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Federal Chancellor Faymann: Quick aid for flood victims

The Austrian federal government promises the victims of the latest flood disaster quick and un-bureaucratic help. After the Council of Ministers on 30 June 2009 Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll stressed that “no flood victim” would be left in the lurch. Funds for flood relief were available and would be increased if required. Moreover, the Chancellor thanked all helpers for the support given so far. According to the final report, a total of 10,000 firemen, 3,000 police officers and 200 rescue teams as well as 600 members of the Federal Army had provided emergency help up to the end of June. In addition, 10,000 soldiers are on standby.

Coordination between emergency services will be further improved, and legal provisions regarding flood risk zones, which have in the meantime been defined clearly, will be amended if required. Measures envisaged by Faymann also include a construction ban within the defined flood risk zones, at least the erection of flood barriers should become mandatory. According to Faymann, it was unacceptable that inexpensive plots of land were bought in flood risk zones and that in the end the state had to pay for flood protection measures. A solution is to be found by autumn. Between 2007 and 2016 funds totalling 2.9 billion euros are allocated to protect the population from natural disasters. Moreover, the redistribution of flood control responsibilities between the Federal Republic, the Länder and municipalities will also be examined. The Chancellor also considers a retransfer of powers from the municipalities to the Federal Republic. In cooperation with all competent ministries (Ministries of the Interior, Defence, Infrastructure, Environment), the Länder, emergency organisations and experts, a concept has already been developed. The aim of the “Strategy 2020“ is to indicate pathways to optimised inter-organisational cooperation. ■

Harmonised A level exam: governing parties reached agreement

The new partially harmonised A level exam will be introduced at all Austrian grammar schools (allgemeinbildende höhere Schulen) in 2014. The vocational higher secondary schools (berufsbildende höhere Schulen) will follow one year later.

The new rules will also apply to A level exams for external pupils and the vocational leaving exam.

On 26 June 2009 Minister of Education Claudia Schmied, jointly with education spokesmen of the People’s Party and the Social Democrats, Werner Amon and Elmar Mayer, presented the reform of the A level exam. The new standardised, skills-oriented school-leaving exam would lead to “more quality, better comparability and above all fairness“ as well as changes in the culture of teaching and studying, said Schmied.

The new A level exam had three pillars: a pre-academic paper to be presented at the oral A level exam; standardised written exams (held on the same day all over Austria) in the compulsory subjects German, mathematics and the first modern language; and oral exams remaining the responsibility of the school. In at least one of the three pillars priorities set by the individual schools have to be taken into account. The marks of the written compulsory exams are based on a centralised grading system.

School administration will also be reorganised – in the framework of the comprehensive administrative reform. To this end, the five parliamentary parties reached an agreement on 29 June 2009. No details have been announced. Chancellor Faymann mentioned that the law governing teacher employment could also be amended. Minister of Education Schmied plans to streamline school administration and bundle responsibilities at federal level; this is, however, opposed by the Austrian People’s Party. ■

Minister of Infrastructure Bures forbids closure of 193 post offices

On 30 June 2009 Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures prohibited the closure of 193 post offices, which had been announced by Post AG in March, based on a decree pursuant to the Postal Services Act. No postal partners were found to replace these post offices; talks with mayors were inadequate and documented insufficiently. But 100 post offices earmarked for closure on 1 July 2009 will be replaced. The number of postal partners is likely to total 1,650 by year-end. ■

Amendment of the EIA Act

The Social Democratic Party and the People’s Party agreed to reform the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The aim is to speed up procedures and implement EU legislation. ■

Support for Austria's anti-GMO initiative

In the struggle for self-determination of the EU Member States regarding the cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMO), Austrian Minister of the Environment Niki Berlakovich scored a first success. At the meeting of the EU environment ministers in Luxembourg on 25 June 2009, 15 EU Member States supported the Austrian initiative, namely Germany, France, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovenia, Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Lithuania, Latvia, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. According to Berlakovich, also Great Britain, Italy and Spain were in favour of a continued debate on this issue. The European Commission had agreed to submit a proposal. ■

Federal President Fischer pays visit to Ukraine

Federal President Heinz Fischer arrived in Ukraine on 6 July 2009 for a three-day state visit. He is accompanied by President of the Economic Chamber Austria (WKÖ) Christoph Leitl and a trade delegation. The official programme includes meetings with Ukrainian President Victor Yushchenko, head of government Yulia Tymoshenko and Speaker of Parliament Vladimir Litvin. Besides bilateral issues, Ukraine's approximation to the EU and the international economic crises are top items on the agenda. ■

20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain: Fischer in Budapest

Politicians from all over Europe gathered in Budapest on 27 June 2009 to commemorate the fall of the Iron Curtain 20 years ago. Besides Federal President Heinz Fischer and the heads of state of Germany, Finland, Slovenia and Switzerland, high-ranking officials from more than 20 other states participated.

On 27 June 1989 the then foreign ministers of Hungary and Austria, Gyula Horn and Alois Mock, had symbolically cut through some barbed wire on the border between the two countries – this event marked the end of Europe's division. Two months earlier Hungary had already started to dismantle the border installations.

The images of this symbolic act on the border that went around the world encouraged thousands

of citizens of the former GDR to travel as "tourists" to Hungary and former Czechoslovakia in summer 1989, where they waited for an opportunity to travel to the West. In August the first people left for Western Germany via Austria. On 11 September all Eastern Germans were allowed to leave Hungary. On 9 November the Berlin Wall fell, on 3 October 1990 the two German countries were reunified. The legacy is that Europe must "support democracy, human rights, the rule of law and tolerance in the spirit of 1989", explained Fischer in his festive speech. ■

Chancellor Faymann in Rome

The talks of Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Rome on 26 June 2009 focused on the economic crisis, the Brenner base tunnel and the forthcoming G-8 summit in L'Aquila (8 to 10 July). Both sides stressed that the Brenner base tunnel was a priority and that they hoped that construction of the tunnel would start as soon as possible. Faymann emphasised that the long-term financing of the project had to be ensured and that this was difficult as, besides Austria, the EU, Italy and Germany participated and were bound by their budgets. ■

Russia praised Austria's active neutrality policy

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov applauded Austria's present role in the UN Security Council as well as its "active neutrality policy" in Vienna on 23 June 2009. This was reflected by the numerous headquarters of international organisations in Vienna, said Lavrov in an official meeting with Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann. Faymann received an invitation by President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. This meeting has been scheduled for autumn. ■

Palestinian head of government Fayyad pays short visit to Vienna

Palestinian head of government Salam Fayyad pled for reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah during his short visit to Vienna on 30 June 2009. Fayyad was of the opinion that a Palestinian state was feasible also without Israel's approval. ■

OECD: Austria weathers the global crisis better than others

Austria has weathered the global economic and financial crisis better than other highly developed countries. This finding was made in the recent country report of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development). The reason why Austria still boasted one of the highest per-capita gross domestic products (GDP) was the highly dynamic economic development up to the early 1990s from which Austria was still benefiting. However, Austria had lost ground in the 15 years preceding the crisis vis-à-vis the best-performing countries.

The OECD experts identified two reasons for the downward trend. People with low qualifications were integrated inadequately into the labour market. In contrast to manufacturing, the more sheltered service sector was significantly lagging behind international competition.

Austria's measures to cope with the crises earned praise, but the OECD urged Austria to come up with a strategy to reduce public debt as quickly as possible. The deterioration of Austria's budget position was classified as substantial and unavoidable. Therefore it was important to consolidate the budget on a sound foundation as soon as recession was over. These measures should be based on expenditure cuts. Opportunities for cost savings were identified in the health sector, community services and the public administration. Additional income could be reaped from higher consumption, land and environmental taxes, but this was diametrically opposed to the plans of the federal government. Tax increases had been ruled out categorically at least in the short and medium term.

The new budget law, providing for multiannual budget caps, met with the full approval of the OECD. Austria had also made progress in limiting the pension expenditure.

According to the OECD's report on Austria, the main risk continued to be the heavy investments of domestic banks in Eastern Europe. In case the economic situation was deteriorating, "further financial-sector support" might be needed.

The recession in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) affected above all Austrian exports and bank profits – with adverse effects on economic growth, income and employment. Against the background of a positive growth differential between CEE and EU countries, Austria should, however, continue to profit from its economic ties

with the CEE countries. In general, the increased openness of the Austrian economy had shown positive effects in the past few years. ■

Wifo/IHS: minor economic growth in Austria as from 2010

Economic analysts expect Austria's economy to shrink considerably in the wake of the severest global recession of the post-war period but a minor growth could be registered already next year. The Economic Research Institute (Wifo) and the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) consider a GDP decline by 3.4% or 4.3% likely for 2009. For 2010 the two institutes predict a minor plus of 0.5% or 0.3%. In 2008 the domestic economy had still recorded a 1.8% growth. Based on the forecast of the experts, the number of registered jobless persons in Austria will probably climb by about 100,000 to almost 310,000 in 2009 and 2010.

In June 229,703 jobseekers were registered, corresponding to a sharp year-on-year increase of 33%. But compared to May, the number dropped by 10,000 due to seasonal factors. Hence, Austria had achieved something that only very few other countries could come up with, Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer explained to reporters on 1 July 2008. Based on the EU's statistical criteria, the domestic unemployment rate had increased by 0.5 percentage points to 4.2%. In an EU ranking Austria was second behind the Netherlands. Austria's favourable result "proved that the measures of the government as well as the high quality placement services of the Public Employment Service were effective", stated Hundstorfer. ■

AUA/Lufthansa: EU Commission puts off decision on take-over

On 1 July 2009, the European Commission decided to open an in-depth probe into the sale of Austrian Airlines (AUA) to the German carrier Lufthansa. One of the reasons for this step was a possible monopoly on some routes and higher ticket prices for passengers. A decision must also be taken about the admissibility of Austria's state aid amounting to 500 millions euros.

The AUA management has in the meantime announced an austerity programme, entailing personnel cuts by about 1,000 jobs up to mid-2010. ■

Russian Minister Lavrov returned historical records to Austria

A full truckload of files left Moscow for Vienna in mid-June. Russia returned historical records to Austria, which Russian troops had looted during WWII. On 23 June 2009, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov handed over two files to his Austrian counterpart Michael Spindelegger, symbolically representing the freight of several tons. But the about 11,000 "fascicles" (the technical term for "bundles of files") are by no means everything. Other files are still kept in Moscow, waiting for restitution.

The Nazis had confiscated the archive material during WWII., transported it to Berlin and then to Silesia, where it finally fell into the hands of the Russian troops. For a long time it was unclear whether the documents still existed. Only in the 1990s did Austrian historians obtain access to the Moscow-based "Special Archives", where they inspected the material. Gerhard Jagschitz and Stefan Karner published the book "Beuteakten aus Österreich" ("Looted Historical Records from Austria") in 2006.

Since 2007 Austria and Russia have been negotiating about restitution. In 2008 the boxes were packed. The Austrian State Archives will now inspect the files. As the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs announced, an exhibition has been scheduled for autumn. Archive material of the Jewish Religious Community (IKG), the Free Masons and Paneuropa-Union are still waiting for restitution. They could probably be returned by 2010.

Besides, negotiations have also been conducted for quite some time about the restitution of the so-called Pahlavi Papyri of the Austrian National Library (ÖNB) and of 1,664 books belonging to the Esterházy Private Foundation, which were transported away from Eisenstadt (Burgenland) to the USSR in 1945. ■

EU educational programme: Austrian universities among the top

Austrian universities celebrated a major success in the framework of the call for proposals under the EU's educational programme Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window. Austria will participate in nine of the 39 projects approved by the European Commission for the academic year 2009/10.

These projects will support the individual mobility of 2,000 students from EU Member States and third countries, allowing them to spend some terms at a foreign university. With a share of three quarters in the total number of beneficiaries, students from third countries are given priority.

The largest number of partnerships with foreign networks were entered into by the University of Graz. It participates for example in projects with universities in Egypt, the Western Balkans, China and South America. Proposals submitted by the Universities of Vienna and Innsbruck as well as the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences were also among those selected by the European Commission.

Austrian universities are highly active in China. Of the five projects funded under Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window, three will be conducted with participation from Austria.

The "External Cooperation Window" launched in 2006 has been integrated as an independent action programme into the EU educational programme "Erasmus Mundus II" since 2009. A total of 163.5 million euros has been made available by the European Commission for projects under the call for proposals recently closed. Thanks to this programme, more than 6,300 students of all levels – from bachelors to PostDocs as well as teaching staff – will benefit from greater mobility. ■

Ingeborg Bachmann Prize 2009 to Jens Petersen

This year's Ingeborg Bachmann Prize (25,000 euros) went to the physician and writer Jens Petersen (32), who was born in Germany and lives in Switzerland. This decision was taken by the jury of the literary competition in Klagenfurt on 28 June 2009. Reciting pieces from his yet unpublished novel "Bis dass der Tod" ("Until Death..."), Petersen won over Ralf Bönt, with 5 vs. 2 votes. The German Ralf Bönt received the Kelag Prize (10,000 euros) for his text "Der Fotoeffekt" ("The Photo Effect").

Jens Petersen comes from Pinneberg near Hamburg. After studying medicine in Munich and overseas, he started to work at the Friedrich-Bauer Institute in Munich. In the meantime he has moved to Zurich, where he finished the neurology residency programme.

The two-meter-tall convertible driver presents himself in a completely unpretentious way. In his work he is trying to come to terms with the

experience gained in his every-day life devoted to medicine. "What makes it so interesting is that you have very close contacts to people." When you deal with two worlds that are so different like medicine and writing, you need a refuge for the mind, he explained. Of course, the experience of pain and death also shaped his literature, and inspired him.

These experiences and impressions of his life as a doctor, which are often quite ambivalent, are therefore reflected in the novel "Bis dass der Tod" ("Until Death...") – a gloomy text about a relationship and its tragic end. Due to severe illness, the wife of the protagonist Alex needs constant care. Alex has to inject her with morphine and provide comprehensive care to her. After many years of intensive nursing care he shoots her, but does not commit suicide as planned. The preparations for the desperate deed are described in detail, the language used by the author is almost painfully direct.

The 3sat Prize (7,500 euros) was conferred on the German Gregor Sander for "Winterfisch" ("Winter Fish"). The German Katharina Born won the Ernst Willner Prize (7,000 euros) with her text "Fifty Fifty". The Hypo Group's Audience Prize (7,000 euros) – based on Internet voting – went to the German Karsten Krampitz.

The Ingeborg Bachmann Prize has been granted since 1977 in commemoration of the author born in Klagenfurt in 1926. It is one of the most prestigious awards for German-language literature. ■

Andrea Breth received Cross of Honour for Science and Art

On 23 June 2009 Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied conferred the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art, First Class, granted by the Federal President on German stage director Andrea Breth, 56. The Minister stated "You show us that art requires the courage to explore new paths".

Actress Elisabeth Orth read the award speech as Sven-Eric Bechtolf, who had been requested to deliver it, could not attend the event due to the final rehearsals for Mozart's "Cosi fan tutte" in Zurich. In his text Bechtolf stressed the "double view" of the honoured stage director and highlighted Breth's acclaimed productions of Schiller's "Don Carlos" and Lessing's "Emilia Galotti": "Clear-sightedly you allow your characters to remain in their existentialist

darkness". Rehearsals with Breth could be compared to "land and sea expeditions. The compass is left at home".

Wolfgang Mitterer and Georg Nigl were responsible for the music at the ceremony.

At the Salzburg Festival ("Salzburger Festspiele") Andrea Breth will direct the revival of her successful production of "Verbrechen und Strafe" ("Crime and Punishment") based on Dostoyevski. In the book reproducing her conversations with theatre critic Irene Bazinger "Frei für den Moment. Regietheater und Lebenskunst" ("Free for the Moment. Director's Theatre and the Art of Living"), published by Rotbuch Verlag, Andrea Breth did not only provide profound insights into her development and working methods but also described her manic-depressive disorder, from which she has suffered for several years. ■

Austrian Theatre Museum: Les Ballets Russes 1909-1929

Anna Pavlova, Vaslav Nijinsky, Michel Fokine, George Balanchine, Igor Stravinsky, Léon Bakst, Pablo Picasso – swarms of artists, including dancers, choreographers, composers and visual artists, were gathered together by Russian impresario Sergey Diaghilev in his legendary "Ballets Russes". He sent the first touring ballet company of the 20th century across Europe and around the globe.

But what is the "Russian" element within the cultural diversity – the common thread linking many productions of the Ballets Russes? Which subjects did the Ballets Russes deal with? Which effects did the West and the extensive tours of the ballet company have on the aesthetics of its pictorial language and its dance vocabulary?

All these questions are explored in the special exhibition at the Austrian Theatre Museum (with the subtitle "Russian Images on the Move"), presenting numerous loan exhibits from Russia. The latest academic research theses about the most famous ballet company of the 20th century are also put before the public.

The show was created in cooperation with the German Theatre Museum in Munich to mark the centenary of the first performance of the Ballets Russes in Paris. "Petrouchka", "The Firebird", "The Golden Cock" are famous creations evoking the expressive enchantment of the ballet, the Russian exotic adored by the elegant French, which had been influenced by Picasso and Stravinsky, rustic lifestyles and Constructivism.

Pavlova became an icon of modernity, Nijinsky the father of a ballet tradition. Porcelain figurines of the venerated dancers, Nijinsky's notebook with jottings about *Le Sacre du Printemps* or his worn ballet shoe retain a magic aura even today.

As admirers of the Ballets Russes and "ardent supporters of the exhibition", the future director of Vienna State Opera Dominique Meyer and ballet chief designate Manuel Legris will give a lecture at Theatre Museum on 16 September 2009. "Summer nights at the Palais" Lobkowitz are presented by famous actors such as Erwin Steinhauer, Helmuth Lohner or Erika Pluhar. Ending on 27 September 2009.

www.theatermuseum.at ■

Masterpieces of modernity at Vienna Albertina

For the first time in its 250-year existence Vienna Albertina shows a permanent exhibition of masterpieces from its own collection. This exquisite show has become possible after taking over the Batliner Collection. It is rounded off with permanent loans from the Forberg and Ploil collections as well as an Austrian private collection donating five paintings by Gerhard Richter to Albertina.

The permanent exhibition comprising about 260 works of art was rearranged. In 29 rooms and galleries with a total surface of 3,000 square metres an overview of the most exciting chapters in the history of painting spanning 130 years is given – from French Impressionism to contemporary art. In parallel to the first presentation of the entire permanent collection of the new Albertina, the Carl Djerassi Hall was opened, which is devoted to Paul Klee.

The repositioning of the museum became possible as the great patrons of the art Herbert and Rita Batliner had transferred their valuable art collection (set up as a private foundation) to Albertina in 2007. The Batliner Collection consists of more than 300 paintings signed by Monet, Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani, Nolde, Kirchner, Malewitsch, Giacometti, Rothko, Bacon, Katz, Baselitz and Kiefer. Rita and Herbert Batliner had collected works of art since the 1950s, with their focus shifting from the masters of classical modernity to contemporary art.

The permanent exhibition gives a new profile to Albertina. The old Princely Collection and the new collection interlock into a multifaceted arts presentation. www.albertina.at ■

Commemorating Napoleon at Schallaburg

Schallaburg, a castle near Melk in Lower Austria, stages the exhibition "Napoleon – Military Leader, Emperor and Genius" (ending on 1 November 2009). The show explores all aspects of his personality and his life – from the rise to power of the young Corsican aristocrat and his rule in France and large parts of Europe to his death in exile on St. Helena.

Valuable exhibits from important international museums, e.g. the Vienna Museum of Art History, the Louvre, the Fondation Napoléon in Paris and Hermitage in St. Petersburg, illustrate the controversial biography of the Corsican fascinating many people even today.

www.schallaburg.at ■

WAGNER:WERK: the deconstruction of modernity in Prague

As a contribution to the cross-border cultural projects between the Czech Republic and Austria taking place in 2009, WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse shows the exhibition "cubiCZm! The Deconstruction of Modernity in Prague" (free admission, running until 29 August 2009). There is hardly a more suitable venue for this exhibition than Otto Wagner's Postsparkasse (Post Office Savings Bank) in Vienna, his key building, where he translated all theoretical reflections into built architecture and designed interior.

The juxtaposition of Wagner's modernity and Czech Cubism reacting to it – one of Europe's most independent artistic and stylistic movements – in this exhibition illustrates thesis and antithesis in the architecture of the early 20th century.

As a professor at the Prague Academy of Arts and the founder of the architecture class, Wagner disciple Jan Kotěra had great influence on the following generation of architects. The founder of Czech Cubism, Pavel Janák worked alongside with Josef Gočár in his studio in 1908/09. As from 1909 Prague became Europe's second most important centre of Cubism after Paris. The theories of the Cubists also addressed commercial art, e.g. book illustrations, advertising posters and poster art.

Czech Cubism anticipated a number of art movements and strengthened the growing cultural identity of a state undergoing transformation.

www.ottowagner.com ■

“Clean and Healthy”: new anti-doping network

Higher, faster, longer – apparently the combat against doping never ends. As soon as one case is detected, the next one follows. Not only high-performance athletes dope, but also amateurs knowingly or unknowingly take forbidden drugs. On the initiative of the Austrian Pharmacists' Association and with the support of the Ministry of Sport and the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), the new “Clean and Healthy” network was founded, focusing on comprehensive information and prevention in amateur sports.

“To combat doping effectively in mass sports, we have to get into the minds of the people engaging in sports. Education and information on the adverse effects of doping must be intensified, and this is precisely the aim of this new initiative. Amateur athletes are made aware of health risks”, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos explained his active involvement in the new network.

A sharp increase in the abuse of medical drugs in mass and amateur sports has been registered in Austria. From 2007 up to last year, the number of offences reported in the context with the abuse of medical drugs rose by almost 100 percent.

“Medical drugs are valuable goods and their primary objective is to heal diseases or to preserve health. Medical drugs may, however, be abused. The positive nature of mass sport, its beneficial health effects are thereby reversed. With the new information brochure ‘Clean and Healthy’ we would like to provide information to amateur athletes and warn them emphatically against health damages, which may even be fatal”, warns the President of the Austrian Pharmacists' Association, Dr. Friedemann Bachleitner-Hofmann, in the network's new information booklet.

About 250,000 information booklets have recently become available for free in Austria's 1,200 pharmacies. The aim is to make amateur athletes aware of the health risks of the abuse of medical drugs in sport.

In cooperation with PR-Data GmbH, the publishing house of the Austrian pharmacists – Österreichischer Apotheker-Verlag – offers an information database on doping and the abuse of medical drugs, which is updated on an ongoing basis and may be consulted in all Austrian pharmacies.

The booklet “Clean and Healthy” and more in-depth information may be downloaded from www.apoverband.at and www.nada.at ■

Success for Minister Darabos: NADA receives the right to inspect files

On the initiative of Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos, another milestone has been reached in the combat against doping. Based on the findings of the inter-ministerial Anti-Doping Working Group set up by Darabos, the Ministry of Justice laid down by decree that the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) has a right to inspect files within the meaning of Section 77, Para. 1 of the Austrian Penal Code (StPO) provided that it has a substantiated legal interest. Now NADA will be enabled to examine whether testing and disciplinary procedures have to be initiated in cases with substantiated reasons to suspect doping.

Darabos said in this context: “This is a great success. I have vehemently pled for giving NADA the right to inspect files. I thank Minister of Justice Claudia Bandion-Ortner for making this joint step in the right direction.

NADA urgently requires information from the prosecution to take action against athletes violating sports law, i.e. the WADA Code or the Federal Anti-Doping Act, and to impose sanctions on them. Otherwise doping offenders could simply continue to participate in competitions; this is something we want to avoid.”

Andi Schwab, Managing Director of NADA, welcomed the decision of the Ministry of Justice warmly: “To give NADA the right to inspect files has also been the wish of many ‘clean’ athletes. Criticism has been voiced repeatedly that it was unacceptable that the public prosecutor knows about athletes probably using doping substances but that NADA had no chance to institute proceedings against them due to a lack of information and suitable documents.”

Requests by NADA to be given access to the files have so far been rejected by the prosecution. Thanks to the decree, of which all judges active in criminal matters, all prosecutors as well as district attorneys will be informed, this will change in the future. ■