

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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No. 15/10

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Notes: We take a summer break and will be back on 23 August 2010. The editorial team of News from Austria wishes its readers a great summer!

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**Heinz Fischer's second term as Federal President**

Federal President Heinz Fischer was formally sworn in for his second term in a ceremony before the Federal Assembly on 8 July 2010. Fischer, who was re-elected by a clear majority in April, is and remains the eighth head of state of the Second Republic. Seven presidents have been elected directly by the people since 1951, five of them for two terms.

Besides the entire federal government, the parliamentary group leaders and Members of Parliament, the guests gathering in the historic Imperial Council Hall in the Austrian Parliament building also included representatives of the Churches and religious communities as well as important personalities from business, culture and the media.

In his speech, Fischer once more rejected nationalist tendencies and praised the benefits of democracy and parliamentarianism. The President also highlighted the importance of electoral law and free elections. Those wanting democracy should be prepared to share responsibility, said Fischer. Focusing on education, he stated that despite of or especially in times of economic crisis, public spending on education and research was one of the "most useful and profitable investments". It was something society owed to young people. Fischer considered it crucial to reach a consensus on the introduction of comprehensive schools for the age group ten to fourteen and controlled access to universities (with optimal use of capacity, lower drop-out rates and a higher percentage of university graduates).

The President also declared his full support for climate protection. He warned against global warming and urged to comply with measures agreed on at international level. Other important concerns mentioned by Fischer were "social symmetry and social justice". Moreover, he expressed his clear commitment to the EU and the Federal Army, drawing attention to the numerous peace-keeping missions in which Austrian soldiers had participated.

National Council before the summer break: minimum income adopted

In its last plenary week before the summer break (7 to 9 July 2010), the National Council adopted several laws. First and foremost, legislation on the means-tested minimum income was passed. This new countrywide social assistance system was approved by the two coalition parties – Social Democrats (SPÖ) and

People's Party (ÖVP) –, the Greens and the Freedom Party (FPÖ). However, the regional parliaments (Landtage) also have to consent before the law can enter into force as planned on 1 September 2010. This social transfer payment is calculated based on the "equalisation supplement to minimum pensions"; 744 euro per month are paid twelve times a year. Couples receive 1,116 euro net, 18% of the amount for singles is paid per child (134 euro net). In addition, the Amendments to the Immission Control Act / Air Quality laying down a new maximum level of fine particles and to the Animal Protection Act with new rules for the (behavioural) training of dogs as well as a legal basis for group practices ("Ärzte-GmbHs") were adopted.

Equal Treatment Amendment under review

The proposed Amendment to the Equal Treatment Act was submitted for review on 12 July 2010. One of the most important new rules is mandatory disclosure of the average wages of women and men as from 2011. In the combat against all forms of discrimination, Austria was "setting an example" in Europe, stressed Minister for Women's Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek vis-à-vis the Austrian Press Agency (APA).

Signposts: Carinthia implements latest Constitutional Court decision

On 13 July 2010, the Land of Carinthia complied with the latest decision of the Constitutional Court, putting up bilingual topographical signposts in Bleiburg/Pliberk, Ebersdorf/Drvesa and Schwabegg/Zvavek as required under constitutional law. A final solution of this issue seems to be in sight. The decision of the Constitutional Court had to be respected, stated Carinthia's Governor Gerhard Dörfler. The SPÖ, ÖVP, the Greens and representatives of the Slovenes in Carinthia described this measure as a "step in the right direction" and Slovenia officially welcomed that the correct bilingual signposts were put up.

New bill against wage dumping

Social Minister Rudolf Hundstorfer submitted "a bill against wage and social dumping" for review on 14 July 2010. Companies will have to pay an administrative fine if their wages are below the minimum level laid down in collective agreements. The new law having become necessary in view the opening of borders to workers from Eastern Europe on 1 May 2011 will enter into force on 1 January 2011.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**German Federal President Wulff meets with Federal President Fischer**

Incoming German Federal President Christian Wulff paid his official first visit to his Austrian counterpart Heinz Fischer on 14 July 2010. Both heads of state agreed that the good neighbourly relations would be continued and intensified.

At their working meeting in the President's Office in Vienna's former imperial palace Hofburg, Fischer and Wulff also discussed the question of EU enlargement and topics such as compulsory military service.

The historical, cultural and economic ties between the two countries were "unparalleled in the world", stated Wulff. Austria's "important stabilising function in Europe" was another reason for intensive bilateral cooperation. Fischer described the official visit of the German President – taking place only two weeks after Wulff's election – as a "sign of great appreciation".

High Austrian award to Luxemburg's Prime Minister Juncker

Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker was awarded the Grand Decoration in Gold with Sash for Service to the Republic of Austria in Vienna on 14 July 2010. Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann awarded the decoration to Juncker at the Federal Chancellery. In his presentation speech Faymann praised Luxembourg's PM as a "bridge builder across party boundaries and countries who has always promoted the common European idea".

Furthermore, Faymann stressed that the relations between Austrian politics and Juncker had always been close and friendly. He knew Juncker as an enthusiastic, courageous and committed European with great sensitivity for group dynamics, said Faymann. He paid special tribute to Juncker's commitment to social balance in European policies.

In his acceptance speech, Prime Minister Juncker underlined that he felt very close to Austrian politics but also to the people in this country.

Federal Chancellor Faymann in Croatia

Economic cooperation between Austria and Croatia as well as Croatia's accession to the EU were top items on the agenda of the meeting between Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor in Zagreb on 12 July 2010. Faymann expressed respect for the achievements of his

Croatian counterpart such as the settlement of the border conflict with Slovenia. Austria always supported Croatia, which was also an important trading partner. One topic discussed by the two heads of government were the framework conditions for Austrian entrepreneurs in Croatia, including legal certainty. Many companies requested amendments to reduce the duration of proceedings, stated Faymann.

Croatia hopes to sign its EU membership treaty in early 2011 at the latest. The last chapter of accession negotiations had been opened in June.

Bulgaria's Prime Minister Borissow in Vienna

Bulgarian Prime Minister Bojko Borissow will arrive in Austria on 19 July 2010 for a two-day official visit. The meeting agenda includes talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll. Discussion will focus on anti-corruption measures as well as EU, energy and economic issues, including the gas pipeline project Nabucco realised under the leadership of the Austrian petrol group OMV.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Martonyi pays first official visit to Vienna

Hungary's incoming Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi and Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger emphasised the special friendship between the two countries after their meeting in Vienna on 13 July 2010. Both ministers praised the bilateral relations and good cooperation at European level. According to Martonyi, the "close cooperation and special friendship between Hungary and Austria were "a symbol of a common Europe".

The two countries "were in clear agreement" regarding all issues affecting Central Europe, stressed Spindelegger. To intensify cooperation, a joint conference of ambassadors would be staged on 6 September 2010. Joint government meetings had also been held for some years. Hungary hoped for Austria's support during its Council Presidency in 2011.

EU accepts GMO ban

On 13 July 2010, the European Commission granted the Member States freedom to forbid or allow the planting of genetically modified organisms (GMO), thereby also accepting Austria's ban on genetic engineering.

ECONOMY

Chancellor Faymann: major upward trend of the Austrian economy

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Minister of Finance Josef Pröll, Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner and Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures presented the 2010 Economic Report of the federal government at Hofburg in Vienna on 14 July 2010.

The crisis was not over but Austria was doing considerably better than predicted by many a prophet. The favourable development was due to concerted action taken by politics and economics, politics had created an adequate framework, and the economy delivered the results, stressed Chancellor Faymann. Austria was performing well compared to other EU Member States. The reaction to the crisis had been right: the purchasing power of the population had been strengthened instead of “sacrificing it to rigorous austerity programmes”, while giving a boost to the economy and exports, explained the Federal Chancellor. Among Austria’s strengths were its small and mid-sized enterprises, industry but also research, education and training. These strong points had to be taken into account in drawing up the budget. The focus would be on three factors: further strengthening of the purchasing power, combating poverty as well as implementing an administrative reform by taking advantage of synergies arising between politics and administration. Details still had to be negotiated with the social partners and the Länder. The aim was to reduce the national debt, underlined Faymann.

The Federal Chancellor was convinced that growth was also needed to preserve wealth. Europe’s previous attempts to control the financial markets were still insufficient for the real economy. European policy had to be judged on the basis of the measures of the Member States. Social cohesion was also an economic factor, said Faymann. Furthermore, it was necessary to put a stop to all this speculation: “The higher the government debt, the higher the risk that speculators will take over”, concluded the Federal Chancellor. There was not any financial market architecture in which the government debt was meaningless, stated Faymann.

Austria had created the basis for a self-sustained upswing even if the economic recovery was not yet self-sustained, Economic Minister Mitterlehner summarised the core findings of the 2010 Economic Report. Structural change was working, the economic stimulus

packages of 2009 and 2010 had been useful, explained Faymann and Mitterlehner in unison. But now the enterprises and the population had to show more optimism.

Mitterlehner considered it likely that the economic upswing would become self-sustained in 2011. At present, Europe was facing growth problems. “In 2010 the economy grows by 4% globally, but only by 1% in Europe“. To support the upswing, it was necessary to open up new export markets and make green investments. The restructuring of the domestic economy towards a service economy was successful, stated Mitterlehner.

(For more information on the 2010 Economic Report for Austria see: www.bmwfj.gv.at)

More international companies are moving to Austria

After the crisis-induced decline last year, more foreign companies moved again to Austria in the first six months of 2010. The number of foreign companies established in Austria rose from 84 to 93, the investment volume tripled from 37 million euro to 103 million euro. On the one hand, Austria profited from the recovery of the German market, on the other hand from its role as a hub for Eastern and South Eastern Europe. These findings are based on figures published by the Austrian Business Agency (ABA) – the public body providing support to foreign companies setting up premises in Austria – on 8 July 2010. ABA Managing Director Rene Siegl expects a gradual revival of relocation activities (which are sensitive to cyclical developments) in the second half of 2010 – provided that the economic situation continues to improve.

With 48 newly established companies (compared to 24 in the first half of 2009), German entrepreneurs are the strongest group of investors, followed by Italy with eight establishments and the CEE region with a total of 22 businesses set up in Austria. With 49 foreign companies moving in, Vienna was the Land that was most attractive as a business location, Upper Austria (13) was ranked second, Salzburg and Lower Austria (both with 8 new foreign companies) shared the third place.

Vienna Airport reports increase in number of passengers

The number of passengers handled at Vienna Airport rose by 10.5% to about 1.8 million in June 2010 compared to the previous month. Increases were recorded on Eastern and Western European routes. In the first six months, the volume of passengers went up by 5.5%.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Vienna: 18th International Aids Conference**

Between 18 and 23 July 2010, the 18th International Aids Conference (AIDS 2010) is held at the trade fair centre in the second district of Vienna. The event will be attended by about 25,000 participants from all over the world, among them 2,500 media representatives. Several events held in the preliminaries and in parallel as well as cultural programmes make the conference a comprehensive experience.

What distinguishes the International Aids Conferences held every second year from other large-scale (medical) events is the mix between science, politics (development, human rights, justice, health policies) and the concerns of those affected.

The conference was opened by Federal President Heinz Fischer. The list of attendees includes high-ranking international personalities: former US President Bill Clinton, Norwegian Crown Princess Mette-Marit, Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Whoopi Goldberg. On 20 July 2010, pop singer Annie Lennox will lead an international human rights march turning the spotlight on the issue "HIV and human rights"; thousands of demonstrators are expected to participate.

Austria and Serbia intensify research cooperation

Austria and Serbia intensify cooperation in science and research. To this end, an agreement was signed by Minister of Science Beatrix Karl and Serbian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science Božidar Đjelić in Vienna on 13 July 2010. This agreement makes it possible to launch more common technology projects, said Đjelić. "Serbia considers Austria a main partner".

Cooperation between Serbia and Austria started to intensify in 2004, when the EU project "South East European ERA.NET" (SEE-ERA.NET) was kicked off. In the future, Science Days will be held and cooperation in the framework of EU projects is to be strengthened. Special support is to be given to fledgling researchers as well as women scientists from both countries.

Alfred Kubin in Austria, Germany and France

Alfred Kubin is in vogue in international museums. Until 28 August 2010, the Nordico Museum of the City of Linz (Upper Austria) shows a unique exhibition titled "Berührungen.

Begegnungen" ("Contacts. Encounters") with drawings of the master and works by his soul mates Margret Bilger, Emmy Haesele and Clara Siewert.

Ostdeutsche Galerie in Regensburg (Bavaria) celebrates its 40th anniversary with a show about Kubin's oeuvre, presenting about 75 watercolours, pen and pencil drawings from all periods of the Bohemian artist (1877-1959). Ostdeutsche Galerie was opened in 1970 near Regensburger Stadtpark in a historic art deco building – erected as a sports hall in the 19th century. The gallery project was realised by establishing a foundation of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Free State of Bavaria and the City of Regensburg in 1966. Its mandate was to preserve the cultural heritage of Eastern European regions previously under German influence (Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Eastern and Western Prussia). Among the outstanding artists represented in the collection are Käthe Kolwitz, Max Pechstein, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Oskar Kokoschka (from Pöchlarn in Lower Austria) or Alfred Kubin.

The Cistercian Abbey Auberive built in the 12th century in the region Champagne-Ardenne (France) presents also a Kubin exhibition (closing on 12 September 2010) with more than 90 watercolours and ink drawings from the collections of Upper Austrian museums, Vienna Dome Museum, the Graphic Art Collection of Albertina, Museum der Moderne Salzburg as well as private collections. The detailed exhibition catalogue includes essays by leading international Kubin experts, e.g. "Kubin and Postmodernism" (Peter Assmann) or "Kubin and Vienna around 1900" (Franz Smola). The exhibition was initiated by Jean-Claude Volot, the owner of Abbaye d'Auberive, a French industrialist and modern art collector, and has been supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum in Paris.

But Alfred Kubin has been held in high esteem in France not only this year. A comprehensive exhibition had been devoted to Kubin at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris in 2008. The special exhibition "Crime et Châtiment" ("Crime and Punishment") currently staged at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris also showcases some fundamental works of Kubin. For more information see:

www.nordico.at, www.kunstforum.net,
www.abbaye-auberive.com

BAWAG Contemporary: Sonia Leimer. Neither in motion nor at rest

BAWAG Contemporary, Franz Josefs Kai 3, 1010 Vienna, presents the exhibition "Sonia

Leimer. Neither in motion nor at rest“ (closing on 25 August 2010). Leimer, born in Merano (South Tyrol/Italy) in 1977, lives and works in Vienna. As curator Brigitte Huck explains in the exhibition catalogue, the cinematographic term “lost film“ describes missing or lost footage. Celluloid is a sensitive and dangerous substance. It does not only destroy itself if stored inadequately but is also highly inflammable. Based on estimates, 80 percent of all silent movies are untraceable, have disappeared and are probably lost forever.

But according to information handed down orally, there are even feature films of the post-war period, e.g. Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s “This Night“ (1966). Hardly anything is known about the plot, but the film is said to have been financed by actor Christoph Roser and shot on 8 mm. Fassbinder himself was the scriptwriter, cameraman and director. He probably also participated as an actor.

In her exhibition Sonia Leimer addresses the fragile, unstable penetrating the seemingly solid, robust. Her work also focuses on the concrete room and its relationship with artistic staging. Other themes are the relations between today’s society, individual narrations and the canon of classical images. Demonstrating heightened awareness of core issues of the present, her work makes fundamental statements about material, media and displays in film, architecture and art dealing with space.

With bright and dark rooms, different floor levels and its generous spatial perspective, the new exhibition premises of BAWAG Contemporary at Franz Josefs Kai are ideally suited to the artist’s objective of exploring brittle constructions along spatial limits. The exhibition revolves around simulated rooms and rooms made from material pretending to be something different – around imagined and remembered rooms, rooms created through narration.

Sonia Leimer treats filmic space as independent space in five works of 2010, investigating the construction of space and time, the patterns and hierarchies hidden behind these constructions and the role played by the imaginary.

www.bawagcontemporary.at

“Signs of the Time“: New Medal Museum of the Federal Chancellery

Under the title “Signs of the Time“, the Medal Museum of the Federal Chancellery was recently opened. The visitors of this museum get a chance to learn about the system of orders and decorations of the monarchy as well as the First and Second Republic. On the initiative of Director General of the Federal Chancellery

Manfred Matzka, members of the Federal Press Service and of Protocol developed a concept and realised the museum project in the rooms of Amalienburg (in the former imperial palace Hofburg accommodating parts of the Federal Chancellery).

Beginning with the Order of the Golden Fleece (Orden vom Goldenen Vlies), the range of exhibits covers the Military Order of Maria Theresa (Militär-Maria-Theresien-Orden), with which the foundation had been laid for the Austrian system of medals and decorations in 1757. This and other “orders of the House of Hapsburg” – St. Stephen’s Order, Leopold Order, Order of the Iron Crown and Order of Francis Joseph – are the highlights of the first room of the museum. In view of the available space, the organisers of the exhibition Thomas Eder, Peter Plener and Walter Reichel opted for a concept in which supplementary information is supplied on selected exhibits. They chose a narrative structure using examples to make the exhibition lively and attractive. Franz Grillparzer’s (1791-1872) literary approach to decorations and medals is for example presented. The young civil servant not yet having earned any medals developed into a mild-mannered highly decorated poet.

Supplementing the medals and decorations showcased, a slide show provides insights into the often very personal biographies of the recipients of medals. Details are for example provided about the great-grandfather of conductor Herbert von Karajan, who was awarded the Order of Leopold in 1869 or about Georg Ludwig Ritter von Trapp, the father of the singing “Trapp family“, who as a submarine commander in WWI. had earned the Order of Maria Theresa. The presentation of the orders is rounded off with various multimedia applications such as additional slide shows critically examining the subject. An audio guide offers an acoustic journey through the history of Austrian hymns from the monarchy to the present. A film gives insights into the world of Opera Ball visitors decorated with medals, by presenting statements of passers-by, civil servants and psychotherapists. The conclusion: the splendour of medals has not faded over the centuries. The museum welcomes groups after appointment:

walter.reichel@bka.gv.at,

thomas.eder@bka.gv.at

ImPulsTanz – Vienna International Dance Festival 2010

Vienna is the centre of the international dance world until 15 August 2010. The most impor-

tant choreographers and the world's best dance companies gather at the "ImPulsTanz" festival. The performance programme includes productions by Marie Chouinard, Mathilde Monnier, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker/Rosas, Jérôme Bel, Alain Platel & Les Ballets C. de la B., Xavier Le Roy, Chris Haring & Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo led by Jean-Christophe Maillot. For more information on the programme see: www.ImPulsTanz.com

Alfons Haider's Stockerau Open-Air Festival 2010: "Victor/Victoria"

After the two-year box office hit "Ein Käfig voller Narren" ("Cage aux Folles"), the director of the Stockerau Open-Air Festival once again decided to rely on a Broadway musical with a filmic past. The musical "Victor/Victoria" – which is performed in front of the parish church, whose tower is enclosed by a scaffolding this year – is based on a UFA sound film of 1933. The film version with Julie Andrews was produced by Blake Edwards in 1982; the theatre adaptation was performed on Broadway in 1995, also starring Julie Andrews. The production in Stockerau (Lower Austria), which is shown until 14 August 2010, is by no means a poor imitation but fulfils all demands of a professional-level theatre performance. The festival even invested into a new translation into German by Gunther Baumann. Gabriel Barylli's production is fast and witty. The dance scenes choreographed by Alonso Barros are dynamic and perfect. Walter Vogelweider's stage design combines neon writing and faded poster imitations with the glamour of the show stage.

A short summary of the plot: A woman is playing a man playing a woman. The leading actors: Alfons Haider as the homosexual Toddy and Maya Hakvoort, who even with a short hair cut and in men's clothes never loses her feminine charm and sings and moves on the stage with subtlety. Another pillar of the cast is Christoph Zadra as the gangster King Marchan. Ines Hengl-Pirker from Stockerau playing the flaxen-haired and empty-headed gangster's bride Norma Cassidy was enthusiastically applauded by the audience. She was brilliant as an actress and a singer – and of incredible sex appeal.

The first night on 6 July 2010 was crowded by celebrities, who were unanimous in their enthusiasm: Federal President Heinz Fischer, Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger, Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer, Minister of Justice Claudia Bandion-Ortner,

Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer, etc. Obviously, "Victor/Victoria" in Stockerau is an absolute must.

www.stockerau.gv.at

Aspang: Peetra Jendrzejek produced "Elling" with theatre group "SägeWerk"

The "Karl Schubert House" association offers 124 people with mental and cognitive disabilities a home for independent living and supports them in realising their individual life concepts. Its top priority is to ensure that fundamental human rights are implemented diligently. The association defines its mission as promoting the independence and obvious talents of the residents.

The theatre group "SägeWerk" forms part of the association. It has presented excellent plays – e.g. by Brecht, Sartre, Giraudoux – in Mariensee since 2004. These productions stand comparison with the best Austrian and international theatres.

Under stage director Peetra Jendrzejek, people with disabilities work together with their carers and professional artists such as actors, make-up artists and musicians. The whole team comprises about 25 people finding a purpose and meaning in theatre work and playing their roles in a very special way.

The aim of the theatre performances is to tell jointly a story in which the differences between professionals, carers, residents, musicians and a light engineer blur.

This year, Jendrzejek produced "Elling" based on the novel by the Norwegian author Axel Hellstenius in the vault of Aspanger Hof in Aspang/Wechsel (Lower Austria).

The outcome is breathtaking, as always: Elling and Kjell Bjarne are released from a mental hospital and move into a communal flat. Social worker Frank tries to help them in dealing with their every-day life. Minor tasks like using a telephone, going shopping or maintaining social contacts pose large problems to the two men, who are also completely different. While Elling wants to become an artist, Kjell dreams of finding a partner. One day, a woman, the pregnant Ruth, slips and literally falls into their life. Will their friendship survive?

If you are interested in a theatre performance that offers something really valuable, you have to go and see "Elling".

Running until 31 July 2010.

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SPORTS POLICY**Initiative “Movement for Healthy Kids“ becomes huge success**

The Austria-wide campaign “Kinder gesund bewegen“ (“Movement for Healthy Kids”) launched by the Ministry of Sport one year ago is developing into a huge success.

Lack of exercise has negative effects on the health of our children, leading to obesity and postural disorders. Movement, playing and sport can make invaluable contributions to promoting the personality development of children. And these are precisely the issues addressed in the campaign “Movement for Healthy Kids”.

The initiative “Movement for Healthy Kids” – in which the Federal Sports Organisation (BSO) “Fit for Austria“ as well as the sports federations ASKÖ, ASVÖ and SPORTUNION play a leading role – aims at incorporating more movement into the curricula of nurseries and primary schools as nurseries are attended by almost all kids for at least one year and as practically all children can be reached through primary school.

The target group are children themselves but also adults having decisive influence on the attitude of children towards movement, e.g. teaching staff, parents and guardians.

One year after the official campaign roll-out, about 2,900 institutions participate; this is approximately 37% of the target group (7,900 primary schools and nurseries). 450 instructors with target-group specific training realise measures at local level, having organised more than 13,000 instruction modules “movement” so far.

In addition to these modules which can be attended free of charge, vouchers for free products are distributed to ensure long-term effects and as an incentive to respond to the stimuli received. Just like the movement modules, the exercise material may be chosen from a supply pool or a product portfolio and combined based on individual needs. About 700 institutions have already exchanged their vouchers against useful products promoting movement.

The campaign is now subject to evaluation (by an external evaluation team) to measure the level of satisfaction of the target group and to optimise the range of free products (according to evaluators, a large number of participants, very good response rate). A multiple-strategy design has been used to develop the campaign “Movement for Healthy Children“ with a view to activating the participants in various ways.

Two catchwords characterising the initiative are “needs-based“ and “additive“. In concrete terms this means that awareness of the different needs and conditions of nurseries and primary schools interested in participating in the campaign is to be raised. It will be up to the participants to select 10 units (person hours) of a combination of physical activities that seems most attractive to them. In the framework of “Movement for Healthy Kids“, each institution will be supplied with a tailored programme.

It is the declared aim of the campaign to support nursery and primary school teachers – provided that they wish to receive support. “Movement for Healthy Kids” does not want to be patronising.

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos: “Movement for Healthy Kids’ offers a wide and varied programme which is adjusted to the respective framework of the participating institutions. In this way we wish to foster cooperation among schools, nurseries and sports organisations across Austria”.

In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture and with the Vienna University of Education, the Ministry of Sport, “Fit for Austria“/Federal Sports Organisation (BSO), the Federal Sports Academy (BSPA) Vienna and the Institute for Medical and Sports-Scientific Consulting (IMSB) Austria are currently training movement coaches for children.

The aim of this pilot project is to allow those completing the training course to teach – together with the professional teaching staff – the classes “movement and sport“ at primary schools. Block seminars and weekly courses will start in September 2010. Training is free of charge for all participants.

Darabos congratulates mountain biker Gigon on her 6th world champion title

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos recently congratulated Michaela Gigon on winning the World Mountain Bike Orienteering Championships for the sixth time.

In Montalegre (Portugal), the 33-year-old Federal Army athlete defended her position at the top of the women’s field in the middle distance (1:00:39 hours), ahead of Dane Rikke Kornvig (+ 0:33) and Marika Hara (1:14) from Finland. The second Austrian participant, Sonja Zinkl, was ranked 16th. For Gigon this has been the fourth World Championships gold medal in the middle distance and the sixth in total.