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HOME AFFAIRS

Federal Republic and Länder agree on Stability Pact and Care Fund

The Federal Republic, the Länder and municipalities agreed on a new Stability Pact on 16 March 2011. In the framework of this pact, the Länder commit themselves to a strict austerity policy to bring the general government deficit below the 3% EU limit by 2012 (from 3.2% of the GDP forecast for 2011). The deficit of the Länder has to decrease from 0.75 % in 2011 to 0.6% in 2012 and to 0.5% in 2013. The municipalities have to achieve a budget equilibrium. The Federal Republic of Austria will in turn assume additional expenses for long-term care services until 2014, when the financial compensation payments to the Länder will end. The new Long-Term Care Fund has been set up for a limited period ending also in 2014 and has a budget of 685 million euro.

The result of the talks was presented on 16 March 2011. Minister of Finance Josef Pröll referred to “many winners” and incumbent Chairman of the Conference of Governors, Upper Austrian Governor Josef Pühringer praised it as “a great achievement“. According to Chancellor Werner Faymann, this agreement proved that 2011 was really a “year of reforms” as announced by him. Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer informed that about 435,000 recipients of long-term care benefits would profit from the Fund.

Public bodies violating the Stability Pact will be reprimanded publicly by the Court of Auditors. Besides introducing strict deficit caps, the Stability Pact requires local authorities to enhance transparency in financial matters. The Länder will have to provide information also on newly created or outsourced institutions such as hospitals and housing associations. This will make it impossible to account for these debts in separate entities. Data have to become more transparent and must be published on the website of the Ministry.

The budget of the Long-Term Care Fund totaling 685 million euro is distributed over four years (100 million euro in 2011, 150 million euro in 2012, 200 million euro in 2013, 235 million euro in 2014). While the Federal Republic contributes two thirds, the Länder and municipalities provide the remaining third. The Federal Republic will be in charge of administering the long-term care benefits of the Länder. Previously, benefit payments were managed by 23 institutions at federal level and by no less than 280 bodies in the nine Länder. The total budget is only a temporary source of

financing. A working group will develop a permanent solution to finance the steadily increasing long-term care expenses by 2012. Objectives of this project are: to reduce the number of decision-makers, to establish uniform practices and to speed up procedures. The establishment of the Long-Term Care Fund will be paralleled by a reform of the system of long-term care benefits. “The financial resources of the Long-Term Care Fund must be used exclusively for long-term care“, emphasised Minister Hundstorfer. In concrete terms, the Long-Term Care Fund Act will lay down rules for distributing funds between the Länder and municipalities as well as for earmarking funds for establishing, expanding and safeguarding care services (e.g. mobile services, day-care centres, temporary care, inpatient care, case and care management).

Federal government adopted women’s quota for companies with state ties

The federal government agreed on introducing a women’s quota for companies with state ties in the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 15 March 2011. In 55 enterprises, in which the government holds more than 50%, 25% of the Supervisory Board members are to be female by 2013. Up to 2018 the women’s quota is to be increased to 35% (from currently slightly above 16%). For the time being, a “voluntary self-obligation” without sanctions will be introduced. If the women’s share of 35% is not achieved by 2018, legal measures will follow.

Crucifixes in nurseries lawful

According to the decision of the Austrian Constitutional Court of 16 March 2011, it was lawful to hang crucifixes in Austria’s public nurseries. A father from Lower Austria had filed a complaint against crucifixes and religious ceremonies in nurseries. Based on the ruling, the respective law could not be understood as an attempt “of the state to give preference to a specific religion” – not even against the background of the separation between the Church and the state. Religious ceremonies (e.g. St. Nicholas Day) were not unconstitutional as participation was not mandatory.

More tax benefits for donations

Donations to volunteer fire brigades, environmental and nature conservation organisations as well as animal shelters will become tax deductible in 2012. Previously only donations to charity societies, for development cooperation or disaster relief qualified for tax benefits. The review period for the bill ends on 8 April 2011.

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

At the summit meeting of the 27 EU heads of state and government in Brussels on 24/25 March 2011, Austria was represented by Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann.

In the wake of the nuclear disaster in Japan, the EU Member States agreed on stress tests for the 143 nuclear power plants in the European Union. They will, however, be conducted under the supervision of the national nuclear safety authorities and not by independent experts as requested by Austria.

Federal Chancellor Faymann reiterated his call for a European nuclear exit strategy in Brussels and rallied support for his initiative to hold a Europe-wide referendum. Energy efficiency and renewable energies are the scenario of the future. In view of the disastrous incidents in Japan, it was cynical to regard nuclear energy as a contribution towards climate protection, said Faymann. The EU summit marked the beginning of the debate on atomic energy. The Chancellor also stated that Austria's position won in any case more support from the European population than by the heads of government. But as an importer of nuclear electricity, Austria too had to do its duty. Faymann was backed by German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, who called for increasing NPP safety at European and global level.

Regarding military action in Libya and Europe's possible involvement, Faymann placed again strong emphasis on Austria's neutrality. Austria would participate only in international missions of a humanitarian nature. A UN mandate (the present UN Resolution only dealt with a no-fly zone), an EU decision as well as decisions on a case-by-case basis were prerequisites for Austria's participation in EU battle groups, underlined Faymann. All considerations of the European Union focused on protecting the civilian population in Libya as well as on providing support in a spirit of solidarity in the event of a large waves of refugees.

The budgets for the two euro rescue systems – both the existing and the new permanent euro rescue fund becoming effective in 2013 – were adopted at the EU summit.

The permanent crisis fund ESM (European Stability Mechanism) for heavily indebted euro-zone countries will have a capital base of 700 billion euro as from 2013. The 17 euro-zone countries will pay 80 billion euro in cash into the ESM, the remaining 620 billion euro

will consist in guarantees or callable capital. The cash contribution will be distributed over a period of five years. Austria would have to make available 450 million euro annually, corresponding to a total amount for the five-year period of about 2.2 billion euro, explained Chancellor Faymann.

In addition, the 17 euro-zone countries and six other EU Member States adopted a decision to establish a "Pact for the Euro". It will promote voluntary economic policy coordination, e.g. concerning wages, taxes and debt reduction.

Chancellor Faymann advocates nuclear-free Europe

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister of the Environment Nikolaus Berlakovich launched an appeal to join forces in the combat against nuclear energy in a special session of the National Council on 22 March 2011. In view of the nuclear disaster in Japan, it was not possible to carry on as usual. At his very moment, it was crucial to stand up against the continued use and promotion of atomic energy in Europe and around the globe, demanded Faymann. Austria had to become an advocate for a nuclear exit strategy in Europe. The main task was to develop concrete scenarios for phasing out atomic energy, fostering alternative energies and increasing energy efficiency, stated Faymann.

The federal government had already adopted an action plan "Nuclear Exit Strategy" in a session of the Council of Ministers – with the general objective of taking action against the use of atomic energy "determinedly and consistently at all levels of Europe", stated Faymann. On 22 March 2011, this issue was also discussed in a meeting with Czech Prime Minister Petr Nečas, who paid an official visit to Vienna.

Spindelegger in Cyprus and Kosovo

Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger called upon Ankara to intensify its efforts of coming closer to the European Union at talks in Nicosia/Cyprus on 24 March 2011. One of the issues at stake was the requirement of extending the customs union between the EU and Turkey to include the Republic of Cyprus. To this end, Turkey had to open its airports and ports to traffic from the Republic of Cyprus.

During a bilateral meeting in Kosovo on 25 March 2011, Spindelegger announced that Austria would strengthen its commitment to promoting the recognition of Kosovo by all EU Member States.

ECONOMY**New Eco-Electricity Act: more subsidies for renewable energies**

In Austria subsidies for eco-electricity will be governed by new rules. Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner presented the new Eco-Electricity Act on 23 March 2011. Its aim is to make Austria independent of imports of nuclear electricity by 2015. In view of the disaster in the Japanese nuclear power plant Fukushima, it was crucial to take advantage of “the open window for renewable energies” right now, stressed the Minister.

The total funding volume for new green electricity plants is increased by about 100 million euro in the current year. Annual funding will be raised from 21 million euro to 30 million euro. This measure will also help to cut waiting lists of applicants for financial support towards eco-electricity plants. Subsidies will be decreased but granted within very short periods. Under the new law, annual fixed amounts of funding will be earmarked for the individual environmental technologies – electricity generated from the sun, wind, biomass or by small hydro power plants.

At present, nuclear energy accounts for about 6% in Austria’s electricity imports. Private households have to expect additional costs of about 13 euro per year.

Austria’s employment rate moved up to the fourth rank in the EU

In an EU-wide comparison of employment in the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2009, Austria moved up to the fourth rank. According to the latest data of Eurostat, Austria reported an increase in employment of 1.7%, while the EU average was about plus 0.3%. The leader was Malta (+3.4%), before Sweden (+2.4%) and Hungary (+2.0%). Slovenia was at the bottom with a minus of 2.1%. The data for Greece and Ireland were not yet available.

Petrol price summit hosted by Minister Mitterlehner

A decrease in the currently high fuel prices was not yet foreseeable, but a new law would help drivers to get more transparent information about the fuel market, explained Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner after the petrol price summit on 25 March 2011, to which he had invited representatives of the mineral oil sector, drivers associations, and experts. “The goal is to find the comparatively most favourable solution for Austria; the

only short-term option is to enhance price transparency”, said Mitterlehner.

A new bill, which will be submitted to Parliament within the next four weeks, will require the operators of Austria’s 2,700 petrol stations to enter “up-to-date” prices into a publicly accessible database, without causing excessive workload to them. The Minister for Economic Affairs explained that the planned law had become necessary as voluntary information (on which the price information systems of the two associations of Austrian drivers ÖAMTC and ARBÖ were based) had become scarce and was provided only with great delay.

Other possible interventions such as decreasing the mineral oil tax, price fixing or public petrol stations were rejected by Mitterlehner.

2010 Food Report

Minister of Agriculture Nikolaus Berlakovich presented the 2010 Food Report on 23 March 2011. Austria was heading in the right direction and supply with safe quality foodstuffs from domestic production was ensured, Berlakovich commented the latest findings of the report. Moreover, the agricultural sector had coped better with the crisis than other industries. In 2009 the Austrian food producers had reported a comparatively low decline in sales by 7%, while other industrial production sectors reported a minus of 20%. Agricultural exports also went up by 8.3% to 7.74 billion euro in 2010. Austrian foodstuffs convinced consumers both in Austria and abroad, emphasised the Minister of the Environment.

With a 20% share of organic farmland, Austria continued to be the European leader in the organic food sector. The sales of organic food had tripled from 308 million euro to 984.2 million euro in 2009 within ten years. The trend towards regional products also continued. Moreover, consumers attached great importance to designations of origin and strict quality controls, explained Berlakovich.

Austrian Mail increased profit in 2010

The listed Austrian Mail posted a profit of 118.4 million in 2010, this is 48.5% more than in the previous year (79.7 million euro). The dividend is therefore expected to be raised from 1.50 euro to 1.60 euro.

BAWAG back in the black

For the first time in four years, BAWAG PSK is back in the black after reporting a net profit of 125.4 million euro for 2010. The risk-related costs had dropped, while earnings had increased, informed the enterprise.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Fiction Prize of Leipzig Book Fair goes to Clemens J. Setz**

The 28-year-old author from Graz was granted the award for the best fiction title (prize money: 15,000 euro) for his collection of short stories "Die Liebe zur Zeit des Mahlstädter Kindes" on 17 March 2011. "The audaciousness of construction, the originality of language and the consistency of the concept leading to both original and eerie stories were decisive", the jury explained its selection. Setz had recently received the Literary Prize of the City of Bremen. He had made his literary debut in 2007 with the novel "Söhne und Planeten", which was immediately shortlisted for the Aspekte Literary Prize. In 2009 his mammoth novel "Die Frequenzen" missed the German Book Prize only narrowly.

2011 Salzburg Music Prize

The Salzburg Music Prize of the year 2011 goes to composer and conductor Friedrich Cerha. The prize worth 60,000 euro was awarded for the third time at the Salzburg Biennial on 13 March 2011. The artist born in Vienna in 1926 was a co-founder of "Ensemble die reihe" and taught at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. Previous awards granted to him include the Grand Austrian State Prize for Music (1986), the Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art (2005) as well as the "Golden Lion" of the Venice Music Biennial (2006). The Advancement Award (with a prize money of 20,000 euro) was conferred on the Spanish composer Elena Mendoza, who has been a lecturer on composition and experimental music at Berlin University of the Arts since 2007. In 2010 Elena Mendoza became the first woman to receive the Spanish National Music Prize.

The Salzburg Biennial 2011 under the artistic leadership of Heike Hoffmann has been based on the concept of presenting different strands of contemporary music. The programme of this festival for new music taking place in March comprised 44 events, encompassing music theatre, film music as well as a portrait of composer Friedrich Cerha.

Diagonale Festival 2011

The Diagonale – Festival of Austrian Film – took place for the 14th time from 22 to 27 March 2011 and turned Graz into the Austrian capital of cinema. The festival managed by Barbara Pichler has been conceived as the main platform for presenting and discussing

Austrian film productions. The primary objective is to anchor domestic filmmaking in public discourse and thereby raise awareness of films made in Austria. 183 films and videos were presented at the festival hosting numerous domestic or even world premiere screenings.

Among the programme highlights of Diagonale are not only a review of the year's crop of films but also a special section devoted to the history of filmmaking (Austrian films from 1975 to the early 1990s, including works by Kitty Kino, Valie Export, Karina Ressler and Margareta Heinrich) and screenings featuring and acknowledging the impressive oeuvre of an Austrian filmmaker. In the framework of a special tribute programme, every year international film stars are invited to Graz and selected works are presented. Turning the spotlight on European co-productions in which Austrians participated, the programme section "Spectrum" promotes Austria as an attractive location for film productions at international level.

The Diagonale Film Festival was opened with the international premiere of Nikolaus Geyrhalter's film "Abendland" (camera: Nikolaus Geyrhalter, cutter: Wolfgang Widerhofer), a long, associative journey across night-time Europe. The film essay "Abendland" (the literal meanings of the German title are "occident" or "night land") explores the concept of the occident as a superior civilisation. It also illustrates different facets of our affluent consumer society based on the principles of exclusivity, non-sharing and social exclusion, which erects a fortress of security to protect itself against intruders from the outside. "Mörder-schwester" by Peter Kern as well as world premieres of works by little known directors such as Richard Wilhelmer's remarkable film "Adams Ende" were screened in the feature film section of the Diagonale.

This year's homage was devoted to Peter Tscherkassky, who is one of the internationally most popular and renowned avant-garde filmmakers. The Viennese director uses "found footage" and manually rearranges the material into new films by using a sophisticated technique. The result are fascinating and humorous works of art, which have been showered with prizes and received their premiers at prestigious festival venues such as Cannes, Venice, Rotterdam, Montréal or New York. However, films by Tscherkassky may also be found at documenta 12 and renowned institutions such as the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh or the Louvre in Paris. Tscherkassky has not only

revived interest in avant-garde filmmaking but also has a profound influence on new generations of independent filmmakers. His latest production "Coming Attractions" was given its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival in September and was promptly granted the Award for the Best Short Film. The footage used for this work came from the bankruptcy estate of an advertising film production company. A highlight of the Diagonale Film Festival was Peter Tscherkassky's introduction to the complex production technique for his films in the series "Cinema Lecture".

The Special Guest of the year 2011 was Elfi Mikesch, who had been praised by the curators of the German Camera Prize in the presentation speech as an "unwavering voice in the language of moving pictures" and who stands out for her love for experiments. She worked as a camerawoman for famous film directors such as Werner Schroeter, Monika Treut, Peter Lilienthal, Heinz Emigholz and Rosa von Praunheim in almost 30 films – among them classics such as "Malina" (1991) or "Deux" (2002), receiving its international premiere at the Cannes Film Festival. Diagonale presented exemplary works like "Die Jungfrauenmaschine" (by Monika Treut), "Poussières d'amour" (by Werner Schroeter) and "Brinkmanns Zorn" (by Harald Bergmann). In the 1970s the professional photographer also started to work as a director. Elfi Mikesch' two latest documentaries "Judenburg findet Stadt" and "Mondo Lux – Die Bilderwelten des Werner Schroeter" (winning the Prize for Best Cinematography 2011) were also presented at the festival.

The trailer for the Diagonale Festival 2011 was created by video artist, performer and musician Sabine Marte in a co-production with Kunsthaus Graz. Diagonale FILMclass was held already for the third time this year. 16 young people aged between 15 and 22 years worked intensively with the medium film during one academic year.

At the opening ceremony of the festival, Senta Berger was awarded the Diagonale Prize for Acting. Austria's most important film awards were presented at the closing event of the festival. The Grand Diagonale Prizes for Feature Film went to Marie Kreutzer ("Die Vaterlosen"), while Ivette Löcker ("Nachtschichten") won the Grand Diagonale Prize for Documentary. Both awards were worth 21,000 euro. Other prizes were conferred on Billy Roisz (Innovative Cinema), Unmut Dag (Short Film), Evi Romen and Wolfgang Widerhofer (Artistic Editing), Arman T. Riahi (Audience

Prize), Marion Mitterhammer and Johannes Krisch (Acting), Leena Koppe (Cinematography), Karl-Heinz Klopff (Short Documentary), Andrea Schratzberger and Veronika Albert (Production and Costume Design).

Graz was awarded title "City of Design"

Having been awarded the title "City of Design" by UNESCO, Graz is added to a list of design cities including Berlin, Buenos Aires, Seoul and Shanghai. The City of Graz had applied for admission to the list already in 2009 but still had to meet certain requirements. Admission criteria are a vibrant design industry, strong stimuli from design and architecture, a characteristic city design, modern training institutions for designers as well as design professionals active at local and international level. The cities selected have to report on their national and international activities as design cities to the UN organisation on an annual basis.

The "Cities of Design" belong to the "Creative Cities Network" launched by UNESCO in 2004. Its aim is to promote the social, economic and cultural development of cities globally, to foster the creativity of the cultural scene with a view to contributing to cultural diversity. Cities may be appointed in the categories film, music, design, gastronomy, media art, crafts and literature. The commitment of the competent representatives of Graz to creativity and innovation in all spheres of life is expected to provide impetus to tourism and economy. A budget of 1.5 million euro was made available for a five-year period. A committee composed of eleven members was set up to manage projects and to safeguard the quality of the label. The "Cities of Design" network promotes the exchange of information among the participating countries. They are entitled to use the UNESCO logo for their programmes and events, which are also published on the UNESCO website.

"Rodelinda" premiered at Theater an der Wien

Georg Friedrich Händel's opera about the migration of the peoples in the early Middle Ages is presented at Theater an der Wien in a contemporary setting. On 20 March 2011, the first night crowd seemed to approve mainly the rendering of the music of this differentiated interpretation of the opera, cheering conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt, while the stage direction by Philipp Harnoncourt was received less warmly. (www.theater-wien.at/)

“Education Road Map“ adopted by coalition government

A flexible system of courses for the senior grades of secondary schools, in which pupils will have to repeat classes only in exceptional cases, and a gradual transformation of all lower secondary schools into New Comprehensive Schools: these are the short-term objectives of the school policy of the federal government.

New tasks are to be assigned also to headmasters. The ideal is a headmaster choosing the teaching staff independently and assuming responsibility for budget and personnel development. Other key elements of the envisaged reforms: Educational standards (evaluation of students' competences) will be introduced as from 2012. The increase in the number of all-day schools will allow those affected to make choices according to needs. Better opportunities for integration will be offered to pupils with special education needs also after the 8th grade. To realise these objectives, an amendment is planned, under which teachers employed by the Länder may work in federal schools.

Austria pleads with EU Commission for regulating entry to medical faculty

Austria's quota system regulating the number of students entering the medical faculty is only a temporary solution until 2012. As agreed with Minister of Science Beatrix Karl, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann tried to win the support of European Commission President José Manuel Barroso for extending the quota system until 2015 or 2016. In a letter to Brussels he will substantiate his arguments that more time is required to find a solution guaranteeing quality healthcare services in Austria.

Austria chairs CEEPUS exchange programme

About 30,000 students and teachers have profited in the past from the Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies (CCEPUS) founded in 1995 on the initiative of Austria, among them about 2,500 beneficiaries from Austria. “Austria has played a pioneering role, responding to the transnational challenges of science and research”, said Minister of Science and Research Beatrix Karl at the 17th CCEPUS conference of ministers in Warsaw. Austria has taken over the chair of CCEPUS for the next two years from Poland and will host the next CCEPUS conference in 2013.

ORF offers media archives on Judaism

100 TV and radio programmes addressing Judaism are made available on demand by the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF). This service covers a wide spectrum – from short reports of TV programmes such as “Orientierung“ and “Heimat, fremde Heimat“ to documentaries like Helene Maimann's “Massel und Schlamassel“. The ORF established this media service in cooperation with the Jewish Museum. After the renovation of the museum, visitors will be able to watch all programmes on flat screens. Media archives for Islam and Buddhism are to follow.

www.religion.orf.at/judentum

Facts and Figures 2010: schools and education

The Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture presented the publication “Facts and Figures 2010 – statistics concerning schools and adult education“. Minister of Education Claudia Schmied explained: “Education is a success factor for Austria's social and economic future. Therefore we need optimal quality in education and fair educational opportunities for all children and young people in Austria.“

The publication includes for the first time statistical data on further and continuing education at universities for teacher training.

www.bmukk.gv.at/statistik

Go ahead was given for master studies for adult and further education

On 24 March 2011 the first master's degree programme in adult and continuing education will be launched. The university course, which falls mainly within the competence of the Federal Institute for Adult Education (Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung/bifeb) and the University of Klagenfurt (Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt) is the first one in this field of adult education.

Minister of Education Claudia Schmied was pleased about this “breakthrough for top-notch adult education“.

1,000 research internships are available during summer holidays

Minister of Innovation Doris Bures informed that since 13 March 2011 pupils aged 15 and above have been able to register for internships in domestic research institutions during school summer holidays. The internship programme is funded by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology. Especially girls are encouraged to participate in this programme during the current year.

SPORTS POLICY

Expert paper provides the basis for the new Federal Sports Funding Act

Clearly defined goals, a more efficient use of funds for high-performance and mass sports as well as a reform of the administration system focusing on stricter control, more transparency and clearer structures – these are the fundamentals of a package of recommendations developed by experts on the initiative of Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos. These recommendations will provide the basis for a new Federal Sports Funding Act.

“Cases of misappropriation such as in the Austrian Olympic Committee as well as the criticism expressed by the Court of Auditors about the current sports funding system have received much negative media attention in the past few years. It is important to me to put a stop to abuse, while establishing a state-of-the-art funding system organised on a partnership basis“, said Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos at the presentation of the experts’ proposals at the House of Sport in Vienna.

The expert paper discusses four major subject areas:

- The aim of the first subject area is to enshrine “key control parameters” in the law, e.g. general objectives, funding targets, ongoing evaluation and a transparent database for the sports funding system. This database will provide the public with transparent information on funds made available. Moreover, all relevant data concerning funding procedures will be gathered in this database.

- As far as high-performance sport is concerned, the experts recommend to improve consulting for the associations representing individual disciplines and to allocate funding based on a transparent, performance-oriented model subject to a catalogue of criteria. This model will be designed for several “funding groups”. Associations performing successfully and according to plan will benefit most from the new funding scheme. Less efficient associations are assigned to lower funding groups and will be supported in their organisational and structural development. In this way, positive processes will be triggered in the associations, ultimately allowing them to move into a higher funding group. With a view to promoting knowledge exchanges, cooperation between larger and smaller associations will be intensified.

- Regarding mass sports, the flow of money from the federal sports funding budget to the grassroots level is to be improved. A minimum

quota will be introduced for funds which the sports federations have to allocate to their member associations. Furthermore, federations will be required to cooperate with the associations in the context of all activities related to the respective discipline for which the association is responsible, especially when training young athletes. The main fields of activity of the federations will be laid down in the funding agreements.

- With regard to the administration of funding, the experts issued the recommendation “administrative simplification and quality improvements“, i.e. to implement a “one-stop-shop principle“. A single point of contact will be created for beneficiaries of subsidies. At present, there are up to ten different support mechanisms from which the associations may draw funds. In addition, the experts suggest to harmonise funding guidelines and to realise a “dual funding model”. All institutional beneficiaries will in the future receive basic funding to finance their key activities as well as demand-oriented “funding for specific measures and projects”. Control will focus increasingly on evaluating whether the funds were used for the intended purpose.

“I consider the expert paper a major step ahead towards a new Federal Sports Funding Act”, stated Minister of Sport Darabos. “The Federal Republic of Austria is currently allocating funds totalling about 80 million euro to the Austrian sports associations. We will be successful in the long term only when these funds are used efficiently. A new Federal Sports Funding Act will create the necessary basis for realising this objective.“

In 2009 Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos launched a reform process of the federal sports funding system. The aim was to draft a new Federal Sports Funding Act by cooperating on an equal footing with the sports organisations. In 2010 Wolfgang Mayrhofer of the Vienna University of Economics and Business was entrusted with developing these recommendations.

The final report containing policy recommendations was submitted for initial evaluation to the Committee for High-Performance Sport of the Federal Sports Organisation chaired by Friedl Ludescher in February 2011. Together with the comments provided by the Committee for High-Performance Sport, the results of the meeting on 23 March 2011 as well as the feedback from the federations, the final report will provide a basis for developing a new Federal Sports Funding Act.