

Editorial close: 4 January 2010

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CONTENTS

HOME AFFAIRS ■ EUROPE

Agreement on the restoration and care of Jewish cemeteries
Numerous changes in 2010
Common training for all pedagogues
Burgenland votes in spring 2010

EUROPE ■ INTERNATIONAL

Faymann visits the Golan Heights – meeting with President Assad
Less red tape in Europe – Federal Chancellery offers support

ECONOMY

Austrian economy is prospering
Brussels approves prolongation of Austrian bank aid package
Intensifying Austrian exports to the Black Sea region
Mixed winter season

CULTURE ■ MEDIA ■ SCIENCE

ÖNB acquired picture collection on Austrian contemporary history
Linz09: “Europe’s Green Belt: Border. Wilderness. Future”
Linz: voestalpine Steel World
Vienna: provenance researchers submit report on Foundation Leopold
Philharmonic’s New Year’s Concert – a “declaration of love” to the world

SPORTS POLICY

Joint anti-doping combat of RED-WHITE-RED TEAM and NADA
ÖOC: Minister of Sport Darabos supports athletes
A demand-oriented system instead of indiscriminate spreading of funds

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Editor: Dr. Franz Putz, tel. ++43/1/53115-2579, fax ++43/1/53115-4274, e-mail: franz.putz@bka.gv.at.
Dispatch: Division VII/2, Ms. Irene Bucher, tel. ++43/1/53115-2958, fax ++43/1/53115-2880, e-mail: irene.bucher@bka.gv.at.
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Agreement on the restoration and care of Jewish cemeteries

The restoration and care of the 63 Jewish cemeteries in Austria has been ensured for a period of 20 years by making available a total of 40 million euro. On 21 December 2009 the federal government, the Länder (notably Vienna and Lower Austria), various municipalities as well as the Jewish Religious Community (IKG) reached an agreement in a meeting at the Federal Chancellery. A fund for the restoration of the cemeteries will be established, to which the Federal Republic will allocate 20 million euro (i.e. one million euro annually). The remaining difference of 20 million euro will be granted by the Länder, municipalities and Jewish communities. In addition, Lower Austria will cover 25% of the costs arising on its territory, the Burgenland considers a similar approach. The City of Vienna will provide the funds for the restoration of the "Kornhäusl" (a building named after architect Josef Kornhäusl) at the Währing Cemetery (costs: 500,000 euro).

Chancellor Faymann described the agreement on the restoration of the Jewish cemeteries, brokered by him, as a "matter of responsibility, of "respect for history", for fellow Jewish citizens and for the cultural-historical heritage of this country. The IKG referred to a "late Chanukah gift". The "last open claim under international law" was finally being settled", informed the IKG. Austria had committed itself to the preservation of the graveyards under the 2001 Washington Agreement, but all efforts had failed. The Jewish graves are in a bad condition, especially in eastern Austria. This is mainly due to the fact that after the Holocaust there almost no descendants. Based on the Jewish religion, Jewish graves are not removed and exist forever. ■

Numerous changes in 2010

Facing numerous changes in the new year, Austrians may, for example, look forward to more flexible childcare allowances. In addition to the four existing lump-sum options, a means-tested childcare allowance is introduced; depending on the last net income, monthly allowances of a minimum of 1,000 and a maximum of 2,000 euro will be granted for a maximum of 14 months. This option is available for children born on/after 1 October 2009. Childcare expenses become tax

deductible. The same-sex registered partnership is also one of the innovations of the year 2010. The costs of bad health are slightly increasing as the prescription fee increases by 10 cents to 5 euro. Most Austrians will receive a new electronic health card adjusted to the needs of people with visual impairments during the year 2010. To prevent abuse of the electronic health card, checks with ID cards will become possible, especially in hospitals. Doped athletes will run the risk of lifelong exclusion from the federal sports promotion programme.

In 2010 pensions will increase by 1.5%, a one-time payment is granted to top up low pensions. In September a means-tested guaranteed minimum income will be introduced, entailing the harmonisation of the social assistance systems of the Länder. Minimum pension is paid 12 times a year: singles receive a net amount of 744 euro, while couples are entitled to 1,108 euro. Nursery attendance will become mandatory for all five-year-olds no later than in autumn 2010. Divorce law has been amended. Children will be supported by a children's counsel in divorce and alimony cases, divorcing couples will be granted a wider scope for agreeing on the separation of assets. New tax incentives will benefit free-lancers and other small entrepreneurs subject to income and expenditure accounting standards. If investments in specific securities are made before year-end, up to 10% of the profit is tax-exempt. Another advantage is offered to entrepreneurs. Under specific conditions, the Federal Republic will assume liability for the loans of large companies. ■

Common training for all pedagogues

According to the plans of the Minister of Education, school and nursery teachers are to undergo uniform training. Teacher training colleges and universities jointly develop training programmes, providing for induction courses and practical experience. After earning a bachelor's degree, the graduate will participate in an introductory programme of at least two years. This is mandatory for all teachers (from primary to grammar school). Completion of this programme is a prerequisite for starting master's studies. ■

Burgenland votes in spring 2010

The preliminary date of the early election to Burgenland's regional parliament (Landtag) is 2 May 2010 (exact date to be confirmed). ■

Faymann visits the Golan Heights – meeting with President Assad

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister of Defence Norbert Darabos paid a Christmas visit to the Austrian UN peacekeepers in the Syrian-Israeli ceasefire line in the Golan Heights on 23 December 2009. Faymann's wish "peaceful holidays" acquired a very special meaning in the buffer zone between Syria and Israel. The Austrian Federal Army has been active in the Golan Heights for 35 years in the framework of the UN Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). "Peace-keeping is an important mission in the region", stressed the Federal Chancellor at the pre-Christmas ceremony at Camp Faouar.

"It is also a sacrifice not to be able to spend Christmas at home", stated Faymann. With his visit, he also wanted to demonstrate that the mission of the currently 380 Austrian soldiers in the Golan Heights was not forgotten at home. "We are proud of them", stressed Faymann. "To be neutral does not mean to be indifferent or to look away. Neutrality must also be defended."

In the Syrian capital Damascus Faymann met with President Bashar al-Assad. Assad expressed his hope for a common stance of the EU in the Middle East peace process. If this prerequisite was met, the European Union could come to play an important role in the Middle East. Faymann emphasised that the EU always advocated solutions based on negotiations.

Besides its long-term engagement in UNDOF, Austria could also perform an important political function in the Syrian-Israeli peace process, said Assad, highlighting Austria's traditional engagement in this region since Bruno Kreisky. Federal Chancellor Faymann explained the EU wished to strengthen the negotiating process as violence would never be accepted as a medium of political confrontation. ■

Less red tape in Europe – Federal Chancellery offers support

On 29 December 2009, the deadline for transposing the Services Directive at EU level ended. The EU portal for the Points of Single Contact is now online: <http://ec.europa.eu/eu-go>. In Austria the Services Directive platform can be accessed at www.eap.gv.at. All information is also made available on the website HELP.gv.at.

The Services Directive requires all EU Member States to remove all legal and bureaucratic obstacles for service providers. It has now become possible to establish enterprises in the services sector or to provide cross-border services by completing the necessary formalities online. A carpenter from Austria wishing to set up a company in Slovenia will be able to take advantage of this service in the same way as an architect registered in Austria who was contracted for building a house in Germany or an Austrian event manager planning to organise an open-air festival in Hungary. To establish or expand a business, it will no longer be necessary to contact several authorities – professional associations and other bodies – partly at different levels (national, regional and municipal). Information may be obtained in every EU Member State electronically, i.e. in a simplified way.

All EU Member States have to set up Internet portals for e-government services with immediate effect. They also have to provide clear and comprehensive information on the administrative formalities and concrete requirements. Moreover, they have to ensure that the entrepreneurs can complete all necessary procedures electronically, e.g. obtain approvals or meet registration requirements.

In cooperation with the Austrian Federal Computing Centre and the Joanneum University of Applied Sciences, the Federal Chancellery developed an online assistant. With the aid of a Q&A system, potential service providers are guided to the relevant professional information and official procedures. Currently, the online assistant offers descriptions of 19 selected occupations and the corresponding formalities at federal level. The working agenda for 2010 comprises the further development of this tool based on demand, improving links to the electronic services of the Länder and municipalities as well as multilingual versions.

The online assistant is available under www.eap.gv.at. As Secretary of State for the Media Josef Ostermayer explained, the implementation of the Services Directive will benefit mainly the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), that are the "backbone of our economy" and the "main engine for growth and jobs".

Thanks to this new electronic service, Austria will continue to fulfil its role as a pioneer in e-government in Europe. ■

Austrian economy is prospering

The Austrian economy is recovering faster than expected. Before Christmas, the Economic Research Institute (Wifo) and the Institute of Advance Studies (IHS) issued an upward revision of their growth forecasts for 2010. The Austrian gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to increase by 1.3 to 1.5 percent, in September the experts predicted a real growth of 1.0 percent. A more significant increase of 1.6 to 1.7 percent is expected for 2011. However, the economic analysts stress that the recovery is only very moderate and is exposed to a number of risks. The unemployment rate increases by one percentage point to 8.1 percent by 2011, a budget deficit around 5 percent is forecast for 2010/11.

The slight growth is driven by private consumer expenditure that has been increasing moderately even during the recession. It will probably rise by about 0.7 percent in 2010 and by roughly 1 percent in 2011. The relatively high real wage increases, growing social transfers and the latest tax reform show favourable effects.

After double-digit declines in foreign trade, exports are picking up again. They are expected to grow by 4 to 5 ½ percent in 2010 and by 6 to 7 percent in 2011.

Price increases in Austria – mainly driven by energy costs – will remain quite moderate. After 0.5 percent in 2009, the experts project an inflation rate of 1.3 percent to 1.4 percent for 2010; this level will be exceeded in 2011 only insignificantly (1.4 to 1.5 percent). ■

Brussels approves prolongation of Austrian bank aid package

The European Commission prolonged its approval of the Austrian bank aid package amounting to 100 billion euro for another six months. Eight other EU Member States – Denmark, Germany, Finland, Great Britain, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Hungary – were also granted permission to continue their crisis support measures. EU Commissioner for Competition Neelie Kroes stated that the aim of the government aid was to support the recovery of the banking sector. However, she also pointed out that the countries affected should prepare the phasing out of the subsidies so as to prevent the banks becoming dependent for state aid. The support programmes to overcome the financial

crisis had been launched to stabilise the financial market through guarantees, capital injections and loans to credit and insurance institutions and were compatible with the EU rules. The measures were an appropriate instrument to restore confidence in the creditworthiness of Austrian banks and to stimulate interbank loans. ■

Intensifying Austrian exports to the Black Sea region

The Austrian export sector plans to concentrate on the Black Sea region with its about 137 million inhabitants in 2010. Currently, about 2 percent of the Austrian exports go to this region. The aim was to push this share to 4 percent, stated Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner. The opening of an Austrian embassy in the Azerbaijan capital Baku was one of the measures to support this initiative at political level, announced Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger.

To explore opportunities for Austrian exporters in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia and northern Turkey, but also in Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and in Russia, Wifo was commissioned with a strategic study, which is to be completed in March 2010.

Foreign trade with the states of the Western Balkans – in particular the successor states of former Yugoslavia – are to be intensified. “A lot has started to move” in the Western Balkans, said Spindelegger. The EU accession negotiations with Croatia are likely to be concluded in 2010. ■

Mixed winter season

The statistical data for Austria’s tourist sector were slightly below the prior-year level in the calendar year 2009 (January to November). As the Austrian Statistical Office “Statistik Austria” informed on 23 December 2009, the number of visitor nights of 114.14 million was 1.9 percent or 2.21 million visitor nights below the level of the same period of the previous year. In the group of the most important countries of origin of tourists visiting Austria, the United Kingdom and Belgium registered increases in visitor nights of 1.6 percent and 36.1 percent, respectively. In contrast, Germany, which has traditionally been the strongest country of origin, recorded a minus of 3.2 percent. The number of guests from Russia went down (minus 15.2 percent) as well. ■

ÖNB acquired picture collection on Austrian contemporary history

The Austrian Society of Contemporary History was founded inter alia by university professors Ludwig Jedlicka and Alphons Lhotsky in 1962.

From its inception, the tasks of the Society focused on research and documentation, the collection of and documentary evidence of contemporary history sources a basis for research projects and on the scientific evaluation of the material collected in cooperation with universities and other academic institutions.

We owe it particularly to university professor Gerhard Jagschitz that this important picture archive could be realised. As he was one of the first historians to recognise the importance of photography as a historical source, he is considered the pioneer of visual history in Austria. Over the years, he succeeded in acquiring important photography collections dealing with Austrian contemporary history. This visual material has been a rich source for numerous academic publications, exhibitions and TV productions such as documentaries on Austrian contemporary history "Österreich I" and "Österreich II". He was one of the first to highlight the significance of private photography as a historical source.

With the Picture Archive of the Austrian Society of Contemporary History, the Austrian National Library (ÖNB) acquired the probably most important photographic estate concerning Austria's 20th century history. The Picture Archive comprises more than 400,000 photos documenting events and personalities of the Austrian history since 1918, World War II and the NS period as well as the Second Republic until the early 1980s. 10,300 pictures from this collection have already been digitalised and made available to the public through the picture platform www.bildarchivaustria.at. After integrating this valuable collection into the ÖNB Picture Archive, Austria's largest picture documentation centre, users are offered a much wider range of documentary material on contemporary history on paper or in digital form. One of the most important parts of the collection is the estate of the Austrian press photographer Albert Hilscher, who created a photo documentation on the years 1931 to 1965.

The sizeable inventory of the NS Photo Agency "Weltbild" also forms part of the very comprehensive Picture Archive.

Special mention should also be made of the photos of press photographer Franz Blaha, who documented the early years of the Austrian post-war period as well as the complete photo estate of Alfred Cermak, a chronicler of the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, focusing on Austrian culture and media.

The collection is supplemented by photo albums offering alternative, private insights into Austrian contemporary and social history. They are considered an important source of socio-historical research.

Besides photos, additional valuable material providing relevant information concerning contemporary history was transferred to the Library, e.g. calendars, medals and decorations, badges, identity cards, food ration cards, etc. ■

Linz09: "Europe's Green Belt: Border. Wilderness. Future"

In the framework of the project "Linz09 – European Capital of Culture", now coming to a close, and in cooperation with the Regional Museums of Upper Austria and the University of Vienna, Schlossmuseum Linz presents the sensational exhibition: "Europe's Green Belt. Border. Wilderness. Future". The show ending on 10 January 2010 showcases an international nature conservation project that aims at protecting the diverse landscapes along the former Iron Curtain with their unique natural and cultural heritage on a sustainable basis.

Wilderness areas of a total length of 12,500 km across Europe became a refuge for wild animals such as bears, lynxes and wolves. These invaluable green havens are often embedded in abundant cultural landscapes. Their ecologically compatible use could serve as a model for a sustainable development of Europe's rural regions. Based on the different aspects of the "forced wilderness", the exhibition presents the cultural and biological diversity of the Green Belt from the subarctic Lapland to the Black Sea coast. A wide range of themes spans from the delicacies of the far north, amber on the Baltic coast and the wildlife of the Bohemian Forest to the floristic marvels of the Balkan Mountains. Finally, the question is explored in which direction the border regions in the heart of Europe could develop in the future.

www.linz09.at/gruenes-band-europas ■

Linz: voestalpine Steel World

The history of Vereinigte Österreichische Eisen- und Stahlwerke Aktiengesellschaft (VÖEST) is inseparably linked with the city of Linz. VÖEST, a subsidiary of “Hermann-Göring-Werke“ during the NS period, provided the basis for Austria’s nationalised industry, which later came under the umbrella of the state holding company Österreichische Industrieholding AG (ÖIAG). After 1947 VÖEST experienced a steady upswing. Thanks to the development of the so-called “Linz-Donawitz procedure”, a basic oxygen steelmaking process, it became an Austrian model company in 1952, which was also active in shipbuilding. In the Korneuburg shipyards – owned by the group between 1974 and 1991 – more than 100 passenger ships were built for the Soviet Union. In 1976 the hitherto largest blast furnace with a capacity of 3.3 million tons per year was put into operation.

In the following years, the strong political influence on the state-owned company increasingly focused on safeguarding jobs. This practice was ended in 1985, when the enterprise – which had grown into a conglomerate – reported a record loss of 25 billion Austrian Schilling (now about 1.817 billion euro) as a result of petrol derivatives deals. The enterprise was profoundly restructured and personnel was cut. Former Minister of Finance Ferdinand Lacina dismissed the entire VÖEST Managing Board and created a legal basis for abolishing the so far usual “system of proportional representation” of the Austrian political parties in the management. In appointing the company’s executive staff political affiliation had seemed more important than economic qualification.

To facilitate the labour market reintegration of the dismissed employees, the Steel Foundation was set up in 1987.

In 1988 and in 1989 VÖEST-Alpine AG was divided into six industry-specific holding companies (e.g. mechanical engineering and plant construction, mining). Based on the Privatisation Act of 1993, the conglomerate was basically divided into three groups, which were partly privatised by 1995. These three groups were as follows: 1) VOEST-Alpine Industrieanlagenbau, then belonging to the newly founded VA Technologie AG and, since 2005, to the metallurgical branch of Siemens Industrial Solutions and Services, 2) Böhler-Uddeholm AG: the Swedish Uddeholm company had been

acquired shortly before and merged with Böhler, and 3) VOEST-ALPINE STAHL AG – today Voestalpine. The two latter were listed on the stock exchange in 1995.

The initial public offering in 1995 marked the beginning of the privatisation of VÖEST-Alpine, up to then wholly owned by the Austrian state through ÖIAG. Privatisation was completed in 2003. Since then the company has again adopted its traditional corporate name Voestalpine AG, which has been restyled in the logo.

Voestalpine manufactures, processes and develops steel into quality products and innovative solutions around the world. Since November 2009 voestalpine Steel World has presented the material steel and countless ways of processing it to the visitors in a futuristic building designed by the Linz-based architects’ studio Schremmer-Jell. Together with the group headquarters, the administrative buildings of voestalpine Stahl GmbH und the gas holders, voestalpine Steel World is another prominent landmark in the urban development context of the industrial location Linz.

The architecture of the building surprises on five levels, particularly through different spatial designs. A whole new world of experience opens up to the visitors. Different spatial areas alternate – close and introverted zones with open and extroverted ones. Steel dominates the whole building – from the supporting construction and the frameworks from welded box sections, the diagonals from welded I-beam profiles and the roof truss from rolled steel sections to the front designed as a glass construction with steel plate casings. The visitors may become active and melt iron ore and coke or produce steel in several processing stages on screens. Virtual experts answer questions. Demonstrations include the production of a mud guard, the process of turning a steel plate into a framework, the equipment of a blast furnace and the safety clothing of a worker.

The group expects the new voestalpine Steel World – which is unique in the world – to double the number of visitors from 40,000 to 80,000 per year. The sensational “museum“ and its café are open six days a week. The permanent exhibition has already been praised for its “high technical quality, aesthetic appeal, the use of different media and its factual approach“ (Julia Urbanek, Wiener Zeitung).

voestalpine Stahlwelt, Voestalpine Linz; Tue. to Fri. 9 am to 5 pm, Sat., Sun. and holidays 10 am to 6 pm. www.voestalpine-stahlwelt.at ■

Vienna: provenance researchers submit report on Foundation Leopold

Provenance researchers Sonja Niederacher and Michael Wladika submitted their first report on the findings of their investigation at the Leopold Museum Private Foundation to the Ministry of Culture and the Foundation on 22 December 2009. Independent provenance research has been established in May 2009 based on an agreement of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture with the Leopold Museum Private Foundation. Research was conducted in line with a schedule developed by the provenance researchers and affected works of the former collections Duschinsky, Eisler, Lanyi, Mayländer, Morgenstern, Neumann, Popper, Reichl, Rieger, Steiner and Stemmer. As far as the Grünbaum Collection is concerned, the researchers still have to complete their investigations; the report will be presented only in spring.

Minister Claudia Schmied thanked the two researchers for their work which will provide a reliable historical basis for decision-making. Both the Ministry of Culture and the Foundation are examining the documents submitted to them and plan to publish them still in January.

Another measure taken by Schmied in response to the findings of the inter-ministerial working group was to set up a panel of renowned, independent personalities, which will examine the legal implications of the report based on the standards applied to the federal museums. The inaugural meeting of the panel has been scheduled for the second half of January. The Leopold Museum Private Foundation was invited to participate in this panel. ■

Philharmonic's New Year's Concert – a "declaration of love" to the world

On 1 January 2010 the Golden Hall of Vienna's Musikverein was the venue of the "New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra" for the 52nd time. After the huge success of 2008, it was the second time that the French conductor Georges Prêtre (aged 85) led the certainly most popular classical concert in the world. While the first part of the concert was devoted to the Strauß family, the orchestra started the second part with the overture to the "The Merry Wives of Windsor" by the founder of the Philharmonic Orchestra Otto Nicolai, whose 200th birthday is celebrated

this year. The official concert ended with the work of a composer who was also born in 1910, the Dane Hans Christian Lumbye and his "Champagner-Galopp" ("Champagne Galopp"). Many spectators considered the breathtaking interpretation of the overture to Jacques Offenbach's "Rheinnixen" ("The Rhine Mermaids"), which later became world famous as "Barcarole" in the Tales of Hoffmann, as the musical highlight.

The Ballet of Vienna State Opera and Volksoper danced a choreography by Renato Zanella at the Museum of Art History (KHM). The soloists came from the Opera Garnier in Paris – Eleonora Abbagnato and Nicolas Le Riche. All dancers wore costumes designed by Italian couturier Valentino. Hannes Rossacher's film broadcast during the intermission of the concert allowed the viewers to take a glimpse behind the scenes of the concert, showing for example how Valentino and his staff pay attention to every detail of the made-to-measure, pink dresses. In the performance the dresses were to match ideally with the colours of the KHM – the oil paintings in the background and the marble grain. 250 working hours were invested into each of these fairy-like dresses.

The concert, which was broadcast for the first time in high-definition format, was watched in 72 countries by about 45 million people, partly live, partly with delay, e.g. in Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Mongolia. The Golden Hall has again been decorated with more than 30,000 flowers from San Remo by the Viennese gardeners and Austrian florists – roses were mostly in the fashionable colour orange. During the waltz "An der schönen blauen Donau" ("Blue Danube Waltz"), the audience could follow the course of the river Danube from its origin in Germany, through Austria, Hungary, to Serbia and Romania into the estuary on the Black Sea. Before the brilliant concert, which may be enjoyed on CD as from 7 January and on DVD as from 14 January 2010, Georges Prêtre had stated enthusiastically: "It is not a concert but a declaration of love to the whole world".

Following an invitation by Federal President Heinz Fischer and his wife Margit, outgoing Croatian President Stjepan Mesic and his wife Milka attended the concert.

In 2011 Franz Welser-Möst will conduct the New Year's Concert of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra – this seems very appropriate as he will celebrate his debut as Vienna State Opera's musical director on 1 September 2010.

www.wienerphilharmoniker.at ■

Joint anti-doping combat of RED-WHITE-RED TEAM and NADA

The 200 athletes of the RED-WHITE-RED TEAM (TEAM ROT-WEISS-ROT) do not only achieve top performance results for Austria but they are also committed to social and societal concerns in sport. Together with NADA, the national anti-doping agency, Olympic medallist in swimming Mirna Jukic, tennis pro Jürgen Melzer, winner of the Vienna marathon Andrea Mayr, dressage rider Victoria Max-Theurer, table tennis world champion Werner Schlager and holder of the somersault record (diving) Fabian Brandl shot a TV spot against doping. The message of the spot showing the athletes in unusual but fair training situations, is clear: “We do everything for success – everything but doping“.

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos: “Sport in Austria has been caused a tremendous damage by some black sheep in the past few years. In this TV spot our athletes of the RED-WHITE-RED TEAM, who are important role models for young people, help to improve the image of high-performance sports.“

NADA manager Andreas Schwab: “It is our goal to reach the public interested in sports and to inform it in a likeable way of the fact that doping is completely rejected by our athletes“.

The spot is broadcast about 60 times in the context of sports programmes and sports transmissions of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) from the beginning of January to the end of March 2010. It is another important step in Austria’s anti-doping combat.

The introduction of new anti-doping legislation in Austria has also been a crucial measure. Numerous tighter rules entered into force right at the beginning of the new year. ■

ÖOC: Minister of Sport Darabos supports athletes

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos supports the call of former Austrian top athletes for an Athletes’ Advisory Board within the Austrian Olympic Committee (ÖOC). According to the initiators, its task will be to advise the ÖOC Managing Board. “In fact, it is the athletes that the Olympic Games are about. They know best what an athlete needs to succeed. I think it is great and important that they want to get involved. Sports policy must make this possible. I give my

full support to the athletes”, stated the Minister of Sport.

Shortly after taking office in February 2009, Darabos himself had launched the initiative “Athletes for Sport“, in which about 30 former and active sports stars, e.g. Markus Rogan, Werner Schlager, Nik Berger, Alex Antonitsch, Christoph Sieber, Michael Hadschieff and Emese Hunyadi, developed ideas for sport in Austria. “The firm commitment of the athletes impressed me. Three concrete projects promoting sport and exercise among young people are being realised”, said Darabos. ■

A demand-oriented system instead of indiscriminate spreading of funds

Minister of Sport Darabos plans to simplify the Austrian sports funding programme, which basically dates back to the post-war period. “The key objective of my project is to use funding in a more targeted and direct way. The subsidies should be geared more strongly than before to the needs of the sports associations and athletes“.

Another step in this direction has been taken. After intensive evaluation talks, the Federal Sports Organisation (BSO) and the Ministry of Sport granted a total of 25 million euro to the 60 federal associations of various sports disciplines and three sports federations for concrete projects and measures at the turn of the year. The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) will receive an extra budget for preventive measures amounting to half a million euro in 2010.

The basis for this promising new approach to funding are Section 11a and Para. 5 of the Federal Sports Promotion Act. On the initiative of the Minister of Sport, the new Section 11a paving the way for a flexible funding scheme for sports associations, clubs, sports events and athletes that is geared to the present needs of organised sports was adopted by all five parliamentary groups in May 2009.

The state-of-the-art funding system shifts from the indiscriminate spreading of funds to an action-oriented, targeted financial support of the sports associations. The new system will also comply with the long-term request of the sports organisations to receive demand-oriented annual funding. ■