

# NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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**HOME AFFAIRS****Transparency Database: Faymann and Pröll agreed to give the go-ahead**

The coalition leaders Chancellor Faymann and Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Pröll, agreed on introducing a Transparency Database on 28 June 2010. The new law on the means-tested guaranteed minimum income may now be adopted by the National Council.

The Ministers of Finance and Social Affairs were requested to submit a draft bill by early September. As a next step, the government bill is to be presented to the National Council by 19 October 2010. The bill will be passed still before Christmas to ensure that the new law enters into force on 1 January 2011. On the same date, technical work will start to implement the Transparency Database. Subsequently, the data can be fed into the system.

In parallel, the Ministers of Finance and of Social Affairs will open negotiations with the Länder with a view to reaching an agreement by 30 June 2011. As soon as the first Land signs the Pact between the Federal Republic and the Länder and completes entry of all requested data into the Transparency Database, the data available for the respective Land will be activated individually and become accessible via the Transparency Portal.

If the negotiations with the remaining Länder are not concluded by 30 June 2011, the federal government will have to submit a constitutional bill to the National Council in the second half of the year. Under the new piece of legislation, the Länder will be requested formally to make the required data available for integration. The Transparency Database will be ready for use throughout Austria on 1 January 2012.

According to the motion for a resolution, the aim of the database is to inform all natural and legal persons of the benefits and services provided to them by the public sector. The beneficiaries are to receive a "clear overview" of their monthly and annual gross/net income, including public aid. The so-called "Transparency Account" will cover social transfers such as nursing benefits, family allowances, subsidies, tax allowances, monetary social insurance benefits (pensions, unemployment benefit) and benefits-in-kind such as free nurseries and schools.

The comprehensive protection of personal data will be guaranteed. Decisions on the evaluation and publication of the aggregate and anonymous data stored in the Transparency Database will be taken exclusively by the federal government "based on prima facie public interest".

The Federal Computing Centre (Bundesrechenzentrum) will be contracted for technical implementation. The ultimate responsibility for operating and maintaining the database will rest with the Ministry of Finance, while the Ministry of Social Affairs will act in an advisory capacity.

**Austria boasts the EU's lowest unemployment rate**

"In May Austria did not only have the EU's lowest unemployment rate but also recorded the strongest decline in the number of jobless people. This announcement is based on the figures published by the EU's statistical office "Eurostat" on 2 July 2010. I see this as a proof that the Austrian federal government adopted the right approach, combining economic stimulus packages as well as employment and labour market programmes and combated the crisis most efficiently in Europe. We will spare no effort to continue the successful policy to promote employment. In addition, more workers and less jobless people are the best contribution we can make to the necessary budget consolidation", explained Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer.

Based on the Eurostat method of calculation, Austria reported an unemployment rate of 4% in May. Moreover, Austria was the EU Member State registering the strongest decline in joblessness from the prior-year level; the number of unemployed persons dropped by 0.9% (from 4.9 to 4%). The unemployment rate of the EU-27 stood at 9.6% in May.

"Besides the fact that Austria is the number one in Europe in the combat against unemployment in 2010, I think it is highly positive that employment in our country is again increasing significantly. The number of active workers rose by almost 41,000 to 3,318,470 persons in June, corresponding to a plus by 1.2%", stated the Social Minister.

The measures taken to fight youth unemployment have also shown positive effects. With an youth unemployment rate of about 9.5% in May (-1.2 percentage points year-on-year), Austria is ranked third in the European Union, after the Netherlands and Germany (EU-27: 20.5%).

"While we are delighted to be the European champion in the combat against unemployment, we must not diminish our efforts. We will continue proven programmes and adopt innovative approaches. I would like to reiterate that there is a silver lining on the horizon, but that the crisis is not yet over".

**EUROPE INTERNATIONAL****Serbian President Boris Tadić held talks on European affairs in Vienna**

During his one-day visit to Austria on 29 June 2010, Serbian President Boris Tadić expressed his commitment to European values and EU standards. The Austrian interlocutors of the Serbian President – Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann – stressed that Austria would support Serbia's EU integration.

After the meeting, the Federal Chancellor informed that he had he discussed with Tadić "how we can improve cooperation in combating corruption and submerged economies all over Europe". Serbia's coming closer to the European Union and the economic development in the Western Balkans were, of course, other topics for debate. Corruption was an "obstacle to growth" in these countries, said the Chancellor. Another issue on the meeting agenda was the significance of the accession talks between the EU and Croatia for Serbia's EU membership aspirations.

The Serbian President – who is considered pro-European – recently demanded a clear statement of the EU whether Serbia's EU membership was still welcome in view of the economic and financial crisis. An era of peace in Europe could only start after EU integration of the entire South Eastern European region, Tadić had recently emphasised at a summit of the South East European Cooperation Process (SEEC) in Istanbul.

The fact that the former military leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Ratko Mladić (who is searched for by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague) has not yet been arrested is considered a main obstacle to Serbia's EU membership. Mladić is alleged to be the main responsible for the mass killings of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica in the summer of 1995 and is suspected to hide in Serbia. Besides, Tadić also rejected reports that Serbia could renounce Kosovo in exchange for EU membership. By no means would Serbia recognise the independence of Kosovo.

The Serbian President started his rounds of talks in Vienna with Christoph Leitl, head of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, who pointed out that – based on the official statistics of the Serbian National Bank – Austria was the most important foreign investor in Serbia with an investment volume of 2.2 billion euro. In 2008 the trading volume between Serbia and Austria reached the 900-million-euro threshold. In 2009 – the year of the global

financial crisis – both exports to and imports from Serbia declined. Leitl said, however, that foreign trade was expected to pick up in the current year as the Serbian economy was recovering. Serbia is likely to report a GDP plus of up to 2.5 percent in 2010. In the first quarter of 2010, Austria exported goods worth 95 million euro to Serbia, while the import volume totalled 55 million euro. Among the goods categories achieving the highest turnover are machinery and plants, motor vehicles, paper and cardboard, plastics as well as pharmaceutical products.

In the evening, Tadić and Fischer – together with Cardinal Christoph Schönborn – opened the exhibition "Serbia – Cultural Bridge between East and West" at the Dome and Diocesan Museum in Vienna. The show delves into Serbia's rich cultural heritage spanning twelve centuries.

Before the exhibition opening, Tadić had participated in the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church in the third district of Vienna. In 1860 Emperor Francis Joseph I. had granted the then 1,500 Serbs of Orthodox faith the right to establish a religious community and to build a church.

**Austrian appointed to leading position in EULEX KOSOVO**

In the framework of the Rule of Law Mission of the European Union in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO), Austria will hold a leading position. Austrian Embassy Councillor Thomas Mühlmann has been proposed for the position "Chief of Staff". The temporary assignment of Mühlmann (provisionally ending on 30 June 2011) has been approved by a majority of members of the Main Committee of the National Council (against the votes of the MPs of the Austrian Freedom Party).

Thus the staff member of the Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs was appointed to the highest position ever assigned to an Austrian expert in a civilian mission of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union.

So far, EULEX KOSOVO has been the largest civilian mission in the framework of the GSDP. A total of up to 2,210 police, judicial, customs and administrative experts as well as an additional 1,233 local staff members will participate in this mission. The aim of EULEX KOSOVO is to support the country in establishing a police, judicial and administrative system. 69 countries have officially recognised the Kosovo since 17 February 2008.

## ECONOMY

### **Wifo/IHS: Austrian economy is slowly recovering**

While Austria's economy is recovering only slowly from the severe economic crisis, domestic economic analysts are more optimistic for the next year, predicting higher growth rates. The Economic Research Institute (Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut/Wifo) and the Institute for Advanced Studies (Institut für Höhere Studien/IHS) forecast a real GDP growth of 1.6% and 1.9%, respectively. However, for 2010 the experts assume growth rates of only 1.2% and 1.5%, respectively, as investments are still shrinking. According to the summer forecast of 2 July 2010, the labour market is developing unexpectedly well.

The domestic economic upswing has been driven by commodity exports, which will probably grow by about 6 to 7% in real terms in 2010. Private consumption is also likely to grow slightly more (0.9%) in real terms than assumed in the spring forecast. The unemployment rate (national calculation method) is expected to rise only to 7.2 to 7.3% in 2010 and 2011 – despite earlier fears that it would surge to 7.7%.

The significant increase in commodity exports in 2010 was due to the growing demand from Asia and other regions in the world, rather than from the euro-zone countries, explained Wifo. Exports to the Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) were also reviving. According to Wifo, net exports would contribute 1.2 percentage points to the GDP growth in 2010 and 0.9 percentage points in 2011.

Based on the estimate of Wifo, the euro-zone countries and EU-27 are likely to grow by 0.9 and 1.0%, while the IHS assumes a plus of 1.3% for both regions. For Germany – Austria's most important trading partner – Wifo predicts a GDP growth of 1.3%, and the IHS of no less than 1.9%. According to Wifo, the euro-zone and the EU-27 will expand by 1.2 and 1.4%. The IHS assumes growth rates of 1.6 and 1.7%. Both institutes estimate that in 2011 the German economy will grow by 1.7%. For the USA a GDP increase of 3.0% and 2.4% respectively is expected for 2010 and 2011. In China growth might slow down from 10.0% in 2010 to 9.0% in 2011 (Wifo) or from 10.5% to 8.5% (IHS).

### **Vienna: seat of the World Bank Group**

Vienna becomes an official seat of the World Bank Group. For three of the five organisations of the World Bank Group liaison offices are to

be opened in Vienna based on formal agreements on the establishment of official seats, informed Minister of Finance Josef Pröll on 22 June 2010.

The three organisations affected are the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). In this way, the status of the three existing offices in Vienna will be raised within the World Bank Group. The formal agreement on establishing official seats is also important in the context of plans to decentralise the World Bank Group headquartered in Washington. Austria seeks to promote the establishment of a regional World Bank office – which could be responsible for Central and Eastern Europe – in Vienna.

Laxenburg (near Vienna) is the venue of another international project. There the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) is to be located. The project was completed in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the European Anti-Fraud Office and Interpol. IACA is to become an independent organisation. Negotiations at international level have to be continued. The mandate has been given by the Council of Ministers on 22 June 2010. According to Pröll, IACA is likely to start its teaching and research activities already in autumn of this year.

### **Major profits for pension plans**

During the financial crisis of 2008 all providers of government-funded supplementary private pension plans in Austria registered a negative performance. But “significant recovery tendencies” could be observed in 2009, informed the Financial Market Supervisory Authority (Finanzmarktaufsicht). Seven years after introducing this type of pension plan, almost every fourth Austrian below the age of 60 signed such a contract.

As at 31 December 2009, 1,450,048 private pension contracts had been entered into in Austria. An amount of 3.8 billion euro was administered, corresponding to a plus of 36.7% compared to 2008. Private pension contracts are offered by 22 insurance companies and five capital investment companies. This fact is mirrored in the distribution of market shares. At the end of 2009 86.8% of the total assets (3.31 billion euro) were held by insurers, while only 504 million euro were deposited with capital investment companies. Investors pay an average of 594 euro for contracts entered into with insurance companies and about 763 euro to capital investment companies.

## CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE

**Art as a passion – on the death of the private collector Rudolf Leopold**

Austria's most important private collector and director of the Leopold Museum at Museums-Quartier (MQ) in Vienna, Rudolf Leopold, died aged 85 years at a hospital in Vienna on 29 June 2010. After falling down the stairs close to Michelangelo's "Pietà Rondanini" in Milano, the art lover suffering from cardiac insufficiency had to undergo several operations.

Rudolf Leopold was born in Vienna in 1925. In 1953 he earned his medical degree. During his medical studies, he used to attend art history lectures and collected paintings and art objects – predominantly by the then almost forgotten Expressionist painter Egon Schiele.

He presented an exhibition of modern Austrian art in Amsterdam in 1955. Attracting a lot of attention, this show made Schiele known to a larger audience. After this success, Leopold organised other Schiele exhibitions in Innsbruck, London and New York.

In 1972 Rudolf Leopold published his comprehensive Schiele monograph as a critical catalogue raisonné accurately documenting the works. From 1989 to 1991 the show "Egon Schiele and his Time" was presented very successfully in Zurich, Vienna, Munich, Wuppertal and London. Numerous other international exhibitions followed. Schiele's works could be admired also at the Expo 2000 in Hannover.

With the support of the Republic of Austria and the Austrian National Bank, Rudolf Leopold incorporated his collection into the Leopold Museum Private Foundation, comprising about 5,300 works of art. Leopold received about one third of the estimated value of his collection and became director for life of the museum. In 2001 the Leopold Museum was opened at MQ. Since then, the important private collection of Austrian classical modernism has been presented as a permanent exhibition. In 1997 Rudolf Leopold was awarded the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art in recognition of his achievements.

The opening of the museum marked the beginning of discussions on "Aryanised" works of art in the collection. The two Schiele works "Bildnes Wally" ("Portrait of Wally") – former owner: Lea Bondi-Jaray – and "Tote Stadt III" ("Dead City III") – former owner: Fritz Grünbaum – were confiscated in New York in 1998. The latter work was returned to the museum in 1999 as the plaintiffs were not the legitimate heirs of Fritz Grünbaum.

In 2000 a Canadian citizen brought action for restitution of the painting "Der Dengler" ("The Scythe Sharpener") by Albin Egger-Lienz. However, the case was dismissed in all stages of appeal and in 2003 by the Supreme Court in Vienna.

Finally, there is the unsettled claim of the heirs of Jenny Steiner for restitution of the Schiele painting "Häuser am Meer" ("Houses on the Sea").

The Leopold Museum is the only Austrian museum making its provenance database accessible via the Internet, but the provenance stated is partly questionable. The collection contains numerous works of art of dubious provenance that originally belonged to persons persecuted by the NS regime: Oskar Reichel, Fritz Grünbaum, Heinrich Rieger, Karl Mayländer, Jenny Steiner and others.

As a private foundation, the Leopold Museum is not subject to the Restitution Act (Federal Law Gazette 181/1998), even though the case "Wally" (confiscation of the painting from the Leopold collection in New York in 1998) was the reason for adopting this law and stirred up discussions. The Restitution Act authorises the competent federal minister to order the restitution of works of art of the federal museums.

The court case "Portrait of Wally" has been pending for 10 years, no end is in sight. In 2008 a scandal erupted around an Albin Egger Lienz exhibition, in which 14 paintings – including 12 exhibits on loan from different Austrian museums – were presented that were suspected of having been looted in the NS period.

The Leopold Museum Private Foundation agreed to the proposal of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture to establish two independent provenance researchers at the museum, who are paid by the Republic of Austria. On 21 December 2009, the researchers presented 11 reports on 17 works of art.

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann stated on the death of Rudolf Leopold that the discussions on the provenance of some works would of course be continued and come to a dignified end. But it was also necessary to keep a sense of proportion and to recognise the lifetime achievements of Rudolf Leopold: "A man passed away who made us familiar with Viennese Modernism and in particular the oeuvre of Egon Schiele. His passion for art and his unwavering eye provided us with a private art collection which today is accessible to the general public. Even though the expert community had been very cautious in judging the works by Schiele, Klimt, Kokoschka or Kubin

for many years, Rudolf Leopold's opinion ultimately prevailed – thanks to numerous exhibitions, important academic studies and his specific toughness“.

Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied also paid tribute to Rudolf Leopold as “someone who was obsessed in the best sense of the word, someone who – with a clear understanding of art movements and zeitgeist – observed, recognised and shaped the developments of the art market in the past few decades. As the director of ‘his’ Leopold Museum“, he has “always been firmly committed to making the treasures of Austria’s largest private art collection accessible to a wide audience“.

Albertina Director Klaus Albrecht Schröder praised the deceased collector for his “unerring sense of quality, which did not even fail him when judging artists and works of art that were not represented in his collection“. Besides, we also owe it to Rudolf Leopold that today Richard Gerstl’s oeuvre is held in high esteem.

### **Andreas Okopenko – on the death of a singular language artist**

With his “encyclopaedia-novel“, Andreas Okopenko went down in literary history as a language pioneer, and in poetry he stood out for his unique, non-conformist approach. The important poet died aged 80 on 27 June 2010. Okopenko developed an independent and experimental literary style in parallel to Concrete Poetry and the “Wiener Gruppe” (“Vienna Group”), but his oeuvre has remained relatively unknown to a wider readership. As an Austrian pioneer anticipating Internet literature, as a modest person in public, a radical in writing as well as lyric poet, Okopenko has, however, come to occupy a special position in Austrian contemporary literature.

He was born in Košice (former German name: Kaschau) in Eastern Slovakia in 1930 as the son of a physician and diplomat. In 1939 he moved with his family to Vienna. After dropping out from university where he had studied chemistry, he earned his living in an Upper Austrian paper group in 1950, where he became the head of the Cost Accounting Department in 1954. Already his first prose text “Die Belege des Michael Cetus“ (1967) commanded the attention of Austria’s literary scene. Okopenko started to work as a freelance writer in Vienna. His sensational main work “Lexikon einer sentimental Reise zum Exporteurtreffen in Druden“ (unofficially, the title could be translated as “Encyclopaedia of a sentimental trip to the meeting of exporters in Druden”) was published in 1970. Generally

only referred to as “encyclopaedia-novel“, the text is structured like an encyclopaedia, with keywords from A to Z and cross-references. As one of the first books anticipating Internet literature and hypertext, the encyclopaedia-novel challenges the readers to construct their own versions. In 1998 the avant-garde classic was also launched as a CD-ROM version created with the help of the author allowing the users to re-arrange the text.

“I am a lyric poet, not only in my beginnings but also by nature“, Andreas Okopenko described himself. His wonderful poetry volumes have titles such as “Warum sind die Latrinen so traurig?“ (1969), “Orte wechselnden Unbehagens“ (1971), “Der Akazienfresser“ (1974) or “Streichelchaos“ (2004), which can be translated as “Why are Latrines so Sad?“, “Places of Changing Unease“, “The Acacia-Eater” or “Caressing Chaos”.

But also his novel “Kindernazi“ (“Child Nazi”) – published in 1984 – became an exemplary piece of literature. It is considered “one of the key texts about the entanglement of Austrians with the National Socialist regime“, said the Spokesman for Cultural Affairs of the Greens, Wolfgang Zinggl.

In 1998 Andreas Okopenko was awarded the Grand Austrian State Prize. In 2002 the Georg Trakl Prize for Poetry was conferred on him. In a first response to the news about Okopenko’s death, Chancellor Werner Faymann praised the poet as a “language virtuoso, enriching the German language and literature with his very special style and new narrative forms“. Knowledgeably, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied described the impact of Okopenko. He had provided “Austrian literature with unprecedented concepts and a new style. The complete break with past traditions resulted in new narrative structures that were essential for the Democratic cultural sector in the post-war era. To show understanding for Okopenko meant to free oneself from norms. His way of setting norms has been and is one of the most vital innovations in modern literature“.

### **Adam Zielinski – on the death of a fighter and cosmopolitan from Poland**

Polish writer Adam Zielinski died in Vienna on 26 June 2010, four days after his 81<sup>st</sup> birthday. He has held the Austrian citizenship since 1959.

In 1929 he was born in Drohobych in Galicia (today Ukraine), south of Lviv. His father, a lawyer in Stryi, was arrested by the Nazis in 1941 and shot together with other intellectuals.

These horrible experiences as well as his later search for the place of the crime to set up a memorial stone were for example described in the stories compiled and re-published under the title “Zwölf jüdische Erzählungen“ (“Twelve Jewish Tales”) by the publisher Wieser-Verlag, where also a ten-volume edition of his work appeared in 2004.

Besides, Zielinski wrote in Polish, German and English. After studying social science and journalism in Krakow and Warsaw, he worked as a journalist. Following his emigration to Austria, he focused on the enterprise founded by him in 1961, through which he established close trade relations with former Yugoslavia and above all China, which was to become the great adventure of his life.

Adam Zielinski was awarded the Manès Sperber Prize in recognition of his life and work in Vienna in 2009.

### **Austrian National Library goes Google: book inventory made available online**

Director of the Austrian National Library (ÖNB) Johanna Rachinger presented her partnership with Google in the State Hall of the ÖNB on 15 June 2010. Within the next years, about 400,000 works will become available online and free of charge. The US technology group will digitise the copyright-free inventory – 120 million pages of works from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. By collaborating with Google, the ÖNB follows the example of renowned international libraries. The libraries of universities such as Harvard, Stanford or Oxford have been cooperating with Google for several years.

Google will bear the entire costs of digitisation. The ÖNB will meet the quite considerable costs of preparing and making available the publications as well as of storing and making accessible the digitised material.

[www.onb.ac.at](http://www.onb.ac.at)

### **Bruno Kreisky Prize for the Political Book 2009**

On 2 July 2010, the Bruno Kreisky Prize for the Political Book 2009 was awarded at the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue. The main prize went to Erhard Stackl for “1989. Sturz der Diktaturen“ (“1989. Fall of Dictatorships”), published by Czernin-Verlag in Vienna in 2009. The recognition award was conferred on Elisabeth Röhrlich for “Kreiskys Außenpolitik. Zwischen österreichischer Identität und internationalem Programm“ (“Kreisky’s Foreign Policy. Between Austrian Identity and an International

Agenda”), published by University Press, Göttingen/Vienna 2009.

Who was responsible for the historic turning point in 1989 leading to the fall of dictatorships and allowing millions of people to experience democratic freedom for the first time? Erhard Stackl shows that there were numerous little-known key players, who destabilised the dictatorships with their courage and intelligence. He met several of them between 1979 and 1989, when he reported for the news magazine “profil“ from Poland, Hungary and the CSSR, but also from Argentina and Chile. The human rights activists and rebels whom he met clandestinely later became ambassadors or ministers, some of them were even elected as presidents of their countries. Stackl’s book presents an impressive description of this development – thrilling, informative but also humorous.

Unlike any other, Bruno Kreisky represented the foreign policy of the Second Republic. He shaped Austria’s “neutrality policy” – first as secretary of state, then as a foreign minister and federal chancellor. With his far-sighted Middle East policy he set internationally recognised trends. His interest in international affairs may be explained by his biography. Born in the monarchy, he experienced the crisis-ridden First Republic and the authoritarian Dollfuß-Schuschnigg regime. In 1938 he was forced into exile (in Sweden).

Elisabeth Röhrlich was born in 1980 and earned a Ph.D. in modern history with Anselm Doering-Manteuffel (Tübingen) and Oliver Rathkolb (Vienna) in 2009. She traced Kreisky’s life and reconstructed the development of foreign policy issues and their implementation. As a consequence of his special background, Kreisky wanted to create a new profile for the mini-state Austria in the international arena. He focused on an “identity policy” based on a recourse to history combined with new values. His life was woven like a leitmotiv into this history-based policy. Despite facing resistance as a Jew and an emigrant in the Second Republic, he himself became a national monument. It was his international agenda that created an identity for Austria.

The speakers at the award ceremony at the Bruno Kreisky Forum were, as usual, high-ranking personalities, including Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer, President of the Dr. Karl Renner Institute, former Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer as well as Hannes Swoboda, MEP and chairman of the jury.

[www.renner-institut.at](http://www.renner-institut.at)

**SPORTS POLICY****Top Sports Facilities Plan 2020 guarantees optimal structures for the future**

During his first 18 months in office, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos has already taken some decisions of seminal importance for the future. In addition to its commitment to combating doping and overcoming obsolete organisational structures in the Austrian Olympic Committee (ÖOC), the Ministry of Sport is making great efforts to develop an optimal, future-oriented framework for high-performance sport. The preparatory work for the year 2020 and beyond has started by establishing a state-of-the-art sports funding system, building and enlarging Austrian sports facilities and, of course, by offering long-term support to the top athletes of the future.

Adequate infrastructure is a prerequisite for top achievements in sport. The Ministry of Sport therefore decided to prepare a Top Sports Facilities Plan 2020. Last year, the Minister of Sport entrusted the Austrian Institute for the Construction of Schools and Sports Facilities (Österreichische Institut für Schul- und Sportstättenbau/ÖISS) with this task. As in principle sport falls within the remit of the Länder according to the Austrian Constitution, all measures are coordinated with the Länder (but also the specialised sports associations) on an ongoing basis. By taking stock of the existing infrastructure, a possible lack of high-performance sports facilities is to be identified and remedied.

The Top Sports Facilities Plan 2020 comprises sports facilities suitable for top-level competitions as well as high-performance centres for professional athletes. In the following a selection of Austrian top sports facilities that are being built, enlarged or planned is provided:

- Swimming Pool for Sport and Wellness in Eggenberg (Graz)
- Werner Schlager Table Tennis Academy in Schwechat
- Wild-water slalom course on the New Danube (Vienna)
- Enlargement of the competition climbing facility in Imst
- Expansion of the natural sledding run in Umhausen

The future success of our promising talents certainly depends on millimetres and hundreds of a second. But giant strides in development and generous schedules are required as well. The Ministry of Sport will continue to be responsible for realising these tasks in the future.

**NADA Austria celebrates second anniversary**

The Austrian National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) will celebrate its second anniversary in early July. The foundation of NADA Austria added a new dimension to the anti-doping efforts in Austria. Some of the most spectacular doping cases (Lisa Hütthaler, Bernhard Kohl, Susanne Pumper) in the Austrian sports history were brought before the Legal Committee of NADA Austria soon after its establishment.

Since then, the public interested in sports has been informed by press releases of the all proceedings opened before or concluded by the Legal Committee.

These press releases may be downloaded anytime from the website of NADA Austria. As a rule, pending proceedings are not commented on. Before completion of the proceedings, NADA Austria may not provide any details to the public due to its legal duty of secrecy.

On 1 January 2009, the revised WADA Code entered into force. Besides redefining the requirements for establishing the Registered Testing Pool and revising the Therapeutic Use Exemptions, the revision focused mainly on more effective legal measures against systematically doping athletes and the “masterminds” behind them. The Austrian Federal Anti-Doping Act takes account of these revisions and incorporates numerous other pioneering innovations. Austria has now a legal framework for the struggle against doping that can be considered a best practice at international level.

By setting up a Special Anti-Doping Committee (Sonderkommission Doping / SOKO Doping) and strengthening cooperation between the public authorities conducting investigations and NADA Austria, the anti-doping efforts have been raised successfully to a new level.

Thanks to the considerably improved budget situation, it has become possible to increase the number of doping tests. In 2009, for example, out-of-competition (OOC) testing was increased by 41% compared to 2008. The appreciation of and support for the work of NADA Austria is reflected in the fact that in 2009 the number of tests ordered rose by 70% from the prior-year level.

Since January 2009, the first blood tests for doping control have been conducted in Austria on the request of NADA Austria. 95% of the forbidden substances and doping methods may be detected in urine; other detection techniques may be applied on the basis of blood analyses.

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