from and about this city, interpreted by La Capella Reial de Catalunya, Hespèrion XXI, Les Trompettes de Jericho led by Jordi Savall and, of course, singer Monserrat Figueras – will certainly be a breathtaking spectacle.

The Chamber Orchestra of Europe with pianist Pierre-Laurant Aimard features "Mozart pure".

The programme of styriarte does justice to Schiller's words in "The Artists": "What souls of beauty have imparted, must excellent and perfect be". www.styriarte.com ■

Danube Festival 09: Fake Reality

The Danube Festival 09 (from 22 to 25 April and 30 April to 2 May) titled "Fake Reality" reacts to the unreality of the reality of our times. Its intention is to animate the visitors to develop a sensorium for fake realities.

Seven musical statement on seven days illustrate the theme of the festival in very diverse branches of art. Sonic Youth explores and crosses the borders of pop culture, the Butthole Surfers create psychedelic fantasy worlds, Girl Monster by Chicks On Speed's tries to uncover feminist networks in the visual arts, media art, performance, discourse and music. Jason Pierce transcends the genres of rock, country, gospel and electronic music. These are just some of the internationally famed bands. Contributions from Austria presented in Krems (Lower Austria) come from laptop magician Fennesz and Patrick Weber alias Crazy Bitch In A Cave. www.donaufestival.at ■

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary T-B A21: A Question of Evidence

T-B A21 in Himmelpfortgasse 13 in Vienna's first district shows the fascinating exhibition "A Question of Evidence" (free admission, closing on 31 May 2009). The selection of works by artists and producers presents critical perspectives of South and Central Asia, above all Burma, India, China and Tibet. In view of precarious human rights situations and obstacles to exercising the right of free speech, the exhibits displayed – videos, photos, texts, material from archives

installation art and performance – represent an appeal to search for the truth. Works from Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, e.g. by Amar Kanwar (India), Nikolaus Hirsch & Michel Müller (Germany) in cooperation with the Cybermohalla Ensemble (India), by Marine Hugonnier (France/UK), Pak Sheung Chuen (Hong Kong), Khin Khin Su (Burma) and Qui Zhijie (China) are on show. www.TBA21.org ■

Mourning for film director Niki List

The popular Austrian film director Niki List (aged 52) died after an accident in Vienna in the early morning of 2 April 2009. In 1982 he had been awarded the Max Ophüls Prize for his feature film “Café Malaria“. In 1986 his detective musical “Müllers Büro“, e.g. with Christian Schmidt, Max Müller and Andreas Vitasek, became a box office hit. His documentary drama “Move!“ giving insights into the multi-cultural youth scene of present-day Vienna caused a stir in 2002.

List received the Austrian Film Prize three times, for “Helden in Tirol“ he was awarded the Mountain Film Festival Prize in Trento (Italy). In March Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied paid tribute to the film director by awarding him the professional title “professor“. Schmied was deeply shocked by Niki List’s death. He had “made a major contribution to the renaissance of the Austrian film” and “made domestic filmmaking a worthwhile experience again“. ■

High honour conferred on Hollein

To celebrate the 75th birthday of the architect on 30 March 2009, one day later Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied and Executive Councillor for Urban Planning Rudolf Schicker invited to a “party for Hans Hollein“ on “Wolke 21“ (“Cloud 21”), the top storey of Saturn Tower built by Hollein on the so-called “Danube Platform”.

As Hollein explained humorously, Frank Lloyd Wright, whom he had met in 1958 shortly before his death, had told him: “Architecture is an old man’s profession“. “Now I am mature enough“. Oscar Niemeyer, the designer of Brasilia, was more than 100 years old. “Now they are my models”, Hollein stated amusedly. “I just hope that I will be able to build other landmarks in Vienna, Austria and abroad. I hope that I will stay alive for some time – even though I sometimes can be unpleasant“. Executive Councillor for Urban Planning Schicker praised the architect’s

achievements in Vienna, awarding him the “Goldene Rathausmann” (a golden trophy representing the statuette on top of the City Hall). Minister of Culture Schmied conferred the Grand Golden Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service to the Republic of Austria on him. The festive speech was delivered by Albertina Director Klaus Albrecht Schröder, who hailed Hollein as “one of probably two dozens of the absolutely most influential architects of the 20th century“, a “master of collage, montage and assemblage“. He had not only created the much-discussed postmodern design for the Albertina in Vienna but the Museum of Mönchengladbach had “ushered in the museum boom“, and Frankfurter Museum boasted the “most beautiful interior of the world“. Both Schröder and Hollein paid tribute to Vienna’s late former Mayor Helmut Zilk for having made possible the erection of the controversial Haas building on Vienna’s Stephansplatz. The statements were listened to attentively by a distinguished audience composed of top architects like Wilhelm Holzbauer, Gustav Peichl, Hermann Czech, Friedrich Achleitner, painter Christian Ludwig Attersee, Rector of the University of Applied Arts Gerald Bast, President of the Jewish Community Ariel Muzicant and founder of the “Standard“ Oscar Bronner – to mention but a few of those celebrating Hans Hollein. ■

Eisenstadt: “Phenomenon Haydn“

Joseph Haydn is inseparably linked with Eisenstadt. In 1761 the master – one of the greatest revolutionaries of music (symphonies, string quartets, piano works, oratorios, songs, etc.) – started to work for the Princes of Esterházy, in whose service he remained for more than four decades. The capital of Burgenland is under the composer’s spell also visually in the Haydn Year 2009 as the exhibition “Phenomenon Haydn” is staged at four venues and different original locations. authentic life worlds and the baroque joy of living, exquisite sacred music and original popular culture are combined for the first time. Highly valuable pieces of art, precious autographs and original musical instruments of renowned owners from all over Europe are displayed. The show recently opened by President Fischer welcomes all music lovers at the Palace of Esterházy, the Haydn House Eisenstadt, the Diocesan Museum Eisenstadt and the Museum of the Land of Burgenland. An absolute must.

www.haydn2009.at ■

Milestone in the combat against doping criminality

On 30 March 2009, the interministerial "Anti-Doping" working group set up by Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos held its first meeting at official level, in which representatives of the ministries of Justice, the Interior, Health and Sport participated. "In my opinion the establishment of this working group has been a milestone in the combat against doping", stated Darabos, "Never before have experts from four ministries gathered around a table to develop jointly strategies against doping in sport".

The representatives of the ministries presented the experience they had gained in this field and with the present version of Federal Anti-Doping Act in a constructive discussion. In the next weeks the working group will prepare proposals for solutions concerning the Decree on Permissible Quantities of Substances, the cooperation between Special Commission on Doping and NADA as well as the possible tightening of criminal law, of provisions regarding the labelling of medical drugs and data protection. A representative of the Ministry of Finance will be invited to the next meeting of the working group, which will deal with tariff regulations. The Anti-Doping Subcommittee in Parliament will benefit from the group's expertise.

Before the interministerial meeting, NADA and the Ministry of Sport presented the new Anti-Doping "Manual for Competitive Athletes". It is distributed to athletes, their coaches, to associations, etc. ■

Top ice hockey tournament for young talents in Zell am See

In the past few years, Austria has developed into a constant factor in international ice hockey. The Austrian national team has gained a foothold in Group A. Many players are active abroad, e.g. in Germany, Scandinavia and North America; and Austria even has an absolute superstar in the National Hockey League (NHL): Thomas Vanek. Austria looks back on a longstanding tradition as the host of international ice hockey tournaments – just think of the numerous World Championships for Group A taking place in our country, the exciting encounters at the Olympic Games in Innsbruck in 1964 and 1976, and last but not least

the World Women's Championships, Division I, held in Graz very recently.

Minister of Sport Darabos is therefore highly pleased about the fact that our country is also very committed to ice hockey for young talents as has been demonstrated at the 18th World Tournament in Zell am See from 10 to 19 April 2009.

Darabos: "This tournament is a true mega-sporting event. 48 teams from 21 nations compete in three age groups, 1200 active athletes as well as 1500 accompanying persons will stay in this region in Salzburg for ten days. This will also give an enormous impetus to the tourist industry in one of Austria's most important holiday destinations". ■

100 years of track and field athletics in Tyrol

On 25 April 1909 the first track and field athletics event had been held on Tyrolian territory. Many were to follow in the next decades. International top athletes such as Heike Drechsler or Sammy Koskei frequently came to Tyrol and impressed the audience with their excellent performance.

National sports celebrities like Roland Schwarzl, Wolfgang Konrad, Andreas Steiner or Gerhard Hartmann can be found of the record lists of Tyrol still today.

In the context of the important anniversary year 2009, a number of first-rate sports events are organised at different places, e.g. the fifth edition of the "Golden Roof Challenge" in Innsbruck's historic centre on 29 May 2009 or the international jumpers' meeting on 31 May 2009 and the European Mountain Running Championships in Telfs on 12 July 2009. A major event will be held in Innsbruck to celebrate the end of the anniversary year.

Minister of Sport Darabos congratulated the Tyrolian Track and Field Athletics Association on this special occasion: "I am very pleased that also young people were involved in these activities, namely in the Multiple Event Championships for pupils in Schwaz as well as in the U-23 and junior events in Innsbruck. We will not be able to continue our remarkable success of the past – at regional as well as national level – unless we promote young talents adequately. I thank all organisers who have contributed to the successful realisation of the anniversary celebrations and sports competitions in this year which is so important for Tyrolian sport". ■