

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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HOME AFFAIRS

Asylum: government agreed on asylum-seekers' obligation to cooperate

The governing parties – Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) – agreed on an “obligation to cooperate” for asylum-seekers in the Council of Ministers on 7 September 2010. Under the new rule, asylum-seekers will not be allowed to leave the reception centre during the first five days after their arrival. If a weekend or holiday falls within the five-day period, it may be extended to a maximum of seven days. If the obligation to stay in the centre is violated, an administrative fine will be imposed on the affected person, in the event of several violations he/she faces detention.

Only clear rules would provide clarity under which conditions asylum could be granted, stated Chancellor Werner Faymann. One of these rules was that asylum-seekers had to cooperate in the process of verifying their identity and of examining the validity of their reasons for requesting asylum. Documents have to be checked carefully and talks have to be held. “This task has to be completed within a maximum of one week”, stressed the Chancellor. On the whole, a good solution conforming to the Austrian Constitution had been found, said Faymann.

Exemptions from “mandatory presence” in the detention centre during the first five days can be granted for visits to doctors or urgent family business. Asylum-seekers receive a red card for the respective period of absence. It serves as an ID and informs that the person is temporarily exempt from the “obligation to cooperate” at the reception centre.

The government bill will be adopted in the Council of Ministers' session on 19 October 2010. Subsequently, it will be submitted for parliamentary review to ensure entry into force at the beginning of 2011.

The new Federal Migration and Asylum Office is likely to commence work in 2013. It will be responsible for all asylum and immigration matters, for which currently more than 100 different bodies are responsible.

Bankers' bonuses regulated as from 2011

In Austria bankers' bonuses in the financial sector will be governed by a new law with effect 1 January 2011. As from this date, bonus payments must be linked to the long-term performance of the respective enterprise. This new rule applies to managing board members

as well as to employees receiving comparable income, staff performing auditing/supervisory tasks as well as all those whose work has effects on banking risks. Guaranteed, not performance-based bonus payments will be forbidden (except bonus after changing job within the first year). All bonuses should be assessed against performance, stated Minister of Finance Josef Pröll.

At least 40% of the bonuses can be paid only after three years, and only up to 50% of this amount is payable in cash. The remaining 50% have to be granted as stakes in the bank's equity (e.g. shares), which will lose value when the bank gets into trouble. If the equity is at risk, the Financial Market Authority may restrict bonus payments. Additional requirements may be imposed if the bonus system entails excessive risks. The remuneration policy of enterprises has to be disclosed in the balance sheet.

New rules for subsidising the Political Academies of the Austrian parties

On 14 September 2010, the Council of Ministers gave the green light for the reform of the public funding system for the Political Academies of the individual parties. Government funding for each of the five Political Academies may be cut if staff members of a Political Academy were convicted of inciting to racial hatred, slander, disparagement of religious beliefs or instigating offences.

CESEE banking conference in Vienna

The OECD warns against escalating government debt. The costs of the financial and economic crisis were “enormous”, said OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría at the CESEE (Central, Eastern and South Eastern European countries) banking conference in Vienna on 17 September 2010. The debt burden is expected to climb to more than 100 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in some countries at the end of the year. Growth in the second half of the year is likely to be weaker than assumed in the spring forecast. Gurría urged the countries to consolidate public finances as from the next year. The right balance had to be found to support economic recovery.

Minister of Finance Josef Pröll pointed out that the region was recovering at different speeds. Vienna considered itself a hub – also because stronger growth stimuli came from Eastern Europe than from other markets. Pröll proposed to establish a joint academy for the representatives of bank supervisory authorities from Central and Eastern Europe.

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

The summit meeting of the EU heads of state and government in Brussels on 16 September 2010 was dominated by the conflict over France's Roma policy between the EU Commission and France. According to Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, it had become evident how important a strong Commission was due to its role as the "guardian of the Treaties".

The way France dealt with Romas – demolition of illegal settlements and expulsion to Romania – had caused an uproar at the EU summit in Brussels. French President Nicolas Sarkozy protested vehemently against the criticism voiced (discrimination of an ethnic group, violation of the free movement of persons) by the European Commission.

Chancellor Faymann interpreted the affair as an attempt of coming to terms emotionally with the situation. He stressed the importance of an independent Commission "that ensures order and examines whether acts conform with the Treaties". After all, the Commission had to guarantee compliance with the Treaties, "regardless" if medium-sized, small or large countries such as France or Italy – emphasising their status as founding members, their number of inhabitants or economic power – were affected, stressed Faymann one day after the scandal in Brussels in a statement made on the Austrian radio.

The very definite reason of this discussion – the Roma issue – showed once more how different the Union was. As opposed to France, Austria had excellent relations with the representatives of this minority. He did not wish to interfere in France's domestic policy even though he held completely different views. But Sarkozy was indeed a partner with regard to the financial transactions tax and the control of speculation, stated the Chancellor. In general, Faymann deplored the lack of EU rules for a social economic policy (catchwords: minimum wages, wage dumping, black markets) and pled for a social union in Europe.

Federal President Fischer at UN Millennium Assembly in New York

Federal President Heinz Fischer will represent Austria at the UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), starting on 20 September 2010, as well as at the opening of the 65th session of the UN General Assembly (21 to 25 September 2010) in New York.

The Millennium Summit, in which about 140 heads of state and government as well as representatives of the civil society will participate, is held to take stock of progress made so far towards reaching MDGs, e.g. halving poverty and famine in the world by 2015, reducing child mortality by two thirds as well as halting the spread of Aids. Experts warn that all goals could be missed.

Fischer visits EU institutions in Brussels

During his visit to the EU institutions in Brussels (14/15 September 2010), Federal President Heinz Fischer pled for a positive attitude towards the European Union. Brussels as a whole was "a very important institution serving the interests of Austria", said Fischer. Most Austrians were aware of the fact that the economic crisis would have had considerably more dramatic effects without the Union.

Slovak Prime Minister Radicova meets with Federal Chancellor Faymann

On 12 September 2010, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann held his first official meeting with Slovak Prime Minister Iveta Radicova in Vienna. At the meeting he emphatically expressed Austria's concerns about the Mochovce nuclear power plant near the Austrian border, informed Faymann. Moreover, he insisted on Austria's full involvement in the security dialogue and on public disclosure of all facts. Austria would work with all the means at its disposal against the construction of additional NPPs and relied on renewable energies. Faymann praised the excellent trade relations between the two countries. Austria was the second-largest investor in Slovakia.

Austrian becomes EU ambassador in Tokyo

Becoming the first head of the EU delegation in Japan, Austria's permanent representative to the EU in Brussels, Hans Dietmar Schweisgut (59), will hold one of the most important ambassador positions in the EU. Before being called to Brussels, Schweisgut was Austria's ambassador in Tokyo and Beijing.

50 years of OPEC in Vienna

On 14 September 2010, the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) headquartered in Vienna celebrated the 50th anniversary of its foundation in Baghdad. According to OPEC, fossil fuels will remain the most important energy source also in the foreseeable future.

ECONOMY**Austria's exports grew by 12.5 percent in the first six months of 2010**

In the first six months of this year, domestic exports went up by 12.5%. The Austrian Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich/WKÖ) expects an increase by at least 7% for the entire year 2010. They are likely to go "significantly" beyond the "sound barrier" of 100 billion euro, WKÖ President Christoph Leitl informed media representatives on 7 September 2010. Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner was of the opinion that Austria's economy was "well on the way to achieve the export target of 100 billion euro for 2010".

Leitl stated that this export growth would safeguard no less than 50,000 jobs. "Strong exports are our most important asset to achieve real, self-sustained economic growth in Austria", emphasised also Mitterlehner. Yet it would be a success if only half of last year's decline in exports (minus 20 %) could be compensated for in the current year.

According to WKÖ, Austria had 40,000 exporters, including 2,000 companies exporting for the first time this year. 2,000 companies are to be encouraged to start exporting in 2011. At present, 50% to the total economic performance can be attributed to exports (of goods and services). Based on targets set by WKÖ, the previous 60% share should be reached again by 2012.

Overseas countries, above all China and Brazil, are to make a substantial contribution towards reaching this goal. The share of the overseas market in Austria's exports is to be increased from currently 17% to 20% by 2012. The basic assumption underlying this target consists in doubling exports to China, which is entirely realistic in view of a 42.4% growth achieved in the first six months of the year.

During the first six months of 2010, exports to the USA have grown significantly, by almost 12% to a total of 2.3 billion euro. For the entire year 2010, a plus between 15% and 20% is expected. In 2009 exports to the United States had dropped by one fifth in the wake of the global financial crisis. Imports from the USA surged by 14% to 1.5 billion euro.

Wifo: economic upswing stronger than expected

The economic upswing in Austria was considerably stronger in the second quarter 2010 than previously assumed. According to the latest projections of the Economic Research Institute

(Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitut/Wifo), the gross domestic product (GDP) exceeded the prior-year level by 2.4%. About one month ago, a GDP growth of only 1.9% had been forecast. An increase of 1.2% over the prior quarter was reported (instead of the previous 0.9%). Wifo also wants to adjust its forecast of a GDP growth of 1.2% for the entire year, but by less than the 0.5% percentage points assumed in the previous revision as there were increasing global signs that the upswing was slowing down. The clear economic recovery had been driven mainly by exports and investments.

Tourism: joint campaign of Alpine regions to lure tourists

By creating the "macro-region" Alps, the tourist industry hopes to meet the challenges of fiercer international competition for tourists. "We have to create a larger market and with that improve the opportunities for everyone", underlined Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner at a meeting of political representatives of the tourist sector from Austria, Germany, Italy, South Tyrol and Liechtenstein in the framework of "the Alps Prologue" in Innsbruck on 13 September 2010.

A common strategy would be required, said Mitterlehner. Austria had managed to maintain, and partly even expand, its market share in tourism during the crisis but global competition had been stiffening. Minister Mitterlehner mentioned the USA as an example of a country that was currently recording stronger growth than Austria.

Austria could score points with three "unique selling propositions", which the Minister described as "cities and culture", "the Danube and lakes" as well as "the Alps". The spotlight had to be turned on this value-added. Besides a common presence of the Alpine countries in marketing, joint action would for example be taken to promote the "staggering" of holidays. The responsible policy-makers would hold regular meetings in the future. "theAlps" is a new lobbying platform for promoting Alpine tourism.

Magna boss Wolf changes to Oleg Deripaska's Basic Elements

Magna top manager Siegfried Wolf (52) changed from the Austro-Canadian car components supplier to the group Basic Elements of Russian entrepreneur Oleg Deripaska. Wolf will be appointed Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Division OJSC Russian Machines, the parent of Russian car producer GAZ.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Chancellor Faymann: massive support to research also in times of crisis**

“Research and education are key factors of economic growth, and therefore they continue to be an important concern of the federal government to which it will pay particular attention in budget planning“, said Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann at the press conference after the Council of Minister’s session on 14 Sep-tember 2010. Therefore for research and education clearly less stringent austerity goals had been set than for the all the remaining sectors. For the importance of research had been recognised a long time ago. The research ratio in Austria had increased from 1.9 to 2.76 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the past decade. Austria was placed sixth in the EU ranking. Against this background, the Council of Ministers appointed the new members of the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development (RFT).

As provided for in the law, Federal Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures (Social Democratic Party) and Federal Minister of Science Beatrix Karl (Austrian People’s Party) had each nominated four members. Hannes Androsch, Gabriele Ambros, Karin Schaupp and Gi Eun Kim were selected by the Ministry of Infrastructure, Renee Schroeder, Markus Hengstschläger, Peter Skalicky and Marianne Hilf were the nominees of the Ministry of Science. The Research Council is expected to meet in early October.

Today the government also nominated the members of the Media Authority to be appointed by the Federal President. Moreover, it agreed on a reform of the funding system for the Political Academies of the Austrian parties. The amendment of the so-called Journalism Subsidies Act envisages inter alia cuts in state funding if employees, staff members or persons holding a contract for work are convicted by a court in connection with their work for the Political Academies for incitement to racial hatred or for other offences. As Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll emphasised, this was not directed against a specific party – the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) – but “we wish to prevent the radicalisation of political parties“.

Minister of Culture Schmied opened the Beijing International Art Biennale

Together with Hu Zhenmin, Vice President of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, Austrian Minister of Culture Claudia

Schmied – as the highest-ranking representative of a foreign country – opened the 4th Beijing International Art Biennale. Austria is represented with a special exhibition. “In Between. Austria Contemporary“ offers a modern vision of Austria and its contemporary art, showcasing 27 artistic positions in sculpture, painting, photography, graphic arts and video art. The works of art created by predominantly young Austrian artists have already toured Israel, Croatia, Montenegro, Cyprus, Hungary and Turkey. “Austria’s contribution can also be seen as a stronger expression of the good and friendly relations between Austria and China in the framework of a rich cultural exchange“, stressed Minister Schmied.

At the Biennale organised by China’s Federation of Literary and Art Circles together with the City of Beijing and the Chinese Artists’ Association, more than 500 artists from 84 countries will be presented to an international audience. The art event titled “Nature and Human Existence“ will run at the National Art Museum of China until 4 October 2010.

During her five-day official visit to China, Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied held talks with Minister of Culture Cai Wu, Austrian artists in China as well as Chinese artists. She opened an exhibition of the Austrian Cultural Forum marking the 150th birthday of Gustav Mahler at the National Opera House of Beijing and last but not least she paid a visit to the EXPO in Shanghai.

IPI World Congress: presentation of the “Free Media Pioneer Award”

The World Congress of the International Press Institute (IPI) headquartered in Vienna was formally opened with the presentation of the “2010 Free Media Pioneer Award“ in Vienna on 12 September 2010. The event held under the motto “Thinking the unthinkable. Are we losing the news?“ explores the challenges of the media landscape, in particular the interplay between traditional and new media.

Together with IPI Chairman Janne Virkkunen, Johannes Hahn (Austrian People’s Party), currently occupying the position of an EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, presented the award to Radio Okapi for its contribution to press freedom in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Substituting Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger, who was unable to attend, Hahn emphasised that the European Commission, just like IPI, was committed to improving the rights and working conditions of journalists: “One of

our most important tasks is to guarantee global press freedom”.

Radio Okapi was founded in 2002 as a public radio with the aim of building and preserving peace. The broadcaster had to pay a heavy price in its history for its always independent news coverage. Two/three years ago, two employees were killed for reporting on conflicts between rebels, local militias and government forces. “We dedicate the award of IPI to our deceased colleagues”, stated a representative of Radio Okapi at the award ceremony in Vienna. Before that IPI Director Alison Bethel McKenzie had delivered a report on the status quo of press freedom in the world. Summing up the sad facts, she reported that 52 journalists died a violent death already during the first eight months of this year. With ten press representatives killed between January and the end of August 2010, Mexico was the most dangerous country in the world for journalists. “The Americas (North, Central and South America, editor’s note) were the most dangerous continent in the first two thirds of the year, with a total of 20 journalists having been killed”, stated McKenzie. In Europe the situation was “not so dramatic in statistical terms but one should not forget that for example Greek journalist Sokrates Giolias had been shot by left-extremist terrorists in front of his home in July. At the opening dinner at Vienna’s Hofburg in the evening, Federal President Heinz Fischer held a much-noted speech. “Press freedom is a matter of common worldwide interest and has to be fought for on a daily basis in many countries”, stated the Federal President. In this context, he launched an appeal to take the “effects of Facebook, Google and Wikipedia” seriously, especially with regard to data protection. An open and democratic society had to reflect on strategies for defining limits to the “digital public” that guarantee the protection of privacy. International rules were indispensable. The International Press Institute was practically the “UN of the media world“, underlined President Fischer.

The International Press Institute was founded by newspaper publishers at Columbia University in New York in 1950. Today it has about 2,000 members from 120 countries, among them BBC, CNN, the New York Times or Neue Zürcher Zeitung.

Since 1992 IPI has had its headquarters in Vienna; from 1992 to 2007 the Austrian Johann Fritz chaired the organisation.

www.ipiworldcongress.com/,
<http://www.freemedia.at/>, <http://radiookapi.net/>

Boltzmann Institute for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology

The new Ludwig Boltzmann Institute (LBI) for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology in Vienna has already drawn a lot of public attention due to discovering the remnants of a wooden structure near the stone circle Stonehenge in Great Britain some months ago.

On 14 September 2010, the Boltzmann Institute for Archaeological Prospection and Virtual Archaeology was opened officially in Vienna. It has been allocated a budget of 6 million euro for a period of four years and employs 15 staff members. Its head, Wolfgang Neugebauer, expects that “archaeology will change completely“. Virtual archaeology combines technologies such as magnet sensors, ground penetrating radar, aerial photos and geographic information systems with 3D technologies on the computer. New technological possibilities are used for the prospection of extensive landscapes.

With international partners from Great Britain, Germany, Sweden and Norway, the Boltzmann Institute plans to do research on internationally reputed sites – which are often labelled as “world cultural heritage” – in the next years. The new technology will also be applied in Austria, e.g. at the archaeological site in Carnuntum or the circular ditch enclosure in Weinviertel. <http://archpro.lbg.ac.at/>

Poland donates Frédéric Chopin monument to Vienna

Frédéric Chopin, whose 150th death anniversary will be celebrated this year, will be honoured with a monument in Vienna. It will be erected at Schweizer Garten, a park between Belvedere and “20er Haus“ (museum of contemporary art, under renovation), in November. The Polish government financed the work of art and gave it to Vienna as a present in the anniversary year. After all, Frédéric Chopin had given his first concerts in Vienna, Polish Ambassador Jerzy Marganski explained the initiative of his country. Chopin spent nine months between 1829 and 1831 in Vienna, where he celebrated first triumphs with concerts – before he moved on to Paris.

The monument with the title “La Note Bleue“, which will be illuminated with blue light during the night, was created by Krzysztof M. Bednarski. A large bird rises into the air from the composer’s head reminding of a paper silhouette. The work on the monument made from bronze plates in a foundry in Rome has not yet been completed.

Media Days on Migration & Media

What role do media play for migrants? Which dialogues do they initiate and to what extent may they foster integration and cooperation? These and other questions revolving around the subject “The opportunities migration offers to the economy and media” will be discussed extensively by a panel in the framework of “Migration Night” on 22 September 2010 during the Austrian Media Days.

Vienna is among those European large cities growing continuously every year; this is mostly due to migration and less to native fertility. People with a migration background represent already more than 40% of the population of working age – with an increasing tendency. The number of start-ups – above all one-person companies as well as small and mid-sized enterprises – by migrants is exceeding that of “natives” considerably. TV use for example is significantly higher among consumers with a Turkish, Serbian, Croatian or Polish background than among people having German as their first language. A wide range of media catering for the different migrant groups is available in Vienna. Web radio and listening to the music of the native country on mobile phones is very popular among migrants. But mobile TV is also used more frequently by the different ethnic groups than by the average Viennese population.

“steirischer herbst“: virtuosity of all kinds put to the test

The most diverse aspects of virtuosity are put to the test at the cultural festival “steirischer herbst“ (“Styrian Autumn”) between 24 September and 17 October 2010. “Forum Stadtpark“ is used as this year’s festival venue. It is redesigned by the young Austrian architects’ collective “feld72“. A wooden porch in the entrance area and an a platform enlarging the building towards the park are added temporarily during the festival. Besides concerts, lectures and film nights, the “Casino of Tricks“ will take place at this venue. Only those will be allowed to enter who can show a “trick“ at the entrance. “We are looking for all kinds of tricks – magical, economic, political, everyday and extraordinary tricks”, informs the festival programme. As a reward casino chips are offered, with may be used for playing roulette or can be exchanged for a drink at the bar. For the festival opening at the Helmut List Hall in Graz, composer Bernhard Lang, choreographer Christine Gaigg, media artist Winfried Ritsch as well as light and stage designer Philipp Hannoncourt developed the project “maschinen-

halle’1“. Twelve dancers interact with twelve computer-controlled mechanical pianos, in the end it is no longer clear who is taking the lead. A highlight of the festival is the exhibition “Utopia and Monument II“, whose first part was shown in 2009. It is the last work by curator Sabine Breitwieser before starting her new job at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The show “Virtuosity and the Public Sphere“ takes place at Mariahilferplatz. The “Franz West“ exhibition presented by Kunsthaus will be another highlight.

Choreographer William Forsythe gives a guest performance of “I don’t believe in outer space“ in Graz (the first time with his own dance company). In cooperation with Schauspielhaus, the “Enzyklopädie des ungelebten Lebens“ (“Encyclopaedia of a life not lived“) by Argentine director Mario Pensotti is presented, to which authors from all over the world contributed. The dance and theatre programme of the festival also features choreographers, directors and ensembles from Britain, New York, Berlin, Amsterdam, etc. www.steirischerherbst.at

Amadeus Austrian Music Awards: astounding range of Austrian musicians

Styrian pop singer Anna F. and Upper Austrian hip-hop singer Skero are the big solo winners of this year’s Amadeus Austrian Music Awards. On 16 September 2010, each of the two artists picked up two prizes at the gala held for the first time at Stadthalle in Vienna. The vocal acrobats of “Bauchklang“ also triumphed with two awards.

The Austrian Music Awards were granted for the eleventh time. Founded in 2000, the Amadeus Awards quickly developed into the most important event of the Austrian music scene. Prominent presenters, leading national and international artists (this year Seal and “Wir sind Helden“) have made the Amadeus Awards ceremony a highly attractive show. The focus is on Austrian music, diversity of genres, interaction in Web 2.0 and audience voting.

The “Electronic/Dance“ Award went to Sofa Surfers, the “FM4 Award“ was conferred on the Viennese drum’n’bass duo Camo & Krooked. The remaining awards were presented to Kontrast (hard & heavy), Hans Theesink (jazz/world/blues), for the second time to Semino Rossi (German hit) and Die Kloostertaler (pop music inspired in folk).

Another Amadeus trophy was awarded to violinist Toni Stricker for his diverse and rich oeuvre – between classical music, jazz and folk-inspired pop music.

www.amadeusawards.at

SPORTS POLICY**New training programme to promote movement in Austrian primary schools**

After the presentation of a five-point programme in autumn 2009 and the successful realisation of first initiatives, the Ministry of Sport and the Ministry of Education took another joint step to promote movement at school. In a joint training programme, primary school teachers and instructors of sports associations may train to become “children’s movement coaches“. The task of a “children’s movement coach“ is to learn children attending primary school enjoy movement and to help them improve their individual movement skills in the long term. In this pilot project, the instructors of sports associations acquire the methodological and didactic basis for working at primary schools. Primary school teachers will acquire additional skills for movement classes.

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos: “This training programme for children’s movement coaches will allow us to use the know-how of sports instructors and trainers in the school system. And they can promote movement and sports very authentically. This will help us in increasing again the share of children enjoying movement and sport.“

Lack of exercise is one of the main reasons for postural damage, obesity and diabetes. Especially children are increasingly affected by these negative trends.

As far as the obesity rate of 15-year-olds is concerned, a recent OECD study comparing 25 countries places Austria already ninth.

To launch the new training programme for “children’s movement coaches” (which will be completed with a diploma), the Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Education and the various sports organisations formed an alliance under the countrywide initiative “Fit for Austria“. The aim of this campaign is to enhance the quality of movement classes in primary schools and to support the children in becoming health conscious.

Minister of Education Claudia Schmied: “I am very pleased about the training programme for children’s movement coaches. It is vital to give children a joyful foundation for lifelong movement and health by providing quality physical education at an early age. Thanks to this new training programme, school can make a valuable contribution. The aim is to roll out the pilot project gradually all over Austria.“

This project is based on the initiative “Sportler für den Sport“ (“Athletes for Sport”) called

into life by Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos. A group of about 20 voluntary and active top athletes – including Markus Rogan, Andrea Mayr, Alex Antonitsch, Emese Hunyady, Werner Schlager and Nik Berger – meets twice a year with the Minister to contribute their ideas to the domestic sport system. The “children’s movement coach” is the first project which will be realised.

Sensational gold medal for Federal Army athlete Corinna Kuhnle

Corinna Kuhnle celebrated a huge success after sensationally winning the gold medal in the kayak slalom event of the Wildwater World Championships in Slovenia on 11 September 2010.

Federal Army athlete Kuhnle, who had earned a silver medal at the European Championships in August, defeated favourite Jana Dukatova. Austrian Violetta Oblinger-Peters, who had been ranked third at the Olympic Games, won bronze again. One of the first to congratulate them was Federal Minister of Defence and Sport, Norbert Darabos: “The success story of Austria’s top athletes continues also in September. I congratulate the two canoeists. I appreciate the fact that both of them are Federal Army athletes, just like Sabrina Filzmoser, who also won bronze at the World Judo Championship in Tokyo.“

Österreichische Sporthilfe extends contract with Austrian Lotteries

Since 1986 the Austrian Lotteries (“Österreichische Lotterien”) have invested 28.2 million euro into sport in Austria through “Österreichische Sporthilfe“. This non-profit association is devoted to promoting Austria’s high-level sport. 94 Olympic medals have been won by athletes supported by this organisation since then.

“Sporthilfe is one of the fundamental pillars of sports funding in Austria. When starting their careers, many sport stars received their first support from Sporthilfe. This is why I think Sporthilfe is unique. There is no other institution helping athletes so unbureaucratically and effectively. For many athletes the financial support from Sporthilfe has become a reliable source of income which they can count on even in uncertain times”, explained Minister of Sport and President of Sporthilfe Federal Minister Norbert Darabos after the successful renewal of the contract.