

## NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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**HOME AFFAIRS****Amendment to Immission Control Act passed by Council of Ministers**

On 15 June 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted the Amendment to the “Immission Control Act / Air Quality”. The Amendment will not only implement the new EU Air Quality Directive but will also create the first legal basis for granting more powers and opportunities to the Länder to adopt measures reducing pollutants and fine particles along transport routes or in densely populated urban areas. Uniform standards were laid down to establish “Environment Zones” (Low-Emission Zones) – areas where vehicles with high emission levels are forbidden to enter. Clear criteria for the emission standards of vehicles have to be defined. Moreover, a system of limit values for for PM 2.5 (fine particles that are extremely harmful to health) will be introduced. The Amendment will be adopted by the National Council still before the summer break.

The Council of Ministers has given the green light to the so-called “doctors’ limited liability company” (Ärzte-GmbH). According to Faymann, the aim was to ensure efficient and accessible healthcare. Doctors’ firms could ease the strain on overburdened outpatient departments of hospitals in the future, offering more flexible opening hours and shorter waiting times to patients. Rural regions will also benefit from better coordinated healthcare supply.

**Chancellor Faymann: We have to invest in the quality of education**

The federal government had “kept its word, the Education Guarantee is effective“, stressed Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann after the Council of Ministers’ session on 8 June 2010. The latest data on youth employment and apprenticeship training demonstrated that Austria did not only boast Europe’s second-lowest youth unemployment rate (May 2010: -10.7% from the level of the previous month), but also the shortest total duration of unemployment (three months on average), said Faymann.

For the first time since the beginning of the crisis two years ago, in Austria employment rates went up, while joblessness was declining (May 2010: -5.3% below the prior-year level). As the number of apprenticeship places in companies had dropped by 4% in this period, this was also due to institutional apprenticeship training. “Thanks to the Education Guarantee, all those seeking an apprenticeship now will have found one by autumn“, said the Chancellor.

It was therefore the order of the day to invest in the quality of education, urged Faymann. To make up for shortcomings, measures had to be taken already at pre-school level. It was necessary to introduce comprehensive school for the age group 10 to 14 as well as to increase the number of all-day schools.

**Family Report 1999 to 2009**

On 14 June 2010, Secretary of State for Family Affairs Christine Marek presented the Family Report for the years 1999 to 2009. According to Marek, it was a success that Austria remained a “reliable country for families“ and that Austrian standards could serve as a yardstick in many areas for other European countries. In a Europe-wide comparison Austria held a leading position thanks to its high level of family benefits and services.

Emphasising a key item on the agenda of family policy, Marek stated that it was necessary to promote the reconciliation of work and family life. This aspect was decisive to boost the birth rate. It was also indispensable to improve the framework for raising children. Numerous measures had already been taken. In 2002 Austria had, for example, introduced the childcare allowance (four lump-sum models and since January 2010 an income-based option). Other measures mentioned by Marek were the tax deductibility of childcare expenses and wider access to institutional childcare.

Based on a forecast, the number of families will increase by about 12% to 2.6 million by 2050 (compared to a total of 2.3 million families in 2007). The share of childless married couples will grow, while the percentage of couples with children will decrease.

**National Council adopted the ORF Act**

With the votes of the governing parties – Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) – as well as the Freedom Party (FPÖ), the National Council adopted the Act on the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) on 17 June 2010. The Act lays the foundation for a constitutionally independent media authority. The most important aspect of the law to the ORF itself is the so-called “refund of fees”. The ORF will receive 160 million euro of additional viewer fees in a period of four years provided that new Media Authority confirms that all structural and austerity requirements were met. Among other measures to be taken by the ORF, it had to establish a new special interest channel for politics and culture and increase the share of Austrian films and series in programming.

**EUROPE INTERNATIONAL****Federal Chancellor Faymann at EU summit in Brussels**

The 27 EU heads of state and government agreed on introducing a bank tax at their summit meeting in Brussels on 17 June 2010. The aim of this measure is to recoup the costs of bank bailouts amounting to more than 1,200 billion euro. To this end, the EU plans to install a “system of fiscal charges and taxes for financial institutions”. Structural details have not yet been agreed on.

At the G20 summit, which will be held in Toronto at the end of June, the EU will call for the introduction of a global bank tax. If this proposal is rejected, Europe will act alone, was the message of the EU summit.

However with regard to the financial transactions tax, independent action by the EU was out of the question. This tax would not rally a majority among the Member States unless it was introduced globally. The issue “financial transactions tax” therefore seems to have been removed from the agenda – at least for the time being – as the G20 partners are not expected to support it. Germany, France, Luxembourg and Austria had advocated a possible EU-wide solution.

The EU Member States agreed on the disclosure of the results of stress tests on large banks relevant to the banking system. This measure is to help build confidence and reassure the financial markets. Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann welcomed this decision. In Austria these stress tests had already been performed or were almost completed. They should be published in two weeks at the latest “to show how strong the system in Europe is”, said the Federal Chancellor.

The new “Europe 2020” strategy was also adopted at the EU summit in Brussels. Its aim is to boost growth and employment as well as to reduce poverty by promoting research, education and climate protection. Other measures agreed on were to tighten the Stability Pact and the step up surveillance of national budget data. The go-ahead was given for Estonia’s accession to the euro-zone with effect 1 January 2011.

**Chancellor Faymann visits Israel**

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann will pay an official visit to Israel from 23 to 24 June 2010. His political meeting agenda will include talks with Israeli President Shimon Peres as well as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman and oppo-

sition leader Tzipi Livni. The key issue for debate is the peace process in the Middle East, which is a priority in Austria’s foreign policy. In Jerusalem Faymann will visit the tomb of Theodor Herzl, the “father of Zionism“, and the Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem, where he will meet with pensioners born in Austria.

During his short visit to the Palestinian autonomous territories, talks with President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad will take place in Ramallah.

**Prime Ministers of Greece and Hungary at IIF meeting in Vienna**

The meeting of the Institute of International Finance (IIF) at Hofburg in Vienna (9 to 11 June 2010) was dominated by the debt crisis. Among the issues discussed were the global coordination of economic policies and the growing importance of emerging markets. The VIPs of the international political and financial arenas did not only include domestic top bankers, ECB boss Jean-Claude Trichet and the already legendary US financial investor George Soros but also the Prime Ministers of Hungary and Greece, Viktor Orban and Giorgos Papandreou. Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann received the two heads of government for bilateral talks.

**EU accepts Austrian ban on cultivation of genetically modified organisms**

The EU will permit its Member States to decide independently whether or not they will allow cultivation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) as from 13 July 2010. Hence Austria’s ban on cultivating GMOs is accepted permanently. “Countries that are GMO-free will remain GMO-free”, Minister of Agriculture Nikolaus Berlakovich was pleased to inform after a meeting with the competent EU commissioners in Brussels on 11 June 2010. To impose the ban, the Member States simply have to declare themselves GMO-free zones. Their de-facto competence will be legally guaranteed.

**Global Peace Index: Austria is the fourth-peaceful country in the world**

Based on a new ranking of nations by their peacefulness, Austria is the world’s fourth most peaceful country. New Zealand is placed first in the comparative study prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), followed by Iceland and Japan. As in the past, Iraq is on the bottom of the list. Criteria such as political stability and respect for human rights were decisive. In 2008 Austria was ranked tenth.

**ECONOMY****OeNB forecast: Austrian economy grows by 1.6 percent in 2010**

In its macroeconomic forecast presented on 14 June 2010, the Austrian National Bank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank/OeNB) assumes that the domestic economy will grow by 1.6% in real terms in 2010 (after a minus of 3.4% in 2009). According to the estimate of OeNB, growth will accelerate to 1.8% and 2.1% in 2011 and 2012, respectively.

In contrast to the forecast of December 2009, the OeNB presented a quite bright economic outlook for 2010 (+0.4 percentage points) and 2011 (+0.2 percentage points). This was mainly due to the faster recovery of global trade, informed the OeNB. The National Bank is more optimistic than the experts of the Economic Research Institute (Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut/Wifo) and the Institute for Advanced Studies (Institut für Höhere Studien/IHS) as well as the European Commission, predicting in unison a GDP growth of 1.3% for 2010. In early May, the European Commission had assumed a plus of 1.6% for 2011, while Wifo and IHS had forecast growth rates of 1.4% and 1.7%, respectively, at the end of March.

But according to OeNB Governor Ewald Nowotny, a “dampening” of prospects for growth is expected in the medium term.

After exports plummeted by 15% in 2009, the OeNB estimates that they will increase by 4.6% in the current year. Exports were likely to go up by 5.4% in 2011 and 6.1% in 2012. No lasting trend reversal is expected in the labour market. Due to high energy prices in March and April, inflation will increase. The OeNB assumes an inflation rate of 1.7% for 2010.

**35 million euro for the 2010 “Photovoltaics Support Campaign”**

With a budget of 35 million euro, funds earmarked for the 2010 “Photovoltaics Support Campaign” were increased by 75% from the level of 2009 (20 million euro). In parallel, funding per kilowatt installed was practically cut by 50%. On this basis, this year 5,500 new photovoltaic systems of private home builders may be funded – instead of approximately 1,900 under last year’s campaign, as Minister of the Environment Nikolaus Berlakovich and Manager of the Climate and Energy Fund Ingmar Höbarth informed at a joint press conference on 10 June 2010.

Berlakovich stressed that never before had so much money been made available for promot-

ing photovoltaics (PV). The support campaign was an important contribution to achieving the climate goal of increasing the share of renewable energy to 34%. More renewable energy was the right response to the “oil industry’s Chernobyl” – the oil spill devastating the Gulf of Mexico, said the Minister.

By investing these funds, this year about 26 MW (peak output) of PV could be installed, compared to only 8,400 kW last year, calculated Manager of the Climate Fund Höbarth. The funding is expected to trigger a turnover of 110 million euro. The average grant per applicant will presumably amount to 6,000 euro.

Funding is made available exclusively to private households for a peak output of five kilowatts. Free-standing units or systems mounted on existing roofs are funded with up to 1,300 euro per kW. The Climate Fund itself subsidises a maximum of 30% of the investment costs, but this aid may be combined with grants by the Länder; total funding may therefore reach up to 50% of the total investment costs or 2,400 euro per kW (peak output).

**Vienna Stock Exchange acquires 20% of CEGH**

Vienna Stock Exchange – Wiener Börse AG – acquires a share of 20% in the gas trading platform CEGH (Central European Gas Hub AG). The oil and gas group OMV and Vienna Stock Exchange were continuing their successful cooperation, stated the two enterprises on 17 June 2010. CEGH, a subsidiary of OMV Gas & Power GmbH, is one of the most important natural gas trading platforms in Continental Europe. In 2009, CEGH reported a trading volume of about 2 billion cubic metres per month.

The most important trading site of CEGH – the gas distribution junction in Baumgarten – is also an important hub for gas transit in Central Europe. The importance of Baumgarten is likely to grow as new pipelines, e.g. “Nabucco” and “South Stream“, will be connected to it.

**New Siemens City in Vienna**

At the opening of the new “Siemens City“ in the 21<sup>st</sup> district of Vienna, President Heinz Fischer stressed that with the 150-million-euro building the international group impressively demonstrated that it was worthwhile investing in Vienna and Austria. New Siemens Österreich boss is Wolfgang Hesoun (Porr). On 1 July 2010, he will succeed to Brigitte Ederer, who was assigned to Munich by the Siemens Managing Board.

## CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE

**Football World Cup: Spindelegger opens Africa show at MuseumsQuartier**

Just a few days before the opening whistle of the Football World Cup, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger, Managing Director of MuseumsQuartier (MQ) Wolfgang Waldner and Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa Xolisa Mfundiso Mabhongo inaugurated the exhibition “Ke Nako Africa – Africa now!” The exhibition is the centrepiece of a series of events of the same name initiated by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in cooperation with the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (Wiener Institut für den Internationalen Dialog und Zusammenarbeit / VIDC) and the Africa Networking Platform (Afrika-Vernetzungsplattform / AVP). Under the umbrella of this initiative, different activities are organised by educational, cultural and civil society organisations (CSOs) from all over Austria.

“We would like to take advantage of the Football World Cup providing a platform for awareness of Africa to contribute to an up-to-date image of Africa – beyond clichés, wars and disasters. Our main goal is to inform about the young, creative and modern Africa. For development cooperation also has the task of sensitising people in Austria and ensuring cooperation on an equal footing, both here and in the partner countries“, said Spindelegger.

The exhibition gives insights into everyday-life in Africa. On a virtual level – through photos, films and music from Africa – the visitors will get to know Africa in a way they have never experienced before. The spectrum of the show covers every-day issues, urban life and leisure, including lifestyle and media use.

The venue of the exhibition closing on 11 July 2010 is the main courtyard of the art precinct MuseumsQuartier (MQ). The container is open daily from 12 to 8 p.m. (free admission). The show is accompanied by a comprehensive programme presenting traditional songs, poetry, rap, contemporary dance performances and acrobatics. Otto Lechner & Windhunde will perform on 28 June 2010 before leaving for East Africa.

[www.museumsquartier.at](http://www.museumsquartier.at),  
[www.entwicklung.at](http://www.entwicklung.at), [www.kenako.at](http://www.kenako.at)

**On the death of Hans Dichand**

Hans Dichand, one of the most important newspaper-makers of the Austrian post-war era, died aged 89 in Vienna on 17 June 2010. In 1959 Dichand revived the daily “Kronen

Zeitung“, which had been discontinued by the Nazis and turned the tabloid paper – often classified as narrow-minded and populist by critics – into Austria’s daily newspaper with the highest circulation. In 1988 “Krone“ merged with the daily “Kurier“ – in which the German publishing group WAZ held about 49 per cent – to form the Mediaprint group, which is dominating the market to the present day. WAZ has also owned 50% of the “Krone“ since the end of the 1980s, when it acquired the shares from Dichand’s former partner Kurt Falk. Recently it has been rumoured in Vienna that “Krone“ plans to buy itself out from WAZ with the support of the Raiffeisen group.

Hans Dichand is survived by three children – “Krone“ editor-in-chief Christoph, Michael, Johanna – and had various grandchildren. The media mogul was considered one of Austria’s most important art collectors and lived in a Villa built by Wilhelm Holzbauer in Kaasgraben in Vienna’s 19<sup>th</sup> district.

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann said about Hans Dichand’s death: “About three million people have been loyal readers of ‘Kronen Zeitung’ for many years, this is unparalleled in the world. This could be achieved only by establishing strong ties between the readers and the paper as well as a lively exchange promoted through abundant space for readers’ letters. Reading ‘Kronen Zeitung’, I pay particular attention to the letter pages. To give the reader a voice and to intensify contacts between the paper and the reader in this way is certainly one of the ideas that have made ‘Krone’ so successful. Without Hans Dichand and his team accompanying him for decades, the success story of the paper would be inconceivable“.

Governor of Styria Franz Voves stated on the eve of the regional elections: “I have not read this paper for eight months“. He emphasised that he was competing above all with the candidates of the other parties and not with the opinion published by “Krone“.

**Schönbrunn: “Summer Night Concert“ of Vienna Philharmonics cheered**

The weather could not have been nicer, the night sky not clearer. On 8 June 2010, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra gave its almost traditional “Summer Night Concert” in the Gardens of Schönbrunn Palace (free admission). More than 100,000 people flocked to the open-air event although the concert was broadcast by the TV stations ORF2 and 3sat. Under the motto “Moon – Planets – Stars“, works by John Williams (“Star Wars“ soundtrack), Gus-

tav Holst ("Mars"), Otto Nicolai, Josef Lanner, Josef and Johann Strauß were performed. The General Music Director designate of Vienna State Opera, Franz Welser-Möst conducted the concert in the absence of Seiji Ozawa, who cancelled his appearance due to his long severe illness. Ozawa had come up with the idea of presenting this interpretation of the "Star Wars" music at the concert. Franz Liszt's Piano Concert No. 2 was performed by Yefim Bronfman.

The concert was attended by the leading representatives of the state and government – Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll, numerous other members of government and, last but not least, former Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel, who had celebrated his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday at the Orangery of Schönbrunn before the concert. Besides, it was Schüssel who had conceived the idea of staging a "Concert for Austria" of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra at the Gardens of Schönbrunn Palace some years ago.

The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra will give the next "Summer Night Concert" on 2 June 2011 (free admission).

### **Holder of Badge of Honour André Rieu performs at Schönbrunn Palace in 2011**

Dutch violinist André Rieu and his "Johann Strauß Orchestra" will give an open-air concert in front of Schönbrunn Palace on 1 July 2011. Ticket sales started already on 4 June 2010. Rieu's Waltz Show recently presented at Stadthalle in Vienna was cheered enthusiastically. His annual gig in Vienna is transferred to Schönbrunn for a period of at least three years and will be broadcast by the TV stations ORF and ZDF.

Born into a family of musicians in Maastricht in 1949, André Rieu grew up with classical music. In the former GDR, his father was conductor-in-chief at the Leipzig Opera House and conductor of LSO (Limburgs Symfonie Orkest), where André Rieu, Jr., played as a violist up to 1989. Among his teachers was Hungarian violinist André Gertler in Brussels. His commitment to salon music started in 1978 with his ensemble "Het Maastrichts Salon Orkest", with which he became popular, particularly in the Netherlands and in the German-Belgian border region. Since the middle of the 1990s, he has been travelling around the world with his about 50-person "Johann Strauß Orchestra", filling large halls in his so-called "World Stadium Tours". He uses Schönbrunn Palace as a stage set for his orchestra and the show interludes;

the whole concert is projected on giant screens. The Ballet of Vienna State Opera and Vienna Volksoper performs regularly at his concerts. Guest appearances of artists like soprano Carmen Monarcha form an integral part of his shows. The classical repertoire is rounded off with orchestral adaptations of German hits and pop songs.

Even if journalists devoted to erudite music despise Rieu's productions and criticise them for being superficial and facile, the charm of the boyish André Rieu, playing a violin of Antonio Stradivari, and of his orchestra is overwhelming and attracts many people whom he brings a lot of joy with his music. Rieu himself says: "I play the 'Blue Danube Waltz' every night and it is never boring. It keeps me young and fit".

André Rieu – who is also a mentor of the Björn Steiger Foundation's project "Retten macht Schule" (promoting first aid training at school) – certainly is not only a successful messenger of the Strauß family's music, but also of Austria's music tradition.

His great contribution to promoting Austria's image was also acknowledged at political level. Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied awarded Rieu the Golden Badge of Honour of the Republic of Austria.

### **Franz Kafka Prize goes to Václav Havel**

Former Czech President, writer and human rights activist Václav Havel (born in Prague in 1936) received the Franz Kafka Prize. An international jury, including Marcel Reich-Ranicki and British publisher John Calder, voted in favour of Havel.

The key theme of Havel's dramas and essays is the alienation of people from the world they live in. There are clear parallels between Havel and Franz Kafka, his colleague from the German-speaking Jewish community of Prague.

Havel thinks that alienation is the reason of the problems faced by humankind today. It was caused by the increasing technality of the economy, for which science had paved the way. He describes life in the Communist dictatorships as an extreme form of alienation. This social formations were based on the notion of a scientifically organised society – referred to as "Scientific Socialism". And the evidence was a society built on lies, where words were devoid of meaning. According to Havel, a typical example was the word "peace", which basically served to support the regime.

A long time before Havel, George Orwell had presented a similar nightmarish portrait of the world in "1984".

Havel explored the theme “alienation” also throughout his essayistic work. His approach was also influenced by Czech philosopher Václav Bělohradský.

Havel’s certainly most famous book is “Letters to Olga”, which the author wrote to his then wife Olga (who died aged only 32) from prison.

The new Kafka Prize winner has illustrious predecessors, such as Peter Handke, Philip Roth, Elfriede Jelinek and Harold Pinter.

### **Alpenverein exhibition nominated for European Museum of the Year Award**

The exhibition of the Austrian Alpine Association (Oesterreichischer Alpenverein) “Mountains, an Incomprehensible Passion“, shown on a surface of 700 m<sup>2</sup> at Hofburg in Innsbruck since 2007 can be visited daily until the end of 2012. This show was nominated by the European Museum Forum (EMF) for the “European Museum of the Year Award“ in recognition of the excellent presentation of the collection to a large audience and its poetic narrative approach. “The high quality of exhibits spanning the almost 150-year history of the Austrian Alpine Association as well as the innovative educational concept have been the decisive success factors“, Christian Wadsack, the President of the Austrian Alpine Association was pleased to inform.

According to the international jury, the exhibition of the Alpine Association made an important contribution to representing the relationship between humankind and nature in all its social, academic and philosophical aspects.

The show sparked unanimous enthusiasm among the about 150,000 visitors.

After 2012, the show will go on – the Alpine Association is looking for a permanent exhibition venue in the centre of Innsbruck.

### **WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse: Architecture of “Red Vienna”**

WAGNER:WERK Museum Postsparkasse presents the exhibition “The Wagner School: Red Vienna, Architecture as a Social Utopia“ (free admission) from 6 July to 28 August 2010.

Around 1900, 95% of all flats in Vienna had neither toilets nor water, consisting only in a combined entrance hall/kitchen and one room. The Social Democrats called for the construction of municipal flats in their municipal policy programmes as early as in 1914; however, housing construction was almost exclusively in the hands of private investors until the end of the Monarchy.

In the 1920s, the Social Democratic municipality of “Red Vienna” realised construction projects of an immense construction volume, with more than 65,000 flats and housing estates. The new flats in these social housing complexes were of remarkable quality. They were not only affordable but also offered a wide range of amenities for every-day life, collective facilities and communication zones fostering solidarity, e.g. nurseries, libraries and theatres.

In the context of this housing construction programme, great importance has to be attached to the graduates of Otto Wagner’s Architecture School at the Academy of Visual Arts in Vienna, including Hermann Aichinger, Leopold Bauer, Alfons Hetmanek, Emil Hoppe, Ernst Lichtblau, Engelbert Mang, Heinrich Schmid and Heinrich Schopper. They were put in charge of building the largest and most prestigious municipal housing complexes. Their architectural solutions shaped the ideas of municipal housing in Vienna (“Wiener Gemeindebau“) until the 1920s.

Municipal housing defined itself as a spatially concentrated expression of a new society; this concept encompassed extensive education, health and culture infrastructure. Architecture became the pillar of social utopia. The buildings distributed over the entire city became a symbol of Social Democratic strength, and the names of the social housing complexes (Engels-, Adler-, Bebel-, Liebknecht-, Matteotti-Hof, etc.) documented the right of the working class to its own history. Karl Marx-Hof designed by Karl Ehn became the building of “Red Vienna” with the greatest symbolic weight.

The outstanding quality of urban development and architecture of the 1920s was hardly achieved in the city’s reconstruction after 1945. It was rediscovered only later, when a new generation of architects looked for alternatives to modernity that was perceived as faceless. These architects considered the municipal housing blocks of “Red Vienna” exemplary, especially those built by Otto Wagner’s disciples who decisively shaped social housing architecture in metropolitan areas.

Today these buildings – classified as historical monuments – are comprehensively renovated and are still an architectural and cultural policy highlight in the municipal housing stock of Vienna (220,000 flats).

[www.ottowagner.com](http://www.ottowagner.com)

**SPORTS POLICY****Funding reform is in full swing: progress at meeting in Burgenland**

About 50 domestic sports experts gathered in Bad Tatzmannsdorf in early June for the first large meeting on the topic “funding reform”. On this occasion, the first results of the three working groups, which had been set up by Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos already in January, were presented.

Wolfgang Mayrhofer – a former top athlete winning a silver medal in sailing at the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980 and now university professor for business administration at Vienna University of Economics and Business – is in charge of project coordination. Remarkable results were achieved in ten workshops, in which key issues such as “the one-stop-shop concept“, “funding of sports associations“ or “sports coaching“ were discussed. These findings will be fed into a final paper in the next months.

“The reform of the funding system is in full swing. A mood of optimism takes over, Austrian sport shows a more united front than ever. The new law is to take effect on 1 January 2012, and I think we are making good progress“, stated Wolfgang Gotschke, Head of the Office of the Minister of Sport, optimistically.

**Strong support of the Ministry of Sport for the Special Olympics in St. Pölten**

More than 2,000 athletes from eleven nations will participate in the “5<sup>th</sup> Austrian Special Summer Olympics”, which were ceremoniously opened in St. Pölten on 18 June 2010 (ending on 22 June 2010).

The Ministry of Defence and Sport supports the Organising Committee of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Summer Games 2010, in which also international athletes will participate, with a federal subsidy of 14,500 euro. The Austrian Federal Army is a reliable partner – as in many previous large-scale sports events. It will be responsible for providing food and beverages to the 600 volunteers, preparing 11,000 lunch boxes for the participants. Moreover, it organises transport to the individual sport venues.

The movement “Special Olympics” offers year-round opportunities for training and competition in 26 different Olympic disciplines to more than 2.5 million children aged eight years plus, teens and adults with mental disabilities in 180 nations across the world. Besides, mention should be made of the fact that the last International Summer Games were held in Shanghai in October 2007. More than 7,000

athletes from 169 countries were in the starting line-up. Competitions were held in 24 disciplines. Austria won 82 medals: 20 x gold, 31 x silver, 31 x bronze.

Darabos: “In my capacity as Minister of Sport, I consider the Special Olympics of crucial importance. Sport, and all its facets, may have vital effects on society and contribute to healthy and fulfilled lives. I am equally pleased about every single medal earned by Austrian athletes. Events such as the one in St. Pölten are a wonderful opportunity to witness the great accomplishments of participants whose life is indeed not easy!“

**Minister Darabos congratulates the men’s handball team**

For the first time since 1993, the Austrian men’s handball team qualified for World Championship. Hence, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos was delighted about the results of the two qualification games against the Netherlands.

Minister Darabos: “After the clear home win, the return match was only a formality. Thanks to the good results at the European Handball Championship in Austria in January, qualification for the World Championship in Sweden in 2011 is another milestone in the development of Austrian handball. I congratulate all players, coaches and officials for having achieved this important common goal. The Austrian men’s handball team continues to be present at a high international level!“

**Football City World Champions will be crowned**

While the Football World Cup in South Africa is underway, the City World Champion will be singled out from about 80 amateur football teams from 60 different countries in Salzburg – in a microcosm, so to speak.

In terms of diversity of participating teams, this event may well compete with the real Football World Cup. Besides football powers such as Argentina, Brazil, England, the Netherlands, Germany or Italy, football outsiders such as Nepal, the Cabo Verde Islands or an Aramaic team will participate. The final matches will take place on 4 July 2010.

The City World Championship of Linz will be held already on 26 and 27 June 2010 in Linz-Pichling. Linz will celebrate the premiere of this event – in contrast to Salzburg, a long-standing tournament host.