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HOME AFFAIRS**Parliament: Green light for aid to Greece and the “euro rescue umbrella”**

On 19 May 2010, the National Council (one of the two Houses of Parliament) established a legal basis for aid to Greece and the euro stabilisation package. The respective amendments were adopted with the votes of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ), the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and two MPs of the Greens. On this basis, Austria may grant loans of 2.3 billion euro to Greece, which receives a total of 110 billion euro from the euro-zone countries and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by 2012. (Originally, a maximum credit limit of 2 billion euro had been fixed.) Moreover, Austria will participate with credit guarantees of up to 15 billion euro in the EU's “rescue umbrella” for debt-stricken euro-zone countries as well as to protect the euro against financial market speculations. In parallel, the Federal Republic's guarantee limit for Austrian banks was reduced from 65 to 60 billion euro. Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll described aid to Greece and the euro rescue package as indispensable measures to stabilise the entire euro zone as well as to fend off other state bankruptcies. Minister Pröll stressed that no additional cash was required for Austria's contribution (of up to 15 billion euro) as guarantees granted in the framework of the bank rescue package were reduced.

Federal Chancellor Faymann pled in favour of exhausting national resources as long as no solutions were available at European level (catch word: financial transactions tax). In addition, Faymann called on the EU and the international community to learn the lessons from this crisis and to take measures to curb speculation. As a response to the crisis in Greece, Faymann called for a common European “economic and social governance”.

With regard to a regulatory system for the European financial markets, the Chancellor explained that it was now crucial to proceed to the stringent implementation of the numerous solutions proposed, such as the financial transactions tax, financial market supervision, an EU Rating Agency, a ban on short selling and strict financial market rules. In Austria the financial transactions tax was basically undisputed. According to Faymann, introduction of a stock exchange turnover tax at national level could be a first step.

Faymann underlined that Austria had handled the crisis well, highlighting that Austria

boasted the second lowest unemployment rate and lowest youth unemployment rate in Europe. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) played a vital role in employment policy. The social partners and government were cooperating successfully. Areas such as education, training as well as research and development were decisive for the future, said Faymann.

The financial framework for the period 2011 to 2014 – including for the first time a spending cap for all ministries – was also adopted by the National Council on 19 May 2010. Costs are to be cut at federal level by no less than about 1.6 billion euro just in the next year. In addition, the Länder will reduce expenditure by a total of 800 million euro. On this basis, the deficit is likely to shrink from 4.7% of the GDP in the current year to 4.0%.

55th anniversary of the Austrian State Treaty

To celebrate the 55th anniversary of the signing of the Austrian State Treaty on 15 May, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann invited to a ceremony at the historic venue, the Belvedere palace. Among the guests were not only members of the federal government but also other top-level representatives of the state, the religious communities as well as VIPs from the media, the cultural and business arenas. Pupils also participated in the event.

“In the State Treaty, Austria made a firm commitment to combat early signs of right-wing extremism”, said Faymann in his official statement. Especially the next generation was “under an obligation to take action“. Over the past 55 years, Austria had become a country founded on solidarity, emphasised the Federal Chancellor. He also pointed out that Austria played an active role as a neutral country as it had taken on important international tasks going far beyond the mere fulfilment of duties – for example by establishing one of the three UN headquarters in Vienna or through the Federal Army's participation in the international peace-keeping missions, in which more than 75,000 Austrian soldiers and civilian helpers had performed valuable services since 1960.

Faymann emphatically pled for a unified Europe that was a “compromise brought to life“. Debates about aid to countries in need had illustrated this once more. 55 years after the Austrian State Treaty, it was “up to us to emphasise that which unites over that which divides“. “Let's appreciate how lucky we are to be Austrians“, concluded Faymann.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Federal Chancellor Faymann visits Shanghai World EXPO**

Chancellor Werner Faymann visited the World EXPO 2010 in Shanghai on the occasion of the “Austria Day” celebrated at the Austrian pavilion on 21 May 2010. Items on his agenda were a tour of the EXPO site, visits to the pavilions of China and other countries as well as a dinner hosted by the City of Vienna. Faymann also held talks with Han Zheng, the mayor of the megacity Shanghai with a population soon growing to 21 million. Different aspects of urban development and eco-technologies were discussed at this meeting.

China was an economic partner of vital importance, especially in times of crisis, stressed Faymann vis-à-vis media representatives. The Austrian government’s EXPO Commissioner Hannes Androsch emphasised that at the World EXPO Austria showed “where we are state of the art“. Austria, and especially Vienna, want to turn the spotlight on their know-how in environmental technologies at the fair.

“Better City, Better Life“ is the motto of the World EXPO. In this context, Faymann expressed his conviction that Vienna had a lot to offer to a megacity like Shanghai: competence and solutions for district-heating systems, waste and water management, transport or urban renewal. Austria’s participation in the EXPO had therefore not only advantages for the Austrian tourist industry, which according to the Austrian Tourist Board had welcomed 155,000 guests from China last year. Unlike most other trading partners, China showed a growing interest in Austria, stated Faymann.

According to World EXPO Commissioner Androsch, the Austrian pavilion receives up to 21,000 visitors per day. Since its opening on 1 May 2010, about 260,000 guests had been registered. Investing 16 million euro, Austria had created a unique showcase – now it was up to the Austrian companies to take advantage of the opportunities.

The pavilion of “Aodili“ (“Austria” in Chinese) was designed by the architects’ studio SPAN & Zeytinoglu. Austria is presented on a surface of about 2,000 square metres, using various multi-media technologies. The World EXPO will end officially on 31 October 2010.

Leading government members now focus their foreign policy activities on Israel. Vice Chancellor Josef Pröll will arrive in Israel on 25 May 2010 with a three-day working agenda. In June, Chancellor Faymann will pay a several-day state visit to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem,

where he will also visit the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem.

Federal Chancellor Faymann in Berlin

In a meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on 18 May 2010, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann pled again in favour of more intervention in the European financial market. Via a financial transactions and bank tax, the financial market should make a contribution to ending the crisis. Merkel also stressed that she was determined to “do her utmost” to champion a global financial transactions tax in the combat against speculation.

According to Faymann, “international solutions” had to be given “absolute priority”. If a solution at global or European level was not possible, Austria would in the worst case consider a solo run and introduce a stock exchange turnover tax. Furthermore, the Austrian Chancellor advocated a Europe-wide plebiscite on the taxation of financial transactions.

Foreign Minister Spindelegger attends EU-LAC summit in Madrid

At the EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit (EU-LAC) in Madrid on 18 May 2010, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger advocated stronger engagement by Austria and the EU in Latin America. Today Brazil, for example, was one of the most important economies in the world. Therefore exports and cooperation between companies in the region had to be strengthened, said Spindelegger, who travelled to Brazil and Argentina on 23 May 2010 together with an Austrian trade delegation.

Spindelegger interpreted the Association and Free Trade Agreements with the countries of the region as a sign that the EU-LAC summit in Madrid had been a success.

France’s Minister of State for European Affairs Lellouche pays visit to Vienna

Austria and France consider closer cooperation of the countries in the Alpine region. Opportunities for realising this plan had been discussed at a meeting between Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger and French Minister of State for European Affairs Pierre Lellouche, informed the Foreign Ministry in Vienna. Spindelegger stressed that cooperation between Vienna and Paris was “excellent“ at bilateral as well as at EU and UN level.

After a visit to the Vienna-based Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Lellouche announced a possible joint application of Germany and France for the OSCE chair (2012).

ECONOMY**Minister of Finance Pröll at euro summit in Brussels**

After adopting the rescue umbrella for highly indebted EU Member States and the bailout package for Greece, the EU ministers of finance agreed on stricter rules for speculators, more stringent controls of national budgets as well as harsher punishment of countries notorious for running up huge deficits at a summit meeting in Brussels on 18 May and in a task force meeting on 21 May 2010.

Minister of Finance Josef Pröll was pleased to inform that hedge funds and their managers would for example be subject to tighter control. In the future only hedge funds meeting the admission criteria of one Member State could become active in other EU Member States, explained Pröll. Bilateral agreements with each individual Member State would be required for hedge funds from third countries. Clear rules would also be adopted for issues concerning standardisation, training, reporting requirements and state supervision, said Minister Pröll.

The debt crisis in Greece also provided lessons affecting budget policy. The task force – composed of ministers of finance and experts – drew up an agenda defining key targets. The group, of which Pröll is also a member, agreed to develop proposals for tightening the Stability Pact before the EU summit in October. In the future Pröll plans to “rap the knuckles” of those countries which had been lax with their budget planning and increasing debt. The Minister also demanded to redefine the framework for action and sanctions.

Other objectives were to overcome the gaps in competitiveness – above all among the eurozone countries – and to harmonise national economic policies to a greater extent.

IMD ranking: Austria more competitive

According to the World Competitiveness Yearbook 2010 issued by the renowned International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Lausanne (Switzerland), Austria improved its competitiveness in an international ranking. The Alpine Republic moved from rank 16 to rank 14, while the competitive positions of Germany as well as the USA deteriorated. This is the first time since 1993 that the USA is no longer number one on the list. Singapore and Hong Kong relegated the Americans to the third place.

Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner described Austria's ranking as an

“acknowledgement and further incentive to continue our efforts to restructure the domestic economy“. Among the strengths of Austria highlighted by the IMD are the high efficiency of the companies, the strong motivation of the employees, the high quality of living, the excellent healthcare infrastructure and environmental quality.

Focusing on innovative products and new markets, Austria's companies were making headway. The internationalisation campaign had provided strong impetus to exports. “We have intensified our contacts in many export markets over the past months. Our visits to Japan, India, China and Russia have been very successful“, stated Mitterlehner.

China's Commerce Minister Chen Deming visits Vienna with large delegation

Chinese Minister of Commerce Chen Deming signed 17 contracts amounting to 900 million dollars (724 million euro) during his visit to Austria on 19 May 2010. Chen was accompanied by a trade delegation composed by 120 managers. Talks were held with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner.

The guest from China showed particularly great interest in Austrian technology. “Cooperation in this area has a great potential“, said Chen. Besides intensifying trade relations (China is Austria's second largest overseas trading partner), China also wanted to encourage Austrian SMEs to become investment partners. The recent acquisition of a stake in FACC AG by a Chinese company demonstrated Austria's attractiveness for foreign investors. In 2009 Austria had succeeded in boosting its exports to China by 7%, emphasised Mitterlehner. Austria hoped above all for contracts in the environmental technology sector as well as for tourists from China.

Minister for Economic Affairs Mitterlehner in Olympic city Sochi

Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner and Russia's Minister of Education and Science Andrey Fursenko agreed on intensifying cooperation in trade, investments, energy as well as with regard to innovation centres at their meeting in Sochi (Russia) on 20 May 2010. In autumn teachers of Austrian tourist schools will start training catering students and trainers in Sochi for the Olympic Games in 2014. An agreement extending the validity of landing rights of the Austrian Airlines (AUA) in Russia until the end of October was reached.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Brussels: Schmied regrets lack of solidarity for EU's education targets**

The EU ministers of education failed to reach an agreement to lay down national targets for the EU's growth strategy "Europe 2020". At the Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting in Brussels, Great Britain opposed national targets. Austrian Minister of Education Claudia Schmied explained that an attempt had been made to agree on core targets of the EU in education but the UK had not supported this proposal. Therefore, the Spanish Council Presidency only issued recommendations to define national targets. "I personally think this is regrettable", stated the Austrian Minister.

Regarding the concrete EU target of decreasing the school drop-out rate to 10 percent in the framework of the strategy "Europe 2020", Schmied said that Austria had announced 9.5 percent as a "cautious" national target. Austria's drop-out rate had ranged between 8 and 11 percent in recent years. With a drop-out rate of 5 percent, only Poland had done better. The worst results were reported by the Baltic states with a rate of early school leavers of almost 16 percent.

In Austria the absolute number of pupils dropping out was about 60,000. This figure also included young people leaving school before doing their A levels exam and not completing intermediate or upper secondary education. To prevent early school leaving, measures had to be taken already at pre-school level – a "kindergarten" was in fact a "garden of education". Regarding the target to raise the level of those having completed university education to 40 percent, Austria's request to include equivalent tertiary education in this percentage had been approved. It was necessary to ensure comparability of higher education in the different countries. Austria's past method of calculation had been very strict but in the future graduates of upper secondary vocational schools such as the technical or commercial colleges could be added to this number. Other countries classifying these schools as "lower tertiary education" had achieved considerably higher rates than Austria.

The Minister was of the opinion that remedial German lessons were highly important in Austria. In Vienna, for example, 50 percent of the children attending primary school were non-native speakers of German. "Due to the demographic development we know that we are an ageing society and that in 15 to 20 years all these children will determine the future of our

country". Therefore it was important to promote German language training. "These children belong to our country". The Minister said that she used "the phrase that (the leader of the Freedom Party of Austria, Heinz-Christian) Strache wanted to monopolise for himself, namely that all children living here also belong to our country".

Important award to Bertrand de Billy

Chief conductor of the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Bertrand de Billy was awarded the Golden Badge of Honour for Meritorious Service to the Republic of Austria on 12 May 2010 by Minister of Culture Schmied. The award ceremony was held in the Audience Hall of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture. The presentation speech was given by the manager of Theater an der Wien, Roland Geyer.

In her speech Schmied highlighted the conductor's firm commitment to contemporary music. Under his lead, RSO Vienna had developed into a leading Austrian and internationally successful orchestra.

Bertrand de Billy is one of the most eminent conductors of the international opera and concert scene. Born in Paris, he also received his training there, then became an orchestra musician and soon a conductor of different Parisian orchestras. From 1993 to 1995, he was active as first Kapellmeister and Deputy General Music Director at Anhaltisches Theater in Dessau (Germany). From 1996 to 1998 he held the same position at Volksoper in Vienna. Bertrand de Billy was the chief conductor at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona from 1999 to 2004.

Pöllau: opening of the first European Centre for the History of Physics

Many findings of physics seem to have no relevance to our every-day lives. But precisely the opposite is true. Numerous technical appliances we take for granted today were developed based on the research of physicists.

Under the name "echophysics" (European Centre for the History of Physics), the first European institution of this kind will be opened in the sumptuous baroque Palace of Pöllau near Hartberg (Styria) on 29 May 2010. The collection of valuable historical equipment will be open all year round.

In the historic building dating back to the 17th century, which was erected on the foundations of a former moated castle, the Victor Franz Hess Society – together with the European Physical Society (EPS) with more than

100,000 members in 40 countries – present about 500 fascinating objects, partly on permanent loan. A team of physicists – predominantly professors emeritus and retired engineers – worked for two years on a voluntary basis to design the presentation of the collection.

The measuring devices and experimental equipment previously used by universities have lacked recognition as European cultural heritage of the first order for many decades. All these objects are brought together and made accessible to the public for the first time in the former monastery. The show is rounded off by documentaries, photos, biographies, films, objects from the private estates of physicists and a didactic presentation of important historical experiments. The exhibits are also an eloquent testimony of the extraordinary skills of craftsmen and engineers of the past two centuries.

The permanent exhibition is supplemented by changing temporary exhibitions. The first show of this kind was devoted to the subject “Radiation – the Exposed Human”.

The museum opening is accompanied by a two-day international symposium on the history of physics, to which 34 lecturers from 16 EU Member States will be welcomed. Its title is: “The Roots of Physics in Europe”.

www.echophysics.org

Re-positioning Bösendorfer

The relocation of the administration, marketing department and parts of the sales department of the piano manufacturer Bösendorfer from the 4th district of Vienna to Wiener Neustadt was completed according to plan in late March of this year. The employees moved into new, modern offices. With manufacturing, administration and sales responsibilities under a common roof, inter-departmental communication and cooperation is to be intensified. Moreover, understanding of the production processes and customer requirements is expected to improve company-wide. Dealers and customers may now choose their Bösendorfer (grand) pianos under the conditions of a concert hall.

Undoubtedly, the process of selecting and testing the famous instruments becomes a great sound experience in the recently completed Piano Selection Centre in Wiener Neustadt.

By opening the new centre, Bösendorfer and the owner Yamaha want to highlight the special – Viennese – sound and emphasise the combined strengths of their famous company names. The investment was made precisely in difficult times to give impetus to the piano

market and support the trading partners in their selling activities. Cooperation between Bösendorfer and Yamaha opens up new sales opportunities to the two brands. Bösendorfer may draw on enormous marketing and PR resources. The successful common presence at this year’s important music fairs in Anaheim and Frankfurt/Main has already caused a stir in the industry.

By integrating Bösendorfer (grand) pianos into the global sales network of Yamaha, the presence of Bösendorfer musical instruments will be strengthened in all regions of the world. Yamaha experts are introduced to the special features of Viennese sound and of Bösendorfer instruments in a special training programme.

The 182-year history of the company Bösendorfer is inextricably linked with Vienna. Therefore, the piano manufacturer will seek to ensure its continued strong presence in Vienna’s concert halls as well as in the music education programmes of the City of Vienna. To this end, a wide selection of rental musical instruments is available at the new Bösendorfer Service Centre in the tenth district of Vienna.

The tradition of the “Bösendorfer Hall“ is upheld as well. The “Bösendorfer Hall“ will find a new home at Domgasse 5 – in the building accommodating Wolfgang Amadé Mozart’s only flat preserved in Vienna. To this end, an agreement has recently been entered into by Mozarthaus Vienna Errichtungs- und Betriebs-gesellschaft, a company of “Wien Holding“.

But Bösendorfer’s City Salon – on the premises of Wiener Musikverein since 1913 – is to remain the centrepiece of Bösendorfer in Vienna. The official seat of the company is at this address, and this is also where the sales department for Austria and Switzerland is located, where prospective buyers, artists, professors, students and friends of the house of Bösendorfer gather for discussions or attend a private concert. www.boesendorfer.com

HK Gruber “Composer of the Year“ at the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival

The 67-year old Austrian composer, conductor and chanson singer HK Gruber became “Composer of the Year” at this year’s Trondheim Chamber Music Festival (Norway).

At this festival Gruber will perform his probably best known work “Frankenstein!!“ based on texts by H. C. Artmann, hold lectures, teach master classes and engage in many other activities. Besides, HK Gruber has been Artist in Residence for Contemporary Music in Örebro (Sweden) for four years. Since February he has also been active as the “in-house” composer

and conductor of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. This year the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival (20 to 26 September 2010) celebrates its 15th anniversary. Its prominent guests include Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes, British violinist Daniel Hope and Swedish trumpeter Hakan Hardenberger.

www.kamfest.no

Austrian Cultural Forum London inaugurates “Sound Park Austria”

The music scene in London’s inner city district Camden is hot. “The Forge“ enjoys the reputation of being one of the most voguish venues of London. “Sound Park Austria“ – a new series of events of the Austrian Cultural Forum London – will be launched at this arts venue on 18 May 2010. “Sound Park Austria“ is curated by London-based bassist Philipp M. Moll from Tyrol. The aim is to raise public awareness of new music from Austria – off the beaten path of the classical music genre – on the one hand, and to promote exchange with British artists, on the other hand.

The festival was opened with a performance of Tyrolian jazz guitarist Hannes Riepler (who also lives in London) and Viennese musician Andy Manndorff, whose trio is known for improvisation beyond traditional categories. The second event of the programme under the motto “New Age“ features violinist Mia Zabelka on 13 July 2010. Together with British harp player Rhodri Davies, she will also perform a piece by composer Radu Malfatti (who also lives in Vienna).

The Austrian Cultural Forum London organises about 150 events per year, clearly focusing on contemporary art. It provides a regular platform for young authors, musicians and visual artists. Its classical programmes concentrate on new discoveries or re-discoveries. The mission of the Austrian Cultural Forum is to create a new, more realistic image of Austria going beyond sentimental-idyllic clichés offered for example in the film “Sound of Music“. With “Sound Park Austria“, the Forum wants to give insights into Austria’s highly diverse, lively music scene. www.acflondon.org/music

Sensational MAK show: art from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

Until 5 September 2010, the Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) in Vienna presents one of the most controversial exhibitions of the year: “Flowers for Kim Il Sung. Art and Architecture from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea“. For this exhibition about 100 oil paintings, ink paintings and water colours, around

30 posters and architectural drawings from North Korea have been selected in cooperation with the Korean Art Gallery.

According to MAK Director Peter Noever, the show should “by no means be interpreted as a political statement but is merely a unique opportunity to explore the practically unknown idealised art of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. The presentation at MAK allows the DRPK to overcome its isolation at least as far as its artistic production is concerned“. The aim of the exhibition is to give insights “into an unknown world determined by the personality cult around ‘Eternal President’ Kim Il Sung and his successor Kim Jong Il as well as the Juche ideology“. An exalted expression of this “specific interpretation of Socialism” was the Juche Tower, the world’s highest stone tower, a model of which was produced for the MAK. The Museum conceived this exhibition as a continuation of shows on Soviet and Cuban art and architecture and offers a comprehensive framework programme starting in June, including lectures, film presentations and a symposium.

www.MAK.at

Wien Museum Karlsplatz: Vienna in Films – a century of city images

Wien Museum Karlsplatz presents an exceptional exhibition from 26 May to 19 September 2010: exemplary footage from about 80 Austrian and international feature films with specific images of Vienna, from silent movies to contemporary filmmaking. Famous films, whose images became part of the city’s memory, are screened alongside with almost unknown works. Sequences of the following films are shown: “The Joyless Street” (“Die freudlose Gasse“ 1925) by G. W. Pabst, Willi Forst’s “Vienna Blood” (“Wiener Blut“ 1942), Carol Reed’s classic “The Third Man“ (1949), Peter Patzak’s “Kassbach“ (1979), Richard Linklater’s “Before Sunrise“ (1995), Barbara Albert’s socio-critical film “Northern Skirts“ (“Nordrand“ 1999).

The filmic presentation of Vienna covers palaces of the aristocracy and their upper middle-class epigones, basement flats of the poor, attic flats of bohemians or even housing complexes on the outskirts of Vienna. What many Viennese milieus seem to have in common is that they are on the edge of a social and emotional abyss.

Many of these films can be watched at the open-air festival “Kino unter Sternen“ (“Cinema under the Stars“), running at Karlsplatz from 2 to 25 July 2010. www.wienmuseum.at

SPORTS POLICY**Darabos at Question time in Parliament:
“Secure financial footing for sport!”**

“The Federal Republic of Austria has put Austrian sport on a secure financial footing“, informed Minister of Defence and Sport Norbert Darabos at Question Time in the National Council on 20 May 2010. According to the government programme, a minimum amount of 60 million euro annually has been allocated to sport funding in Austria.

In negotiations with the Ministry of Finance, Minister Darabos achieved an even higher amount: at least 80 million euro per year. “The sports federations also described this amount as ‘respectable’“, said Darabos. In view of the economic and financial crisis, this was a good result. The reproach that funds originally earmarked for national defence were transferred to sports was vehemently rejected by the Minister of Sport – the financial resources for sports funding were clearly defined in the Austrian Gambling Act.

As far as the role and tasks of the sports federations, e.g. ASKÖ, ASVÖ or Sportunion were concerned, Darabos said that they did a lot for small sports clubs. He welcomed the establishment of sports federations. An example mentioned by Darabos was the project “Kinder gesund bewegen” (“Kids moving for health”) teaching kids and youngsters in nurseries and schools that exercise was fun. “This approach ensures that funds go directly to the children“, said Darabos. He also described cooperation with the sports federations as good.

Explaining the pillars of the “new sports funding scheme“, the Minister of Sport stated that he wanted a new approach to funding – “away from indiscriminate, all-round distribution towards the targeted use of resources for prime sports“. Currently, sports like football or ice hockey are prioritised funding targets. Some important achievements such as hosting the European Handball Championship in Austria probably would not have been possible without sports funding. Moreover, the focus should be turned to an even greater extent on the athletes. The Minister of Sport was optimistic that a unanimous solution for sports funding would be adopted by Parliament. With regard to the question how he defined “prime sports“, the Minister of Sports stated that not only the success of Austrian athletes in the respective sport was a decisive criterion but for example also the number of people practising a specific

sport in Austria. A catalogue of criteria was being evaluated.

Concerning the financing of sports associations at municipal level, Darabos reiterated that a budget of 80 million euro had been guaranteed to them. “Sports associations are the basis. In 2010 we will develop a new sports funding system, which will enter into force only in 2012 to facilitate planning by the sports associations“.

The autonomy of sport was a reality in Austria, and it was not at risk. The legal basis was enshrined in the government programme and was global “common sense“. The Minister of Sport expressed his hope that a common sports policy would be formulated at EU level.

**ÖOC: Darabos requested to clarify all
open questions**

The Austrian Olympic Committee (ÖOC) was also an issue for debate at Question Time. Darabos commented on recent developments: “I am one of those who have made sure that these anomalies in the Austrian Olympic Committee would be clarified. The incidents in ÖOC are undoubtedly the biggest sports scandal of the Second Republic!“ The Austrian sports development should not be marred by occurrences of this kind, said Darabos, who demanded once more that this scandal had to be cleared up comprehensively. To prevent similar incidents in the future, the Minister of Sport plans to reorganise the funding and auditing system in Austrian sport. Darabos stated that in the case of ÖOC financial resources should for example be granted only to cover specific requirements. The Minister was of the opinion that the auditing procedures used in the Austrian sport sector were no longer state of the art. “With a view to restructuring the control system, I have already set up working groups, in which independent sports scientists will participate to guarantee objectivity“, he explained.

**Preparations for Ninepin Bowling World
Championship in Ritzing are in full swing**

The 3rd Individual Ninepin Bowling Classic World Championship will take place in Ritzing from 25 to 30 October 2010. 150 days before this large-scale event is kicked off, preparations entered their final phase. More than 400 active athletes from 15 nations will participate in this important sports event in Burgenland. The Burgenland has already been the venue of the Team World Championship two years ago, which was also held at the federal training centre for top-performance athletes in Ritzing.