

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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HOME AFFAIRS**EU financial transactions tax – Chancellor Faymann: “Important step“**

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann welcomed the proposal of the European Commission to introduce an EU-wide financial transactions tax in 2014. This proposal was “very much in line with what Austria has been calling for since 2008“, said Faymann on 28 September 2011. In this way, the financial markets would “finally contribute more to budget stability“. Faymann also pointed out that the proposal of EU Commission President José Manuel Barroso was “so far one of the most important steps towards more tax fairness in Europe“.

All purchases and sales of all types of securities (e.g. shares, bonds, derivatives) were to be subject to this new tax. This was also something Austria had demanded for a long time, stated Faymann. Private withdrawals from bank savings books, bank transfers or Internet shopping would not be affected.

“I consider it vital to clarify that the financial transactions tax should flow into the national budgets“, emphasised the Chancellor. According to Barroso, the EU Member States would benefit from an additional income of 55 billion euro through this tax. Faymann expected a revenue of between 500 million and 1 billion euro annually for Austria.

Administrative courts: Faymann expects go-ahead for reform in December

As Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann stated during the Question Hour of the 800th session of the Federal Council (chamber in Parliament representing the Länder) on 6 October 2011, the government’s envisaged reform of the administrative courts is likely to be adopted by Parliament in December. He was optimistic as also the Länder had signalled strong interest in “finalising this issue discussed over several years“, said Faymann.

In view of the large number of special authorities currently active in this area, the reform would in any case lead to “major progress“, explained the Chancellor, who expected significant “efficiency gains“.

The government also plans to replace more than 120 appeal senates and special authorities (that are not subject to government instructions) by nine regional administrative courts. In addition, the Asylum Court should be further developed into a federal administrative court of first instance.

Vorarlberg’s Governor Sausgruber will resign in December

Vorarlberg’s Governor Herbert Sausgruber (aged 65) – a member of the People’s Party (ÖVP) – unexpectedly announced his resignation on 7 October 2011. He would step down at the beginning of December 2011. In the recent past, he had realised that his capacity to work was decreasing and that he had to reduce his workload. However, in this position this was not a long-term solution, “at least if you want to deliver the quality the citizens of Vorarlberg are used to“, stated Sausgruber, who has been the head of the regional government of Vorarlberg since 1997. Markus Wallner, incumbent Deputy Governor and Regional Councillor for Healthcare, is expected to succeed Sausgruber as governor and acting ÖVP party chairman.

Health insurance institutions exceed austerity target

Based on the Monitoring Report presented by Minister of Health Alois Stöger to the Council of Ministers on 4 October 2011, the health insurance institutions will exceed their cost reduction target by more than 200 million euro. While the original political target for 2011 were cost cuts by 361 million euro, the health insurance institutions are likely to save 565 million euro in 2011 (based on current estimates). They had overachieved the goal also last year, decreasing costs by 463 million euro instead of the requested 197 million euro. These targets had been defined for the government’s cost-cutting path (2010 to 2013) for consolidating the health insurance institutions. In this four-year period expenditure has to decline by 1.725 billion euro. This means that the health insurance institutions will not receive less money but that the increasing costs have to be cut by this amount.

Government approved 55 million euro for 20,000 new childcare places

The “15a agreement on expanding institutional childcare“ concluded between the federal government and the Länder was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 27 September 2011. 55 million euro are made available for 20,000 new childcare places until 2014. The Länder will provide the same amount. This investment in childcare would improve the quality of life and make it easier to reconcile family and working lives, said the Chancellor. 24,000 new childcare places and 9,000 new jobs had been created in the last three years, added Women’s Affairs Minister Heinisch-Hosek.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Indian President Patil in Austria**

Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil paid a state visit to Austria from 4 to 7 October 2011. She was accompanied by her husband Devisingh Ransingh Shekhawat and a large trade delegation. The political programme in Vienna included talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer. President Patil also participated in the formal opening of the Austrian-Indian Economic Forum staged in the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ).

The President's meeting with Federal Chancellor Faymann (6 October 2011) focused on plans to intensify bilateral relations in science, environmental technology and research. Patil invited Faymann to a working visit to India.

She praised the friendly relations between Austria and India and highlighted the significance of intensified cooperation, notably in the energy sector. India planned to expand its share of renewable energies and was very interested in Austrian know-how in the field of photovoltaics and wind energy, stated Patil.

Faymann also underlined the traditionally good relations of the two countries, especially in the economic sector. He drew attention to the fact that domestic exports to India had increased by almost 40%, comparing the first six months of 2010 and 2011. This was a "record level", illustrating the high export-orientation of the Austrian economy, said Chancellor Faymann.

The two countries also wanted to intensify collaboration in basic research. "It is important to invest in future-oriented areas such as research and education, especially in times of tremendous economic challenges", stressed Faymann. He also informed that cooperation between Austrian and Indian universities was stepped up.

The last stop of President Patil's visit to Austria was the city of Salzburg, where she and Federal President Fischer were received by Governor Gabriele Burgstaller on 7 October 2011.

Euro rescue umbrella: increase approved by National Council

In a special session on 30 September 2011, the National Council approved the increase of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). Thus the Austrian share in guarantees extended in the framework of the euro rescue package rises from 12.2 billion euro to 21.6 billion euro. Expenses and interest payments (which

could total 7.1 billion euro based on recent estimates) have to be added to this amount.

In the Question Hour of the Federal Council on 6 October 2011 Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann reiterated the importance of the euro rescue umbrella (i.e. the EFSF) and the subsequent permanent European Stability Mechanism (ESM). "There is no better alternative, especially if you take the medium- and long-term effects on the euro-zone into account", said Faymann.

People are mistaken if they believe that the bankruptcy of a euro country would not affect them. Taking into account the consequences for trade relations or the expenses of reconstruction, it became clear that non-involvement was not a desirable alternative, stated the Federal Chancellor. Austria could not withdraw when the Community was creating a safety net to protect its weakest members. More than 80% of Austria's exports went to the euro-zone, underscored Faymann.

The financial transactions tax would be a suitable instrument to generate funds for investments. In this way, difficulties could be coped with successfully in the long term, explained the Federal Chancellor.

Foreign Minister Spindelegger in Libya

Travelling with a large delegation, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger paid a short official visit to Tripoli on 9 October 2011. In talks with leading members of the National Transitional Council of Libya, Spindelegger offered Austria's assistance in establishing democratic structures in Libya. Austria could provide support in training police officers, judges and public prosecutors and thereby help "to guarantee the rule of law and reconciliation efforts", stated Spindelegger.

Three resolutions of Austria adopted by UN Human Rights Council

On 5 October 2011, the UN Human Rights Council adopted three resolutions – on the rule of law, children's rights and the protection of minorities – tabled by Austria.

Among the issues addressed are the rights of children in trouble with the law. Children younger than 12 years should no longer be prosecuted under criminal law. Furthermore, the rights of religious and other minorities should again be placed higher on the international agenda. To help countries to confront their past, the Human Rights Council will appoint a new Special Rapporteur on Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence.

ECONOMY

Economic Council meeting on education and training

On 4 October 2011 the government and leading representatives of the domestic economy gathered for the second meeting of the “Economic Council” set up by the federal government in June of this year. Top items on the agenda were education and training – against the background of the latest economic forecasts and labour market data.

Leading members of the government expressed their intention to press ahead with new measures in education and training policy and to set priorities based on the requirements of the economy. Key demands of the economic sector also affected childcare services. “Investments in education make an important contribution to safeguarding Austria’s position as a business location. I therefore call for expanding the new comprehensive school system and all-day childcare facilities across Austria. These are investments we are willing to make” emphasised Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann.

The government wants to continue its deliberations in working groups and with the competent ministers to find suitable ways to incorporate concrete proposals of the groups and enterprises into curricula, educational targets and qualification criteria.

Wifo and IHS reduce growth forecasts for 2012

The Economic Research Institute (Wifo) and the Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS) expect the Austrian economy to grow significantly more slowly in 2012. According to the autumn forecasts (of 30 September 2011), Wifo and IHS predict a real GDP growth of 0.8% and 1.3% for the next year. Compared to the previous forecasts issued three months ago, the rates almost halved. Based on the summer forecasts, the GDP was to grow by 1.8% and 2.1%, respectively.

However, the experts hardly reduced the estimates for the current year. Wifo continues to predict an increase by 2.9%, while the IHS assumes a rate of 3%. But towards year-end, growth is to decrease significantly.

Unemployment is increasing, record of active employees

In September the number of unemployed persons increased by 1.9% or 4,040 (to 218,207 persons) from the previous month. In parallel, the number of participants in public training programmes dropped by 10.9% (7,563) to

61,920 persons. The number of jobseekers therefore totalled 280,127, corresponding to a decrease by 3,523 (or 1.2%) from September 2010, informed the Ministry of Social Affairs on 1 October 2011. The unemployment rate (Austrian method of calculation) remains unchanged at 5.9%.

The number of active employees increased to a record level of 3,484,000. The gap of apprenticeship places is narrowing.

The average job search takes 94 days – this is one day less than in the past year.

Austria remains the EU Member State with the lowest unemployment rate. With 3.7% (based on the EU calculation), it is the only country with unemployment below 4%. The average unemployment rate in the EU-27 is 9.5%.

Mitterlehner: Austria is a popular location for headquarters

Since September 2009, 22 regional company headquarters were established in Austria, eight company headquarters left the country. With a total of 303 headquarters Austria was doing quite well, stated Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner at the “Headquarters Dialogue“ on 3 October 2011. By comparison, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary hosted only 84 company headquarters in total.

To attract headquarters was a “vital issue for the business location Austria”, said Mitterlehner in his opening speech. As one of the goals to safeguard Austria’s competitiveness Mitterlehner highlighted the need to decrease tax and fiscal charge rates. The Minister also stressed the need to develop a new generation of skilled workers.

Thermal rehabilitation of buildings: 780 million euro invested

In the current year Austria’s enterprises and households have obtained financial aid for the thermal rehabilitation of buildings of about 92 million euro, generating investments of 780 million euro. While the enterprises exhausted the funds allocated to them (30 million euro), households have applied for funding totalling only 62 million euro. 8 million euro of the aid earmarked for them were still available, informed Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner and Minister of the Environment Nikolaus Berlakovich in a press release on 2 October 2011. To date, companies have submitted 800 project applications with an investment total of 160 million euro. Private households entered 15,916 applications, with an investment volume of 619 million euro.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**“Curt Stenvert – Neodadapop“ at Lower Belvedere**

Belvedere devotes a comprehensive retrospective to the Dadaist, object artist and filmmaker Curt Stenvert, who died in 1992. The exhibition (running until 15 January 2012) showcases 89 works. This museum presented Austria's only solo show of the artist, who is not so well known in Austria, already in 1975. The current exhibition turns the spotlight on Stenvert's comprehensive body of work, which is not limited to object art started in the 1960s but covers collages, paintings and installations (“Stalingrad – or: The Financial Profitability of a Tyrannicide“) as well as early experimental films (e.g. “Der Rabe“). The artist was also politically engaged and participated in the social activism of the 1960s. His work is therefore presented in a historical context.

In November the show at the museum will be accompanied by a retrospective at the Austrian Film Archives, screening Stenvert's experimental films, the two feature films “Wienerinnen“ and “Flucht ins Schilf“ as well as his cultural and industrial films.

Museum of Applied Arts (MAK) presents Walter Pichler

In its show “Walter Pichler. Sculptures, Models, Drawings” (closing on 28 February 2012), MAK offers one of the few occasions to gain insights into the artist's main series of works. On his farmstead in Burgenland – which he declared a “venue” in 1972 – he created an architectural environment with individual rooms for each of his sculptures, which he sends to exhibitions only rarely.

Sometimes it takes Pichler several years to work on his creations. Starting out with drawings, he develops sculptures and architecture – trying to cover the whole creative spectrum in a “total work of art”. He is one of the most important visionary artists of the present.

For the MAK exhibition Walter Pichler developed a retrospective, in which his figurative sculptures (created between the 1970s and the present) take centre stage in a compact scenario. His artistic criteria could be described as minimalistic, individual elements echo archaic images. Pichler's approach of placing his sculptures – be it in an art environment or exhibition – in new allegorical contexts in different phases is also unique.

www.mak.at/

“Liszt in Raiding” 2011

The aim of the festival – which has been under the artistic management of the pianist brothers Johannes and Eduard Kutrovatz since 2009 – is to increase knowledge about the work of Franz Liszt and to make it available to the audience. The programmatic focus of the festival is on Liszt's complete oeuvre as well as on virtuosity per se. Works by composers associated with Liszt are also included in the programme. “Liszt in Raiding” enjoys enormous popularity, which is also due to the superb acoustics of the wooden concert hall built in 2006 next to the house where the composer had been born.

After three performance phases in January, March and June (the masterly concert of piano virtuoso Kirill Gerstein deserves special mention), the festival continues from 19 to 26 October 2011 with guest performances by Boris Bloch (19), Adrian Eröd with Eduard Kutrovatz on the piano (20), the Kutrovatz duo (21 and 25) as well as Arcadi Volodos (on 22 – Liszt's birthday – and on 26). The presentation of the composer's symphonic poems takes place on 23 October 2011 (Wiener Akademie conducted by Martin Haselböck). On the same day, the vocal cycle V will be performed by Wiener Kammerchor (Vienna Chamber Choir) at the church of Unterfrauenhaid, where Liszt was baptised. The concerts are rounded off by lectures (19 to 22 October 2011).

Heinz Aeschlimann, an entrepreneur and sculptor from Switzerland, created a sculpture for the 200th anniversary of Franz Liszt's birthday. It will be presented as a gift to the Franz Liszt Society in October and can be admired already now at the Liszt Centre in Raiding. www.lisztfestival.at/

Elevate: discourse and art in Graz

The seventh edition of the festival for music, arts and political discourse “Elevate“ is held from 20 to 26 October 2011. It addresses change in spheres such as “human beings – society”, “communication – media“ and “technology – energy” during the past ten years. Insights into the festival topic “capitalism in the 21st century” are offered in the British documentary “The Crisis of Civilization“ by Dean Puckett, receiving its premiere at “Elevate”. The opening will take place in the presence of Alternative Nobel Prize laureate Johan Galtung. Kumi Naidoo, Greenpeace International Executive Director, as well as war and disaster reporter Sharif Abdel Kouddous will participate via video stream. During the day the festival will focus on discourse and a documentary film series. In the evenings it will

offer literature (Marlene Streeruwitz and Gerhard Rühm present texts authored for this occasion) and thrilling contemporary music. <http://2011.elevate.at/>

Landestheater St. Pölten 2011/2012

After seven successful years, manager Isabella Suppanz will quit her job with Landestheater St. Pölten (selling more than 91% of its seating capacity). She relies on a proven mix of own productions and guest performances in her last theatre season – which has been ushered in with Raimund's "Der Verschwendener" (production: Jérôme Savary). Like Ibsen's "Ghosts", (director: Michael Gruner), it will be shown until December 2011.

Highlights of the guest performances are Herbert Achternbusch's "Susn" (director: Thomas Ostermeier), O'Neill's "Long Day's Journey into Night" (director: Ulrich Waller), Borchert's "The Man Outside" (director: Luc Perceval), Beckett's "Krapp's Last Tape" (Robert Wilson) and René Pollesch' "Schmeiß Dein Ego weg!".

The regional theatre's own productions presented in the season 2011/2012 include Labiche's "The Affair of Rue de Lourcine" (director: Barbara Novotny), Hauptmann's "Einsame Menschen" (production: Janusz Kica), Nis-Momme Stockmann's "Der Mann, der die Welt aß" (production: Antje Hochholdiner), the world premiere of "Leben=Traum" (director: Silvia Armbruster) and Georges Feydeau's "There's One in Every Marriage", which has been produced by the theatre manager Suppanz herself before her resignation. Dramatic advisor and director Bettina Hering from Zurich will succeed her on 1 September 2012.

Awards to Michael Glawogger and Josef Dabernig in Venice

At the 68th Venice Film Festival Glawogger's documentary "Whore's Glory" was awarded the Special Orizzonti Jury Prize. "The oldest profession becomes a mirror to a global labyrinth of sex and commerce that Glawogger captures with stunning visual eloquence and precision", stated the jury. It selected Josef Dabernig with his film "Hypercrisis" as Venice Short-Film Nominee for the European Film Awards.

Outstanding artist awards 2011

The awards granted by the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture for young cultural creators were presented by Minister Claudia Schmied at Vienna's RadioKulturhaus on

30 September 2011. They went to George Bezhnashvili (fashion), Linda Bilda (visual arts), Caroline Heider (artistic photography), David Helbock (music), Barbara Hundegger (literature), Anna Jermolaewa (intercultural dialogue), Claudia Kottal (performing arts), Elke Krasny (women's culture), Tina Leisch (documentary film), Matthias Meinharter (video and media art) and Lotte Schreiber (avant-garde film).

Bavaria's Comedian Award 2011 goes to Josef Hader

Josef Hader received the Bavarian Comedian Award in Munich on 27 September 2011. "His very angry and sometimes peculiar, sometimes melancholic songs" were received enthusiastically by the audience, explained the Bavarian Broadcasting Corporation (BR) – which had granted the prize together with the Munich-based Luspelhaus. Thanks to Hader's talent for observation, his great narrative skills and brilliant ideas, performances of the comedian were a very unique experience for the audience.

Awards of "Opernwelt"

After the traditional critics survey of the magazine "Opernwelt", the Salzburg Festival may be pleased about the award "Premiere of the Year", which it earned for Wolfgang Rihms "Dionysos" (produced by Pierre Audi, conducted by Ingo Metzmacher). Mieczyslaw Weinberg's Auschwitz opera "The Passenger" (directed by David Pountney) performed at the Bregenz Festival earned the title "Rediscovery of the Year". Baritone Johannes Martin Kränzle became "Singer of the Year" thanks to his "outstanding performance" in "Dionysos".

Stella 2011

The prize founded by the Federation of Children's and Youth Theatres ASSITEJ Austria was presented at a gala in St. Pölten on 29 September 2011. "Ente, Tod und Tulpe" of "u\hof: Theatre for a Young Audience" from Linz won a prize for its "outstanding production for children". With the play "Heldinnen", the Graz-based "theater t'eig und uniT" received the Stella prize for an "outstanding production for young people". Karin Schäfer was paid tribute to for her stage design for "Zheng He – Als die Drachenschiffe kamen", Matthias Jakisic won in the category "composition". Mezzanin Theater in Graz earned the special prize of the national jury, while the production "Popcorn" of Dschungel Wien convinced the international jury. The director

of Dschungel Wien, Stephan Rabl, was honoured with the special prize of the Executive Board of ASSITEJ for his artistic work devoted to children and young people.

Meeting on “Sparkling Science“ programme

“Sparkling Science“, the programme promoting fledgling researchers, was called into life by the Federal Ministry of Science and Research in 2007. Its aim is to give pupils real insights into the world of science and research. At present, more than 30,000 pupils work – side by side with researchers – on research questions in a total of 167 funded projects covering a wide range of disciplines.

On 14 October 2011 the Federal Ministry of Science and Research and the Technical University of Vienna offer another opportunity for academic exchange in the second meeting of project teams.

Claudia Schmied presented reform package for pedagogical universities

On this year’s World Teachers’ Day, Minister of Education Claudia Schmied presented three reform packages for the further development of pedagogical universities. They offer vital tools for reorganising teacher training and have the following main priorities: 1) measures to strengthen research competences and personnel development; 2) new study programmes for further developing pedagogical universities and 3) measures concerning quality development and quality assurance. New study programmes will be offered at two or three pilot facilities serving as pedagogical universities already in the academic year 2012/13.

Amendment provides for more qualified support to apprentices

“The Amendment to the Vocational Training Act submitted for review today by the Ministry of Economy after consultations with the Ministry of Social Affairs will entail considerable improvements for apprentices and companies“, said Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer. Under the amended Vocational Training Act it will become possible to fund coaching for apprentices. “This benefits both apprentices and the training companies themselves“, stressed Hundstorfer.

Apprentices, companies, parents and vocational schools may contact counselling and support services if apprentices face problems during apprenticeship training. The first projects of this type are to be launched in 2012.

Austrian Media Days at Vienna’s Stadthalle

Just like last year, almost all members of the professional media community attended the convention of the media industry to engage in discussions with international industry representatives such as WAZ Manager Bodo Hombach, Modern Times Group Boss Hans-Holger Albrecht, “Spiegel“ Chief Mathias Müller von Blumencron, star blogger Nicolas G. Carr or RTL Managing Director Gerhard Zeiler.

The convention was held under the general motto “Courage” at Vienna’s Stadthalle from 27 to 29 September 2011. www.medien-tage.at

“LanguageScape Graz“

According to a survey of the Language Centre of the University of Graz, about 150 languages are spoken in the streets of Graz. The multilingual every-day life in the Styrian capital will be in the limelight of the exhibition “LanguageScape Graz” – a joint project of the Language Centre of Graz University and the Graz Academy. The show curated by Astrid Kury and Barbara Schrammel-Leber (closing on 6 November 2011) was opened on the ground floor of the Municipal Museum of Graz on 26 September, the European Day of Languages. “We try to show how multilingual and polyglot people live in Graz – and we also want to inspire people to learn more languages”, stated the curators.

www.stadtmuseumgraz.at

Dug-out canoe of Bronze Age brought to surface of Carinthian lake

The approximately 3,500 years old boat was discovered by a diver about eight years ago. Now it has finally been brought to surface to prevent further damages. Embedded in deep mud, the 4m long and about 600mm wide dug-out canoe had been preserved for several millennia and was in good condition. Otto Cichocki of the Vienna Institute for Archaeological Science (VIAS) hoped that the boat could be exhibited – together with other dug-out canoes – “ideally in the pile dwelling museum of Lake Keutschach, which will hopefully be realised soon”. In summer 2011, 111 prehistoric lake pile dwellings in the Alps were declared world heritage. The pile dwelling in Lake Keutschach in Carinthia is one of the five sites of finds in Austria.

SPORTS**Eleventh “Day of Sport“ at Heldenplatz breaks all attendance records**

Heldenplatz, literally translated as “Heroes’ Square”, received its sports heroes and saw an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm for sport. At the 11th Day of Sport at Heldenplatz in Vienna, the sonic barrier of 500,000 visitors was broken for the first time in history.

“This fantastic response shows the enormous importance of sport and movement in our society, on the one hand. On the other hand, it proves how enthusiastically this event is acclaimed by the public. The Day of Sport is an integral part of Austria’s sport scene, and its message encouraging people to engage in physical activity has been received very well“, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos was pleased to state. Ski jumping super star Thomas Morgenstern was equally happy: “The backdrop for this event is unique and it is wonderful to enjoy the enthusiasm of our fans”.

The next Day of Sport will take place on 29 September 2012.

New sports funding system is to become a reality already in 2013

A discussion was held with Federal Minister Norbert Darabos in the Sports Committee meeting in Parliament on 6 October 2011. The talks focused on the planned reform of the sports funding system, for which an expert paper with concrete proposals for improvement has been submitted. His ministry was drafting the necessary legal provisions to implement these proposals, informed Darabos. He reminded the Committee of the principles guiding the reform: the new funding system should consist of basic funding as well as performance-oriented project aid; funding management should be improved; the allocation of funds should become more performance-oriented; support for promising talents and for associations should be stepped up; a transparent funding database was to be established.

The new funding system was to be realised by 2013. The Minister also promised that the new issues of the Sport Report and the Anti-Doping Report would be submitted very soon.

In another round of deliberations, Minister of Sport Darabos highlighted the great importance of winter sports weeks for pupils. Darabos assured the Members of Parliament that he would make efforts to boost the attractiveness of sports weeks by cooperating with the economic sector. He would also seek the support of the Minister of Education for more

physical exercise at school in general as well as more school sports weeks.

To enhance physical education programmes in all-day schools, the federal government made available 200 million euro, reminded Darabos. He also called on the Länder and municipalities to take action.

In the context of the European sports policy, Federal Minister Norbert Darabos informed on the EU’s White Paper on Sport and the implementation of the Action Plan “Pierre de Coubertin“ as well as Austria’s pioneering role in this policy area. He stated that Austria gave priority to the “combat against doping“, to “sport and youth“ and the “dual training system for athletes“. The economic dimension of sport was also of vital importance to Austria. Darabos reported about efforts to make sport more visible as a crucial economic factor and to redress the lack of relevant statistical data.

The Minister of Sport described it as a success that sport could be enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon and that sports funding, even though it was quite modest, had become available at EU level.

Burgenland promotes football tourism

Burgenland promotes football tourism as a new way to boost guest figures. According to Governor Hans Niessl, the training camps of various football clubs resulted in about 30,000 additional guest nights last year. The initiative “Best of Football“ presented in Bad Tatzmannsdorf on 5 October 2011 is expected to increase this number to up to 100,000 nights. To this end, eight providers, including the accommodation of the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) in Bad Tatzmannsdorf and the EURO-2008 camp of the national team in Stegersbach, will cooperate under an umbrella brand.

Fabian Leimlehner is first Austrian to top the World Gym Rank

Fabian Leimlehner became the first Austrian to top the so-called “World Gym Rank”.

The world ranking in gymnastics is based on the results of six competitions (five in Europe, one in Qatar), the best four are counted in the ranking. Four competitions have already been held in the current year.