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"News from Austria" takes a holiday break until 23 August 2009. The editorial team wishes you a nice summer.

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Faymann looks back: measures for the economy, jobs and families

Looking back on seven-month government work, Chancellor Werner Faymann focused attention on the packages stimulating the economy and the labour market, on tax cuts and investments in schools and education. 68 government bills had passed the Council of Ministers, “this is a record”, stated Faymann after the Council of Ministers on 7 July 2009. 25 bills covered important measures to combat the economic crisis. Faymann also highlighted the introduction of the free nursery year, measures to safeguard pensions and long-term care benefits as well as investments in infrastructure and climate protection. However, the crisis was not yet over. “Even if Austria registers Europe’s lowest increase in unemployment, there is a risk of growing poverty and unemployment“, warned Faymann. During the summer the government would work hard on preparing further steps to be taken in autumn. The focus was on education and infrastructure, said the Chancellor.

With regard to the government treaty laying the groundwork for the construction of the natural gas pipeline Nabucco (see next page), which has been signed recently, Faymann stressed the importance of this project for the Trans-European Networks (TEN). The aim of the project was to diversify energy supplies. Energy efficiency and renewable energies continue to be top priorities of domestic energy policy. As far as the combat against corruption in the civil service is concerned, the Chancellor emphasised that the new rules for members of government and high-ranking civil servants had to cover also Members of Parliament. The new anti-corruption law was adopted by the National Council on 8 July 2009.

Regarding the current discussion about extending the periods of entitlement to childcare allowance for lone parents, Faymann stated that the draft legislation on a means-tested childcare allowance was largely accepted. The proposal of Women’s Minister Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek to extend the entitlement period for lone parents would cost more money. “But we know that single mothers are often socially disadvantaged and face poverty risks“, underlined the Chancellor. The government would examine whether the guaranteed minimum income to be introduced next year could fill this social gap. The new Childcare Allowance Act would enter into force no later than in 2010. ■

National Council signs off for the summer break: 98 laws adopted

During the parliamentary season 2008/2009 the National Council adopted 98 laws, e.g. fingerprints in new passports, the tax reform, economic stimulus packages, the “eco-premium” for scrapping old cars (already phased out), the anti-violence package with improved victims’ protection. In addition, the New Middle School, the biennial budget 2009/2010 and the Budget Accompanying Acts were passed. The free nursery year will be introduced in September. In their last session (8 to 10 July 2009) before the summer recess, the MPs gave the green light for a number of laws, i.e. the amendment of the University Act, the Anti-Corruption Act, the Labour Market Package II (longer short-time working arrangements), the amendment regarding environmental impact assessment (shorter procedure), the reform of the Austrian Railways (ÖBB), state guarantees for the industry, the Corporation Act, the new family law and harsher punishment for speeders and drunken drivers. ■

Investigating committee set up

The parliamentary investigating committee set up to look into various allegations of secret information and spying held its first meeting on 17 July 2009. The 17 committee members come from all parties represented in Parliament. The meeting was chaired by former Economic Minister Barstenstein of the People’s Party (ÖVP). The task of the committee is to find out whether confidential data of the police and military secret services were disclosed to politicians and if the public prosecutor had violated the immunity of MPs by tapping phones. Another issue under investigation is the alleged instrumentalisation of Austrian MPs by foreign secret services. The latter has been confirmed in the 2009 Constitution Protection Report of the Ministry of the Interior. ■

Settlement Fund: payment shares

Based on the final payment shares fixed by the General Settlement Fund for NS Victims, payments covering between 10.5% and 20.74% of losses will be made. The Fund has 210 million US dollars (151 million euros) at its disposal. Claims of about 1.5 billion US dollars were put forward in about 20,700 applications (160 still pending). ■

Nabucco: Chancellor Faymann signed intergovernmental treaty

The five gas transit countries – Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey – as well as the EU signed the intergovernmental treaty laying the foundations for the construction and operation of the Nabucco gas pipeline in the Turkish capital Ankara on 13 July 2009. With that, a stable legal framework for the next 50 years has been created. The pipeline will transport natural gas from the Caspian region to the Austrian natural gas hub in Baumgarten (over a distance of 3,300 km). The aim of the Nabucco project – led by the domestic OMV, Central Europe's leading oil and gas group, – is to reduce the EU's dependence on Russia. The expenditure totals 8 billion euros. Operations will start in 2013 at the earliest. It is still unclear which countries are to supply the gas. At the signing ceremony Austria was represented by Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner. Chancellor Faymann described the agreement as “an example that Turkey's EU membership was not a prerequisite for partnerships with this country.” The project had no consequences for the EU accession negotiations, said the Chancellor.

Minister for Economic Affairs Mitterlehner stressed that Nabucco strengthened Austria's role as a gas hub. Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger stated in a press release that the project was “part of our safeguards against future gas crises“. Based on the intergovernmental agreement, 50% of Nabucco's future transport capacity – 31 billion cubic metres gas after project completion – will be reserved for the shareholders, including not only the five parties to the contract OMV, MOL (Hungary), Transgaz (Romania), Bulgarian Energy Holding and Turkish Botas but also the German energy group RWE. The remaining 50% are to be offered to other market participants. The terms agreed on will remain in force 25 years as from the launch of the gas pipeline operations.

Austria's gas consumption totalled about 9.5 billion cubic metres in 2008, that of Germany 82 billion cubic metres. Almost 54% of Austria's total gas supply is provided by Russia.

EU funding for the Nabucco project amounts to 200 million euros. The European Investment Bank (EIB) makes available 2.5 billion euros. ■

Portugal's President Cavaco Silva pays visit to Austria

Portuguese President Anibal Antonio Cavaco Silva will arrive in Austria on 24 July 2009 for a three-day official visit. The programme of the state visit includes talks with President Heinz Fischer and Chancellor Werner Faymann. On 25 July 2009 the two presidents and their wives will participate in the opening of the Salzburg Festival (“Salzburger Festspiele”) and attend the performance of the Händel opera “Theodora“ at the Festival Hall in the evening. ■

Foreign Minister Spindelegger travels to Ethiopia and Uganda

Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger paid visits to Ethiopia and Uganda (Eastern Africa) from 13 to 16 July 2009. Key issues discussed at the meetings with government members and representatives of the African Union were Austria's development aid projects in the two countries. Ethiopia and Uganda were so-called “prioritised countries” of the Austrian Development Cooperation (OEZA). Austria supports mainly water supply, sanitary, peace-keeping and democratic development projects. The talks in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa concentrated on the fact that the government's combat against Islamic rebels had to be backed politically and financially.

Austria and Uganda, the second destination of the Minister's visit to Eastern Africa, currently hold seats on the UN Security Council. In the two countries Spindelegger tried to rally support for the candidacy of Benita Ferrero-Waldner (incumbent EU Commissioner for External Relations) for UNESCO Director General. ■

Female Speakers of Parliament gather in Vienna

15 female (Deputy) Speakers of Parliament from Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia accepted the invitation of National Council President Barbara Prammer to the 5th Global Summit of Speakers of Parliament at Vienna's Parliament on 13/14 July 2009. Discussions focused on the UN Millennium Goals (anti-violence protection, equal rights, struggle against poverty, famine, Aids) as well as the effects of the financial and economic crisis on women. President Heinz Fischer hosted a reception at his official residence in Hofburg. ■

Government presented 2009 Economic Report

The federal government's 2009 Economic Report is, of course, under the impact of the global economic and financial crisis, which has led to the most significant recession in Austria since the foundation of the Second Republic. The key ratios of the 183-page paper, including for the first time contributions of the European Commission and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), do not show any deviations from recent economic forecasts. This year the Austrian economy is expected to shrink by 3.4% (Economic Research Institute/Wifo) or 4.3% (Institute for Advanced Studies/IHS). A growth rate of a maximum of half a percent is forecast for 2010.

Based on estimates of the Ministry of Finance, the budget deficit will climb to 3.5% of the GDP (gross domestic product) in 2009 and to 4.7% in 2010 due to the high expenditure on economic stimulus measures; it will start declining only in 2013. In this period the indebtedness ratio will reach an all-time high of 78.5%.

It was imperative to consolidate the budget and to reduce the government debt as soon as the economy would start to pick up, stressed Minister of Finance Josef Pröll at the presentation of the Economic Report on 14 July 2009. "This is important so as to create room for manoeuvre for the next generations", stated Pröll.

"'Crisis' is probably the currently most frequently used term" explained Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann. "But we also have to visualise a future after the crisis to convey courage and confidence." To counter the crisis, several billion euros were invested. But a new scenario was needed for the future, the aim of investing huge amounts was not to re-build the same system, underlined Faymann.

It was not acceptable to continue strengthening monopolies. "We need a new framework and strict controls, we need strong financial market supervision and special rating agencies to counteract speculation and to strengthen the real economy", demanded Faymann.

Policy-makers should never lose sight of social balance, neither in times of crisis nor in phases of economic upswing. The state had to fulfil important tasks anytime: "We have to invest in the future – education, research and development are the basis of fair competition in a fair society", said the Federal Chancellor.

Hence, the government's Economic Report reaffirmed the need of making more future-oriented investments in education, families, the environment, infrastructure and labour market policy as well as of taking austerity measures in administration.

In 2009 the public income totals 63.88 billion euros, while expenditure amounts to 77.47 billion euros. Income of 57.59 billion euros and expenditure of 70.77 billion euros are expected for 2010. As a result of financing the bank rescue package, the government debt rose to 62.5% of the GDP, exceeding the Maastricht limit of 60%. The budget was also heavily burdened by the state subsidy of 500 million euros to support the sale of AUA (Austrian Airlines). ■

AUA/Lufthansa: negotiations with the EU continue

German Lufthansa's new offer to make concessions to the EU Commission to comply with competition law improved the chances for a go-ahead for the deal with Austrian Airlines (AUA) significantly. Well-informed circles reported that Lufthansa's concessions referred mainly to the routes Vienna-Frankfurt and Vienna-Geneva, which had been subject to particularly strict examination. To finalise the deal before the end of July, Brussels had to take a decision within the next days. ■

Double taxation agreement with Luxembourg

On 7 July 2009 Minister of Finance Josef Pröll signed a double taxation agreement with Luxembourg to implement the OECD's new standard on administrative assistance in tax matters. On the sidelines of the EU Council of Ministers of Finance in Brussels Pröll said that after signing an agreement with Bahrain "the machinery is operating at full speed in the negotiations on double taxation agreements based on the OECD standards for improving taxpayer honesty". Banking secrecy should be protected but the exchange of tax-relevant information on foreign nationals should be facilitated.

In Brussels Pröll advocated a single chair of the EU or the Euro-Group, the so-called "single-chair solution", in the reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). ■

Memorable visit of Chancellor Heinz Fischer to Lviv

In the framework of a three-day working visit to Ukraine (see News from Austria, No. 14/09), Federal President Heinz Fischer was also welcomed by Mikola Kmit. The Governor of the Oblast (administrative district) of Lviv (former German name: Lemberg) stressed the good memories of Lviv of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy at a dinner at Pototsky Palace. The visit of Federal President Fischer had been the first of an Austrian head of state since Emperor Francis Joseph. Lviv in Western Ukraine had been part of the Imperial & Royal Monarchy. After the reception Fischer met Mayor Andrey Sadovyi in the City Hall, where he signed the city's Book of Honour. Fischer visited the National Museum, and his official programme also included a walk to the opera house.

Lviv was for the first time mentioned in a written document in 1256 but was founded earlier. In 1772 Lviv became part of the Hapsburg Empire. It was the fourth-largest city of the Imperial & Royal Monarchy after Vienna, Budapest and Prague and the capital of the newly founded "Kingdom of Galicia and Lodomeria". After World War I, an "Ukrainian National Council" took power, in 1918 Polish troops conquered the city, which became the capital of a Polish Voivodship between 1919 and 1939. At the beginning of World War II, Lviv formed part of the USSR. Between 1941 and 1944 German occupiers staged cruel pogroms among the local and Jewish population. In the wake of the conquest of the Soviet Army in 1944 and the displacement of the Polish population, Ukrainians settled. After 1985 Lviv became the centre of the Ukrainian national movement. The "Orange Revolution" also expressed the wish of many people from Lviv to become part of Europe. ■

Carinthian Summer: Fischer praised the tolerance of the festival

On 10 July 2009 Federal President Heinz Fischer opened the 40th Carinthian Summer Festival at Ossiach Abbey. The anniversary season of the festival managed by Thomas Daniel Schlee is kicked off with the German-language premiere of the church opera "Passion & Resurrection" by British composer-in-residence Jonathan Harvey. His work describes the sufferings, death and

resurrection of Jesus based on texts of medieval Benedictine church dramas and the liturgy of the Last Supper of the Anglican Church.

In his festive speech Fischer praised the "special hallmark" the festival had developed over the past decades. Explaining that "the Carinthian Summer Festival conveys a message of pluralism and tolerance", he stressed that the freedom of art had been enshrined in the Austrian Constitution in 1982. This freedom had to be respected also in the future.

Just like the previous speaker, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied, he referred to the legendary music festival in Woodstock (USA), which had been staged in 1969, the foundation year of the Carinthian Summer Festival. To the surprise of the audience, Fischer stated to have been in Woodstock, but in 1968 when "it had not yet been so famous". Artistic manager Schlee warned against not paying enough attention to the festival's future during an anniversary season. Governor Gerhard Dörfler underlined the close links between the Church and the arts in the festival: "The Carinthian Summer Festival may inspire us in our fast-paced world".

www.carinthischersommer.at ■

"Rigoletto" in St. Margarethen

Opera lovers may attend Giuseppe Verdi's opera "Rigoletto" in the Roman quarry of St. Margarethen until 23 August 2009. In previous years the programme of the St. Margarethen opera festival included the Verdi operas "Nabucco", "Aida", "Otello" and "La Traviata" – an unforgettable experience for the audience in a stunning natural setting.

Stage designer Manfred Waba produced a remarkably good imitation of the city centre of Mantua. Director Renzo Giacchieri, who is also in charge of Bizet's "Carmen" (with Elina Garanča) in the Baths of Caracalla in Rome this year, succeeded in creating a gripping production of the chamber music drama around the hunchback court jester of the Duke of Mantua.

Koen Schoots, who will become the musical manager of Vereinigte Bühnen Wien, sensitively conducted the festival orchestra of the City of Arad (Western Romania) which was playing excellently. The cast, varying according to the performance date, is superb, e.g. Jean-François Borrás as the Duke, Irina Iordachescu as Gilda, Albert Pesendorfer as Sparafucile and Georg Tichy as Rigoletto. www ofs at ■

MAK Global:Lab: Art as a Message. Asia and Europe 1500-1700

Globalisation and its effects on art have been a key theme explored by the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) for some time. In the exhibition "Global:Lab" the subject, i.e. art as a communication medium between cultures, is transferred to a historical level. Tendencies in European and Asian art in the period 1500 to 1700 are highlighted in the MAK Exhibition Hall up to 27 September 2009, which serves as a global laboratory, where the confrontation with foreign culture turns into an experimental analysis of domestic traditions,.

The show has been conceived as a story about stories. 80 percent of the 470 exhibits shown come from the MAK's own collection. The artistic contacts and relations between Asia and Europe are traced in four large sections. The key theme "princely representation" is represented by the famous "Hamza Nama", a Mughal manuscript of the 16th century, which is one of the most important works of painting in the Islamic world. About 200 pages of the manuscript (which is believed to originally have included 1400 pages) have been preserved in the different collections around the world. With 60 miniatures, the MAK owns the largest coherent part of the manuscript.

The Hamza Nama is based on a tale handed over orally over many centuries. It was told by Hamza ibn Abdul-Muttalib (approx. 569-625), the uncle of the Prophet Mohammed (around 570-632). The historical facts were embellished with many fictitious events over the centuries. The Mughal emperor Akbar (the "Great"), ruling from 1556 to 1605, commissioned the voluminous work. It was created between 1557 and 1577 in his court workshops.

The exhibition presents the Hamza Nama surrounded by European tapestry and folding screens from Japan and China.

The show at MAK also covers three other themes in sections of different sizes. One section turns the spotlight on the discovery of geographical and cosmic realities. Different research on the shape of the firmament and the earth was treated artistically. The so-called "Ricci map" – a loan exhibit from the Austrian National Library (ÖNB) – is an excellent example. To increase acceptance of the map and of the pertinent European knowledge in China, the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) placed the continents in way that made China the centre of the map – and of

the world. By doing so, he made concessions to the Chinese idea that China – the "Middle Kingdom", was the centre of the world.

The exhibition also documents that the art and knowledge transfer between the continents was of decisive importance. The confrontation with unknown art was reflected to a very large extent in the country's own artistic production. This transfer is illustrated by a twelve-panel Coromandel folding screen of the 17th century, a loan exhibit of the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen. It shows Dutch sailors bringing exotic animals and treasures to the coast to load them onto a ship. This scene may be interpreted as depicting Dutch envoys at the Chinese emperor's court. www.mak.at ■

Vienna Kunst Haus Hundertwasser Museum: Art Brut from Japan

The exhibition "Art Brut from Japan" may be visited at Vienna Kunst Haus until 18 October 2009. The work of 15 autodidactic artists from Japan is shown for the first time in Austria and against the background of the Austria-Japan Year 2009. All the artists presented in the show, who are living on the margins of the Japanese society and often in mental institutions, created their own world of high esthetical intensity. The artists are presented through their paintings and graphic art, their sculptures and statues as well as touching documentaries depicting their fate, living conditions and working methods. Eijiro Miyama, for example, crosses Yokohama on his bike as a living sculpture in a fantastic costume.

"Art Brut from Japan" comprises about 140 works and was developed by the Collection de l'Art Brut in Lausanne, the internationally renowned museum for this type of art.

The term "Art Brut" was coined by the French painter and sculptor Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), who paved the way for this autodidactic art. By donating his collection to the city of Lausanne, he made it possible to found the Collection de l'Art Brut opened in 1976. Having devoted a solo exhibition to Dubuffet in 1995, Vienna Kunst Haus is presenting the first show from the Collection de l'Art Brut in Vienna: "Art Brut from Japan" www.kunsthawien.com ■

Mourning for Heinrich Schweiger

On 14 July 2009 actor Heinrich Schweiger died aged 77 years in a hospital in Salzburg. Born in Vienna in 1931, Schweiger was awarded the honorary title "Kammerschauspieler". He did not only shape Vienna's Burgtheater, of which he was a member since 1949 (with interruptions), but also influenced Vienna's literature-oriented theatre tradition decisively over several decades. The honorary member of Burgtheater, who made his breakthrough at the age of 22 in a legendary performance of Arthur Schnitzler's "Komtesse Mizzi" ("Countess Mizzi"), appeared on stage quite rarely in the recent past after years of intensive creative work. He played Tiefenbach in Thomas Langhoff's "Wallenstein" production at Burgtheater, but also in "Land des Lächelns" ("The Land of Smiles") at Vienna Volksoper or the TV series "Der Winzerkönig" ("The King of Winemakers") produced by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF).

In 1956 Schweiger worked for Bayerisches Staatsschauspiel in Munich and Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf. In 1961 he returned to Austria as he was contracted by Burgtheater. Many interpretations of characters by the actor, e.g. Shakespeare's "Othello" directed by Fritz Kortner, Leopold Lindtberg's adaptation of "Richard III.", Büchner's "Danton", village judge Adam in Kleist's "The Broken Jug" or Mack the Knife in Weill's/Brecht's "The Threepenny Opera" became legendary. The interplay between him and Oskar Werner in Anouilh's "Becket or the Honour of God" at Vienna Burgtheater in 1960 was spectacular. The skirmishes between the ideally matched Schweiger playing King Henry II. of England and Werner as his friend Thomas Becket, later Archbishop of Canterbury, were, by the way, recorded on CD by the ORF. Hence, the death of Heinrich Schweiger, who had received many important awards (e.g. the Kainz and Nestroy medals or the Cross of Honour for Science and Art) was deeply mourned. Minister of Culture Schmied hailed the deceased as one of the "most outstanding personalities of the German-language theatre. Stressing that Schweiger had "shaped the cultural life of his native city Vienna", Minister of Science Hahn conveyed his sincere condolences to the widow. Schweiger had been married to his third wife, former ORF moderator and incumbent administrative head of Vienna's 1st district Ursula Stenzel since 1983. ■

ÖNB took over remaining inventory of Arthur Schnitzler's library

In July 2009 the Austrian National Library (ÖNB) took over about 8,000 books of the library of Arthur Schnitzler, author of "Der Reigen" ("La Ronde"). After the death of Lilly Schnitzler, the wife of Arthur Schnitzler's son Heinrich, who bequeathed his collection to the ÖNB, the valuable library will be recompiled. Its fate reflects Austria's contemporary history. In 1940 the library of the Jewish author, who had died in 1931, was confiscated by the Gestapo and "left for further use to the National Library". In 1946 actor and director Heinrich Schnitzler presented his restitution claim to the ÖNB, which recognised the claim but reacted very hesitantly. In 1947 Heinrich Schnitzler was returned the works from his father's library that could be found, but one third of the inventory was allegedly lost. Nevertheless, Heinrich Schnitzler continued to feel attached to the ÖNB, bequeathing the entire library, theatre art research materials as well the original manuscript of "Liebeleien" ("Flirtation) to it.

A long time after Heinrich Schnitzler's death, his assumption was confirmed – in the post-war period there had been inaccuracies in classifying the works seized. As a result of provenance research initiated by ÖNB Director General Johanna Rachinger upon entering office, other objects from Arthur Schnitzler's library were found and restituted to Heinrich's widow Lilly in 2005. ■

BAWAG Contemporary shows Franz Erhard Walther

The exhibition "Franz Erhard Walther" about the revolutionary artist born in Fulda (Germany) in 1939, is running at the BAWAG FOUNDATION'S exhibition space "BAWAG Contemporary" until 2 August 2009 (free admission). Walther had strongly influenced artists like Jonathan Meese, Rachel Whiteread or Franz West and became known through paper work created by bending, folding, tearing, pasting, gluing and soaking. The highlight of the show is the artist's autobiography: "Star dust – a drawn novel" created in 2007 and 2008.

www.bawagcontemporary.at ■

Well-aimed financial support of young talents: "Project12"

With the aid of the recently launched programme "Project12" providing well-aimed individual support, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos wants to push young football talents to the international top level.

"We try to reform sports funding – from thinly spread funds to targeted individual support. This targeted personalised support of young kickers is precisely the aim of Project12, and I am pleased to be able to co-finance Project12, as the improved and updated successor project of Challenge 08", stressed Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos at the presentation of the Project12 programme devoted to the promotion of young talents on 13 July 2009.

President of the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) Leo Windtner, ÖFB Director Martin Pucher and Sports Director Willi Ruttensteiner presented "Projekt12 – from a young talent to a national team player", which will run until EURO 2012. It has been modelled on the previous project. Project12 focuses to an even greater extent on providing individual support to high-potentials. The most promising talents aged between 15 and 21 (31 male footballers and 9 female kickers) are to be selected and promoted through additional programmes in the areas of sports medicine, sports psychology and the involvement of fitness coaches.

Minister of Sport Darabos wants to guarantee that this type of targeted support is granted to talents during longer periods: "Many footballers who proved their talent in the recent national match in Belgrade were promoted under the Challenge 08 project. I am pleased that they qualified for the "A team" and developed excellently within an extremely short period."

The federal government finances Project12 with 400,000 euros annually from the budget earmarked for structural aid. An additional 180,000 euros per year come from the recently introduced federal sports promotion fund. ■

Darabos guarantees NADA a budget increase of half a million euros

Minister of Sport Darabos and the Federal Sports Organisation (BSO) once more intensify the anti-doping combat. The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) will receive an additional

535,000 euros in 2009. As a result, the total budget of NADA increases by almost 50% to more than 1.7 million euros. Based on the decision taken by the Ministry of Sport and BSO, the share of federal funds contributed to NADA is increased from 676,000 euros to 1.2 million euros, i.e. by 80%. The funds have been made available under the new Section 11a of the Federal Sports Promotion Act, which was adopted in the National Council in late April.

Minister of Sport Darabos interpreted the increase in financial resources as a clear signal in the anti-doping combat: "The budget increase gives impetus to NADA and the combat against doping. We have to exhaust all possibilities to struggle against doping. NADA will receive my full support." ■

Table tennis: "Werner Schlager Academy" before completion

Werner Schlager's second dream that is of relevance for international sports is now also coming true. After the table tennis player from Lower Austria became the last world champion not coming from China in Paris in 2003, the construction of the Schwechat-based "Werner Schlager Academy" (WSA) is gradually entering its last phase. The formal opening is expected to take place in the second half of 2010. In the framework of a press conference in mid-July, interested persons, among them Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos, will be able to cast a glance into the main hall of the building complex "Multiversum Schwechat" situated in the city centre. Darabos described "Multiversum" as a part of the 2020 plan for high-performance sports venues. Darabos: "It is also great that top athletes like Werner Schlager are committed to promoting their sport still during their active career!" ■

Austrians win two silver medals at European Championship in Osijek

Austria earned two silver medals at the European Shooting Championship in Osijek ending on 19 July 2009. Thomas Farnik from Vienna became second in the 50m free rifle three positions competition. Thanks to their great team performance, Farnik, Mario Knögler and Christian Planer won silver in the team ranking. Minister of Sport Darabos congratulated the athletes on their remarkable success. ■