

# NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

Editorial close: 12 April 2010

No. 08/10

## ***HOME AFFAIRS***

Labour market: favourable signs but all-clear signal cannot be given  
Women's Minister Heinisch-Hosek calls for upgrading part-time work

## ***EUROPE INTERNATIONAL***

UN chief Ban Ki-Moon in Vienna  
EU Council President Van Rompuy meets with Chancellor Faymann  
Foreign Minister Spindelegger pays visit to Moldova  
Deeply shocked about the death of Polish President Kaczyński

## ***ECONOMY***

Industry is gaining momentum  
FFG: enterprises engaged in research also during crisis  
Full nationalisation of OeNB started

## ***CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE***

Educational policy: Schmied promotes uniform and high standards  
Erhard Busek is new President of the EU-Russia Centre in Brussels  
German Victims' Association: trace of SED money leads to Austria  
40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rauris Literature Festival  
WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse: Women of the Economic Miracle  
Attractive Fair Fashion: World Fair Trade Day on 8 May 2010  
Mayor Michael Häupl says Turkish schools are possible in Vienna

## ***SPORTS POLICY***

Darabos: "Let's reorganise Austria's sports promotion scheme!"  
Journal "TEAM ROT-WEISS-ROT"

### IMPRINT

Owner (publisher) and producer: Federal Chancellery, Federal Press Service. A-1014 Vienna, Ballhausplatz 1. 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. Website: <http://www.bundeskanzleramt.at>. Excerpts from this text may be reprinted. Published by the Federal Press Service – Vienna.

**HOME AFFAIRS****Labour market: favourable signs but all-clear signal cannot be given**

The situation in the domestic labour market has relaxed slightly. In March the number of registered unemployed persons (excluding the participants in training programmes of the Public Employment Service) has dropped for the first time since the beginning of the economic crisis: by 1.8% (4,807 persons) from the prior-year level to 266,320. In parallel, the number of training programme participants – who are not included in the official unemployment statistics – increased by 33.6% to 84,017 persons. Including those undergoing training, 350,337 persons were jobless in March. This were 4.9% or 16,330 jobseekers more than one year ago but – due to seasonal effects – almost 50,000 persons less than in February, as the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Public Employment Service (Arbeitsmarktservice/AMS) informed on 1 April 2010.

According to the AMS, the number of long-term unemployed persons rose substantially (by 28.8%), while unemployment in the labour market for temporary agency workers decreased significantly (by 13.6%). The situation has relaxed considerably also in the industrial sector. The number of jobseekers in manufacturing declined by 10% year-on-year, youth unemployment decreased by 5.9%. In addition, the tourist industry reported a 3.9% decrease in the number of unemployed persons.

The number of vacancies rose by 2.3% or 644 to 28,083 job openings compared to the previous year. Unemployment decreased in the Länder Salzburg (-11.5%), Tyrol (-9.9%), Styria (-7.3%) and Burgenland (-5.6%).

Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer identified positive signals, too. The trend was favourable but it was “too early to sound the all-clear signal”, said Hundstorfer at the presentation of the labour market statistics in Graz. According to the Social Minister, one could not speak of a “trend reversal” unless unemployment started to decline in all groups – men, women, young people, the age group 50+ and training programme participants.

Hundstorfer explained the upward trend in the number of trainees by the strong increase in courses offered by the AMS. These training and qualification measures improved the job opportunities of jobseekers considerably. Job qualifications were the best way out of unemployment. In 2009 50% of the participants in training programmes offered by the AMS had found new jobs within three months, empha-

sised the Social Minister. With an overall unemployment rate of 5.0%, Austria still boasted the second lowest level in an EU comparison – behind the Netherlands (4.0%). The average unemployment rate of the EU-27 was 9.6%.

**Women’s Minister Heinisch-Hosek calls for upgrading part-time work**

Part-time workers earn less than full-time workers for equal work; in some sectors the difference in the gross hourly rate was no less than 3 euro. This is one of the findings of a qualitative study on part-time work presented by Minister for Women’s Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek on 30 March 2010.

“Part-time jobs are often a dead end for women”, stated Heinisch-Hosek. In Austria about 700,000 women were working part-time, almost half of them due to care-giving obligations. In this respect, the study revealed a significant difference between female and male part-time workers. Education and training were the main reason why men took up part-time jobs, while only 3% opted for it due to childcare duties. Moreover, men held part-time jobs predominantly at the beginning or end of their careers, but most women working part time were in the age group 30 to 44 years, that is of “prime working age”, said the Minister.

More than 50% of the women worked less than 24 hours per week but only one quarter of them wished to increase their weekly working hours, and this happened in fact very rarely, stressed Heinisch-Hosek. Besides, part-time work often forced workers into unqualified jobs, every fifth woman did not find a position commensurate with her education and training when returning to the full-time labour market. It was necessary to take action to tackle this issue and the pay gap. Therefore, wage transparency in the companies was “indispensable”. The government had already taken important steps to improve the working conditions of women such as the means-tested childcare allowance to ensure faster labour market reintegration after maternity leave and to provide fathers with an incentive to go on parental leave. Moreover, a part-time working scheme for parents of children younger than 7 years was introduced.

Additional measures helping to improve the work-family balance demanded by Heinisch-Hosek were more childcare facilities, incentives to fathers to take parental leave and the obligation of companies to announce full-time job vacancies internally before publishing them externally.

**EUROPE INTERNATIONAL****UN chief Ban Ki-Moon in Vienna**

UN Director-General Ban Ki-Moon met with leading representatives of the Austrian state and government in Vienna on 8 April 2010. He led talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger and Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer. The current situation in Kirgizstan, the Middle East and Afghanistan as well as Austria's participation in UN peace-keeping missions and the international climate goals were the key topics on the agenda. An in-depth exchange had taken place on these issues, stated Faymann after his meeting with the UN chief. Lessons had to be learnt from the failure of the climate conference in Copenhagen as quickly as possible for the firm commitment to common binding targets was "a duty to future generations", stressed Chancellor Faymann at a joint press conference. Austria wanted to make an active contribution, and Vienna would be the ideal venue for a climate conference. Ban Ki-Moon declared himself in favour of a binding climate protection treaty. He thanked the "Austrian government for its active support in the combat against climate change".

Furthermore, the UN chief highly commended the "essential role" of Austria in the UN peace-keeping missions, in particular the mission in the Golan Heights. To date, more than 90,000 Austrian women and men had provided valuable services in international peace-keeping operations.

Ban Ki-Moon stated that he would continue to support the opening of approximation negotiations in the near future to give impetus to the Middle East peace process. Ban expressed his great concern about the conflict in Kirgizstan. In cooperation with the OSCE, a special envoy would be sent to Kirgizstan.

He also thanked for Austria's active role in the UN Security Council and the good cooperation in tackling all global challenges. Ban Ki-Moon underlined the shared views with Vienna on the combat against the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and for gender equality as well as for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Chancellor Faymann was invited to the next special summit meeting of the UN in New York (20 to 22 September 2010). The "UN High-level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals" will address the UN's MDGs up to 2015 as well as a road map towards achieving them.

Faymann in turn assured the UN Director-General of Austria's continued support in the UN Security Council. With regard to economic policy, the Chancellor stated that it was vital to make available money for pressing social issues such as the combat against poverty or measures in the health sector, instead of speculating and incurring financial losses. The Federal Chancellor stressed that it was indispensable to increase supervision and regulation of the financial markets.

**EU Council President Van Rompuy meets with Chancellor Faymann**

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann met with EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy for a working meeting in Vienna on 6 April 2010. According to Chancellor Faymann, crucial European issues had been discussed, among them joint measures to combat the financial crisis. Other important subjects for debate were the introduction of a financial transactions tax and a bank tax as well as the struggle against crime in Europe. With regard to the latter, a basis for cooperation had been established by founding Frontex (European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU), which "we have to continue strengthening", said Faymann, whose concern was supported by Van Rompuy.

**Foreign Minister Spindelegger pays visit to Moldova**

The Republic of Moldova should be brought "as close as possible" to the EU, stressed Minister for Foreign Affairs Michael Spindelegger at a meeting with his counterpart Iurie Leanca in Chişinău on 9 April 2010. In Moldova, which is said to be Europe's poorest country, "a lot had been done in a short time" to promote reforms, and this was "the right way to adjust the country to European standards", Spindelegger was pleased to state. Austria was in favour of liberalising visa rules for Moldavian citizens soon.

**Deeply shocked about the death of Polish President Kaczyński**

The death of Polish President Lech Kaczyński and numerous other passengers in a plane crash in Russia on 9 April 2010 profoundly shocked Austria. Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann were "deeply saddened and moved". They expressed Austria's sincere sympathy to the families of Kaczyński and of the victims as well as to the Polish population.

## ECONOMY

### Industry is gaining momentum

The industrial sector in Europe – and consequently also in Austria – is gaining momentum. In March it was mainly the weaker euro that triggered the strongest growth since November 2006. Enterprises were expanding their business activities already during the sixth month in a row, as the research institute Markit informed about a recent poll among 3,000 companies on 1 April 2010. Chief economic analyst of Markit Chris Williamson referred to a “real boom” in the euro-zone countries.

However, the situation in the different countries varies greatly. While in Germany, Austria, Italy or France business is improving continuously, debt-ridden Greece is slipping into a deepening recession.

In contrast, Austria’s industrial sector is gradually overcoming the economic crisis. According to the Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) of Bank Austria, Austria’s industry recorded in March the highest increase in production of the past 20 years. Purchase prices increased sharply, and also selling prices went up again after a long time. On the whole, industry will grow by 4% in the current year. “Apparently priorities are shifting slowly from unconditional cost-awareness towards taking advantage of new business opportunities while being sensitive to risks”, emphasised Bank Austria analyst Walter Pudschedl on 30 March 2010.

The steadily improving order position of companies has led to an unexpectedly dynamic increase in production of the Austrian industry. Employment in this sector was stabilising, growing demand made it possible to adjust prices, stated the experts. The latest Purchasing Managers’ Index of Bank Austria improved to 56.7 index points. According to Stefan Bruckbauer, chief analyst of the Austrian economy, this was “a clear signal of strong growth”. The production index went up to 60.4 points, this is the second-highest value measured so far. The order position was improving at a steady pace as business with new customers continued to develop favourably, stated Bruckbauer.

The Federation of Austrian Industrialists also referred to a “strong recovery”, but warned that capacity utilisation was still 5 to 10 percentage points below the normal level. Currently, companies reported an average capacity utilisation rate of 70 to 75%.

In the manufacturing sector unemployment declined by 10% from the prior-year level – this is another indicator justifying some cautious optimism.

### FFG: enterprises engaged in research also during crisis

Austrian companies engaged in research even during the crisis. This was the impressive conclusion of a report presented by the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft/FFG) on 9 April 2010. In 2009 the number of research projects approved by FFG increased by almost 21% to 3,072, the total funds paid out rose by more than 3% to 378 million euro. However, the total funding pledged (projects approved by FFG) decreased by about 7% year-on-year to 508 million euro. The future development was also causing concern to the FFG management.

However, FFG boss Klaus Pseiner highlighted a “remarkable development” in 2009. Acting anti-cyclically, the companies had invested increasingly in research. The number of applicants exceeded the level of 2008, and also the share of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in beneficiaries of FFG funds rose by 8 percentage points to 77%. But the “acid test” would be faced in the current year. It remained to be seen how things would develop, stated Pseiner.

The government-owned funding bank “austria wirtschaftsservice GmbH” (aws) also approved more requests for funding in 2009 than one year earlier. It issued a total of 5,960 approvals to Austrian companies, this is approximately 15% more than in 2008. However, the total volume of funding decreased slightly by 1% to 982 million euro. According to the latest activity report of aws, this was due to the prudent investment behaviour of Austrian companies in the wake of the cyclical development.

The more than 4,500 approvals comprised subsidies, guarantees, credits and loans. About 64% of the total funds went to the material goods production and services sectors. 97% of the requests approved by aws benefited SMEs.

### Full nationalisation of OeNB started

The full nationalisation of the Austrian National Bank (OeNB), which the Republic of Austria plans to realise by taking over the remaining 30%, is nearing completion. As the OeNB informed on 31 March 2010, a handful of shareholders, especially those holding smaller stakes, had already signed agreements on the transfer of their shares, among them Vienna Insurance Group (0.47%). RZB (8.73%) and the Federal Austrian Economic Chamber (8.33%) also agreed to sell their share holdings.

**CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE****Educational policy: Schmied promotes uniform and high standards**

After adopting a new system of A-level exams for secondary academic schools (Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule/AHS), the school-leaving exams of secondary vocational schools (Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen/BHS) will be reformed. As from the school year 2014/15 onwards (one year later than at the secondary academic schools), the written final exams of the BHS will be held simultaneously in all parts of Austria. Throughout Austria the candidates will sit for uniform tests in the subjects German, mathematics and a modern language. The new BHS school-leaving exams are based largely on the model of the AHS exams adopted in 2009:

The exam candidate has to write a “diploma thesis” independently and outside the classroom, which is comparable to the “pre-graduate thesis” of the AHS. If it is graded “not passed”, a pre-graduate thesis on a different subject has to be submitted before autumn. Special rules have been adopted for the secondary technical school (HTL) as well as agriculture and forestry schools. If the pre-graduate thesis is not passed, a written “project exam” has to be taken in autumn. Regardless of the grade, the pupil is allowed to take the written and oral school-leaving exams.

As far as the written school-leaving exams are concerned, the pupils may choose between options with three or four tests. Compulsory subjects are German, mathematics and the first modern language. The tests are prepared centrally under the lead of the Federal Institute of Research, Innovation and Development (Bundesinstitut für Forschung, Innovation und Entwicklung/BIFIE). Other than at the AHS, BHS exam candidates choosing the option of three written exams may replace the third standardised exam by a test in a “priority subject” of the respective school (e.g. accounting at secondary commercial schools). In this way, the exams will reflect the educational focus of the respective type of school optimally.

With regard to the oral A-level exams, two or three exams have to be taken, depending on the number of written exams. The tests are prepared by the specialist teachers of the respective subject of the individual schools.

The pupils have to do school-leaving exams in German, mathematics and the first modern language, but they may choose between a written or oral test.

Besides the reform of the school-leaving exams of the secondary vocational schools, Minister of Education Claudia Schmied submitted two other bills for review. One bill provides for the extension of remedial language classes for pupils with foreign mother tongues for an indefinite period. Children of compulsory school age having only an inadequate knowledge of German may benefit from up to eleven hours per week. Based on the second bill, textbooks have to meet the requirements of the new school-leaving exam and new educational standards in a “competence-oriented” way.

As Minister of Education Claudia Schmied pointed out, “the educational reform goes on”. The reform of the school-leaving exam of the BHS, “without neglecting the educational focus of this type of school as well as the adjustment of the textbooks to new requirements are two indispensable steps”. The extension of remedial German classes was described by the Ministers as an “educational policy requirement”.

**Erhard Busek is new President of the EU-Russia Centre in Brussels**

Former Vice-Chancellor Erhard Busek – President of Forum Alpbach and Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) – has been appointed as new President of the EU-Russia Centre in Brussels. Busek succeeds to former UN High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina Paddy Ashdown, who had held this office for four years.

According to him, the Centre acted as an “advocate of Russia in the EU and of the EU in Russia”. Its aim was to promote dialogue and mutual understanding. Busek pointed out that he was also President of the Vienna-based “International Center for Advanced and Comparative EU-Russia/NIS Research” focusing on dialogue on research and economic affairs.

According to its mission statement, the EU-Russia Centre in Brussels is a “non-profit organisation” and “independent resource for information and expertise”. Acting as a platform, its goal is to strengthen the relations between the EU and Russia. The Centre is to ensure “that both sides comply with international standards regarding core elements of the civil society such as democracy, human rights and an independent judiciary”. Busek said that there was “no government dependence”. The Centre was financed by private donors and foundations.

From January 2002 to June 2008, Erhard Busek was Special Co-ordinator of the EU Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the

predecessor of the present Regional Co-operation Council (RCC).

### **German Victims' Association: trace of SED money leads to Austria**

After the German "Association of Victims of Stalinism (Vereinigung der Opfer des Stalinismus/VOS)" had filed claims for a substantial share in the assets of the Socialist Unity Party (Sozialistische Einheitspartei/SED), a court in Switzerland recently issued a decision. Following an appeal, the Zurich Supreme Court sentenced Bank Austria (an enterprise of the UniCredit group) to pay 128 million euro from the assets of the former GDR party SED to the Federal Republic of Germany. Including the interest accrued since 1994, the amount due totals between 230 and 240 million euro.

The German federal government, which recently invested SED funds almost exclusively in infrastructure measures, had the duty of distributing this money among the victims of the SED dictatorship in the former GDR, requested VOS in Berlin on 30 March 2010. In all the new German Länder regional foundations should be established to ensure funding of the victims' associations.

The amount corresponds to the assets of the GDR's foreign trade company Novum. Enterprises in the West wishing to do business with GDR holding companies had to pay mandatory commissions to Novum, which were transferred to the government budget or the SED coffers. The business woman from Vienna Rudolfine Steindling (75) became Novum manager in 1973, acting as the sole trustee between 1978 and 1992.

The court decision of 25 March 2010 is not yet final. The bank would appeal against it, said a spokesman of Bank Austria.

### **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rauris Literature Festival**

From 7 to 11 April of this year, five winners of the Rauris Literature Prize – Hans Joachim Schädlich, Peter Hensch, Katja Oskamp, Bodo Hell and Michael Köhlmeier – came to the mountain community in Salzburg to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Rauriser Literaturtage" ("Rauris Literature Festival"). 19 other authors joined them. Among them were Peter Turrini, Wolf Haas, Peter Esterhazy, Samson Kambalu and Hubert von Goisern, who did not perform as a singer with his accordion but came to read from his first book "Stromlinien" ("Streamlines") and to explain the process of creating and blending melody and text.

The fan of Rauris and winner of the Swiss Büchner Prize Adolf Muschg had to cancel due to illness.

The festival was opened by Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied. She stressed that Rauris had become an integral part of the Austrian literary scene. Bodo Hell delivered a festive speech, Governor Gaby Burgstaller conferred the prizes on the laureates.

Thomas Klupp became the prize winner of the year 2010. The author from Erlangen (Germany) aged 32 received the prize for his novel "Paradiso", which – as the jury put it – "reveals the evil, deconstructs the patterns of rogue's tales and dandy novels, surprising with numerous voices in the artistic jargon of a generation suffering from affluent neglect".

This year the Rauris Prize for Unpublished Prose was explicitly dedicated to the students of the "partner universities" of Salzburg, Klagenfurt and Innsbruck. The prize goes to Martin Fritz from Innsbruck for the story "hier war jetzt" ("here was now").

Interspersed with the numerous readings – lasting late into the night – were musical interludes. The readings, talks and discussions (free admission) attracted an audience of more than 4,000 people. [www.rauriser-literaturtage.at](http://www.rauriser-literaturtage.at)

### **WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse: Women of the Economic Miracle**

In retrospect, the 1950s seem to have been an era of restoration, stagnation and of petty-bourgeois idylls, combined with eagerness to climb the social ladder and efforts to attain material wealth. Especially women were assigned a new role after the end of WWII. After men returned from war, the women who had earned a living for themselves and their children were forced back into the role of housewives. Before WWI, housework had been paid work, especially in middle-class families. Now housework was declared a labour of love. Both the lady of the house and the servant became housewives.

The serving attitude, with which women now treated men and which was advocated and requested by self-help books and women's magazines, was also based on women's economic dependence. It was even enshrined in the law. Before the family law reform in 1975, the man was the official head of the family in Austria. If a married woman wanted to become gainfully employed, she had to obtain permission from her husband. The women "...was entitled to take up employment only insofar as this was compatible with her marriage and family duties". If they wanted to open their

own bank accounts and to dispose of their own incomes (!), working wives required the signature of their husbands.

How did women in the 1950s adjust to this role? How did they run their lives and that of their families? And which moral concepts did they pass on to their daughters?

The exhibition "FEMININE FIFTIES. The Women of the Economic Miracle" shows the world of women in the 1950s based on about 200 selected exhibits in the historic banking hall of the former Postal Savings Bank until 22 May 2010 (opening hours: Mon to Fri. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.). The exhibits include an original kitchen and living room of the 1950s, decorative objects (ceramic figurines and ceramic wall masks of the company "Keramos, Wiener Kunstkeramik and Porzellanmanufaktur") as well as every-day objects, fashion, photos, brochures of all kinds, film programmes, autograph cards and women's magazines.

A richly illustrated, comprehensive catalogue – edited by Monika Wenzl-Bachmayer – is available at the museum shop; price: 20 euro.

Georg Coch-Platz 2, 1018 Vienna. Visitor information: [www.ottowagner.com](http://www.ottowagner.com)

### **Attractive Fair Fashion: World Fair Trade Day on 8 May 2010**

Since the 1970s, the major part of the labour-intensive clothes production has been relocated to developing and emerging countries. Textile workers slave away 60 to 70 hours per week without health insurance, maternity leave or paid overtime. Their income stagnates despite increasing food prices. In many places trade unions are permitted only on paper. Workers getting organised risk their jobs. Sexual harassment and oppression form part of the sad working lives of these women. Female workers can hardly subsist on their low incomes.

In contrast, fair trade companies have relied on fair working conditions for many years, also in the textile industry. They want to guarantee adequate incomes, fair prices as well as decent working conditions. "In the fashion and clothing industry we observe a trend towards 'fair fashion' of organic quality. Demand is going up. In recent years, the textile companies therefore increasingly applied social and ecological standards. As a result, the supply with fair trade fashion is growing", said Barbara Kofler, manager of ARGE Weltläden. This kind of fashion is provided by EZA Fairer Handel, the young Austrian fashion collective "Göttin des Glücks" as well as the internationally active

fair trade suppliers Ideo, Ethos, dwp and El Puente.

Among the project partners on the production side are Craft Aid Mauritius and Rajlakshmi in India. They guarantee compliance with social minimum standards in all phases of the production process: from the cotton field and from stone removal, spinning, weaving, dying to the production of clothes.

Under the motto "fair trade – my style", the Austrian Fair Trade shops want to raise awareness of the bad working conditions in the textile and clothing industry during the campaign weeks around the World Fair Trade Day on 8 May 2010. Besides information events, mobile fashion shows – from Vorarlberg and the Land Salzburg to Lower Austria – present fair trade clothes in the streets serving as catwalks.

In the virtual fashion show "Individual Fair Fashion Award" fair trade fashion fans may exhibit photos of their favourite pieces.

([www.individualfairfashionaward.at](http://www.individualfairfashionaward.at))

The fair trade shops sell only fair trade clothes, observance of social and economic minimum standards along the entire production chain. [www.weltlaeden.at](http://www.weltlaeden.at)

### **Mayor Michael Häupl says Turkish schools are possible in Vienna**

According to Mayor Michael Häupl, Turkish (grammar) schools are possible in Vienna. He stressed this at a joint press conference with Turkish Ambassador Kadri Ecvet Tezcan on 9 April 2010. They could be established analogously to the Lycée Français, Vienna International School or Komenski School, where Czech and Slovakian are for example taught. But a Turkish educational institution would not fall within the competence of the Land Vienna, which is not responsible for secondary schools and as schools with foreign-language instruction are mostly run by private bodies.

Tezcan referred to expert opinions claiming that it was indispensable to master the mother tongue before learning a foreign language, e.g. German – and this in turn was a prerequisite for successful integration. Mayor Häupl stated that about 40 per cent of almost 16,000 children of Turkish origin attended mother-tongue courses in Vienna.

There were approximately 5,000 company owners as well as hundreds of university graduates and artists with a Turkish background in Austria, said Turkish Ambassador Tezcan.

## SPORTS POLICY

**Darabos: “Let’s reorganise Austria’s sports promotion scheme!”**

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos has given the go-ahead for the huge project “reform of the sports promotion scheme”. Together with all the stakeholders of the domestic sports sector, the sports promotion scheme of the Federal Republic of Austria will be completely reorganised. The aim is a new Federal Sports Promotion Act. The pillars of this law should be defined by the end of 2010, and the Act is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2012. “This is a mega-project, but I am absolutely determined to realise it. In the context of Austria’s anti-doping policy, I have demonstrated that I turn words into deeds. With the reform of the sports promotion system, things will not be different”, Austria’s leading sports politician stated passionately. A weakness of the present system identified by the Minister are inadequate controls of funding. Darabos: “There are major shortcomings in auditing. Especially the recent incidents involving the Austrian Olympic Committee (ÖOC) have clearly shown that there is a pressing need for stricter control by the funding authority. We must start from here and make it harder to mislead and cheat by using secret accounts and double invoices.” Due to the great number of different financial instruments, the supervisory bodies may only check a small part of the total funds. “I therefore request comprehensive audits instead of checking individual bookkeeping vouchers. This would also be an important simplification for the sports associations. The allocation of funds also has to be monitored more closely. We have to ensure that the money is used where it is needed and for the earmarked purpose, i.e. optimal support of our athletes”, stated the Minister. Other problems of the current funding system identified by Darabos are lacking priorities, too many funding instruments, often unclear earmarking and inadequate coordination with local authorities.

The five main objectives of the reform:

***Stopping the indiscriminate spreading of funds*** – targeted support with clear priorities;

***Focusing on athletes*** – allocating funds directly to athletes, establishing clear structures;

***Dismantling bureaucracy*** – fewer financial instruments, simplified procedures for sports associations;

***Improved coordination with the Länder*** – clearly defined division of responsibilities in the sports sector;

***More transparency through better control.***

Since taking office, Darabos has called for determining “prime sports” in Austria. He wishes to establish this concept in the framework of the reform of the sports promotion scheme. The association “Sport-sEconAustria” was commissioned to develop – together with a group of sports experts – a model for selecting the future “prime sports” fairly and transparently and based on qualitative and quantitative criteria. First steps to a state-of-the-art sports funding system were taken by the Minister in 2009. By incorporating Section 11a into the Federal Sports Promotion Act, it became possible to respond in a targeted way to the needs of the sports associations and to provide flexible support.

“I consider it crucial that as many sports experts as possible shape this process actively and that the entire Austrian sports sector pulls together”, said Darabos, who had invited different sports players to participate in a working group already in summer 2009. Wolfgang Mayrhofer – a former elite athlete, silver medalist in sailing at the Olympic Games in Moscow 1980 and currently professor of business administration at Vienna University of Economics and Business – is in charge of coordinating the project. He will support and monitor the reform of the sports funding scheme.

In January the three working groups “mass sports”, “top-level sport” and “division of responsibilities” became active under his lead. In each group eight experts prepare proposals to be realised in a new sports funding model. The first results of the working groups will be available by the end of May. On 1 June 2010 an expert workshop will be held, followed by the conference of the regional presidents of the Federal Sports Organisation (Bundes-Sportorganisation/BSO) in early July. After feeding in the input of the working groups during the summer, a final “expert proposal” will be submitted in autumn.

**Journal “TEAM ROT-WEISS-ROT”**

The first issue of the journal “TEAM ROT-WEISS-ROT”, named after the federal platform for funding Austrian elite sport “RED-WHITE-RED TEAM”, will be published in a few days. The 36-page magazine is devoted to the achievements of almost 500 Austrian top athletes receiving support. Readers will also find scientific reports and sports-specific service pages in this magazine, which will be presented to the public in the framework of the European Judo Championships.