

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

Editorial close: 26 April 2011

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HOME AFFAIRS

Spindelegger new ÖVP Chairman and Vice Chancellor – Cabinet reshuffle
Package of immigration laws approved by Committee on Internal Affairs
A mandatory women's quota is supported by 54 percent of the Austrians
Childcare allowance: share of fathers about 3.5%

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL

Federal President Fischer in Slovenia
Chancellor Faymann supports Lithuania's call for NPP stress tests
Turkish President Gül pays state visit to Austria in early May
Spindelegger attends UN debate on rule of law in New York

ECONOMY

Austria placed third in EU-wide use of renewable energies
IMF issues upward revision of growth forecast for Austria
Wifo: Austrian labour market will not be flooded by Eastern Europeans
Oil price pushed inflation to 3.1. percent in March
Monetary assets of the Austrian households rose to 461 billion euro

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE

Exhibitions at the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg
Museum Gugging: "gaston chaissac!"
Lower Austria's exhibition: "Conquering – discovering – experiencing"
Vienna's pop festival
Romy Gala Night at Vienna's Hofburg
Karlheinz Töchterle appointed as new Minister of Science
Claudia Schmied presents bill promoting all-day schooling
Doris Bures: Austria's R&D expenditure increases significantly in 2011
Christa Neuper new Rector of the University of Graz
Eva Blimlinger new Rector at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna
Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture on "Facebook"
Alfred Adler's urn rediscovered in Edinburgh and returned to Vienna
Late Roman graves discovered in Bregenz

SPORTS POLICY

Sabrina Filzmoser dedicates her second European championship title to Claudia Heill
European Year of Volunteering 2011: sport makes also a contribution

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HOME AFFAIRS**Spindelegger new ÖVP Chairman and Vice Chancellor – Cabinet reshuffle**

Six days after Josef Pröll stepped down for health reasons, Michael Spindelegger – his successor as Vice Chancellor and Chairman-designate of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) – presented the new government team on 19 April 2011. Besides changes in portfolios, there are four new government members. The new ÖVP government team was sworn in by President Heinz Fischer on 21 April 2011.

Spindelegger remains Foreign Minister. He will be elected ÖVP Chairman at the federal party convention in May. The new Finance Minister succeeding to Pröll is Maria Fekter, previously Minister of the Interior. Former Minister of Science Beatrix Karl now heads the Ministry of Justice. Minister of Agriculture Nikolaus Berlakovich as well as Minister for Economy and Families Reinhold Mitterlehner retain their positions. Previous Secretary of State for Families Verena Remmler resigned from the ÖVP government team, and so did Secretary of State for Finance Reinhold Lopatka and Minister of Justice Bandion-Ortner. According to Spindelegger, family affairs will become a “matter for decision by the boss“.

New members of the ÖVP team are Minister of the Interior Johanna Mikl-Leitner (previously Executive Councillor for Social Affairs of Lower Austria) and Science Minister Karlheinz Töchterle, before Rector of the University of Innsbruck. The new State Secretariat set up within the Foreign Ministry will be headed by the previous Manager of Vienna's art complex Museumsquartier Wolfgang Waldner. The only 24-year-old Chairman of the Young ÖVP, Sebastian Kurz, became Secretary of State for Integration, a new position created in the Ministry of the Interior.

Decisions were also taken on the distribution of positions in the party and the parliamentary group: new ÖVP Secretary-General is Hannes Rauch, previous party executive of the Tyrolian branch of the ÖVP. The ÖVP's parliamentary group is not affected by any changes and continues to be led by Karlheinz Kopf.

After the swearing-in ceremony, Werner Faymann and Michael Spindelegger stressed the common approaches of the governing coalition vis-à-vis reporters. “We are working as a team. This is the most important prerequisite for the second half of the government term“, stated Faymann. Spindelegger also underlined the importance of good cooperation. Key tasks of the government mentioned by Faymann were

education, research, development, structural reforms as well as EU-wide action for more social cohesion and against speculation, nuclear power plants or genetically modified products. The top priorities for cooperation will be defined at a government meeting in Semmering on 30/31 May 2011. Four weeks after his pulmonary infarction, Josef Pröll resigned from all his positions on 13 April 2011, explaining that he had “not decided against politics but in favour of his health and family“. In his resignation statement, Pröll drew favourable conclusions about the work of the coalition but warned against a standstill and opportunism. In the aftermath of a series of corruption scandals involving members of his own party (e.g. MEP Strasser), he also called for more decency and responsibility in politics.

Package of immigration laws approved by Committee on Internal Affairs

On 13 April 2011, the Committee on Internal Affairs of the National Council adopted a package of immigration laws, covering the Red-White-Red Card, mandatory minimum stays of immigrants in reception centres and a stricter “integration agreement” (e.g. basic German before immigration). The coalition parties – Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP) – voted in favour. As far as German language skills are concerned, a period of grace may be granted if the immigrant does prove adequate knowledge of German within two years. After that, expulsion is possible under the proviso that Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (protection of private and family life) is observed.

A mandatory women's quota is supported by 54 percent of the Austrians

Almost two thirds of the Austrians do not believe in gender equality at work. According to a recent poll by the market research institute “market”, 54% of the interviewees were in favour of a mandatory women's quota.

Childcare allowance: share of fathers about 3.5%

According to the weekly statistics of the Ministry of Family Affairs presented on 18 April 2011, one week earlier about 3.5% of the recipients of childcare allowance were men. The highest share of fathers was reported for the options with the shortest leave: 2.3% for the option 20+4 months (624 euro/month), 6.4% for the model 15+3 (800 euro). The fathers' share in recipients opting for the longest leave (30+6/436 euro) was only 1.1%.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Federal President Fischer in Slovenia**

On 18 and 19 April 2011, Federal President Heinz Fischer paid an official visit to Slovenia. The programme included a meeting with President Danilo Türk and Prime Minister Borut Pahor. Key issues for debate were the conflict over bilingual topographical signposts in Carinthia and the Slovene nuclear power plant Krško near the Austrian border.

At the meeting at the Castle of Brdo Fischer and his counterpart Türk discussed the situation of the Slovene minority in Carinthia as well as the latest developments concerning bilingual signposts. The two heads of state pled for a “package solution“ for which the specific percentage of Slovene speakers in the population of a town or village was no longer decisive. Fischer was optimistic. According to him, the goal was almost reached. Türk called for a solution “acceptable to both sides“.

Slovenia considers itself the protective power of the Slovene minority in Carinthia and reminds of the decisions of the Constitutional Court in Vienna according to which bilingual signposts were to be put up in places where the Slovene minority exceeded 10 percent of the population. A compromise providing for bilingual signs in settlements with a Slovene share of at least 17.5 percent had been reached between the Austrian federal government, the Land of Carinthia and the representatives of the Slovene minority in early April. It was, however, rejected by the most important representation of the Slovene minority in Carinthia, namely the Council of Carinthian Slovenes. Fischer described this compromise as a solution the two ethnic groups in Carinthia “could live with“.

In talks with Prime Minister Pahor, Fischer explained Austria’s position on atomic energy, in particular on the Krško nuclear power plant. Pahor had agreed that the safety aspect should be given “top priority”, said Fischer.

Austria and Slovenia wanted to support Bosnia and Herzegovina on the road to European integration, the Federal President informed on joint plans for the future of the Western Balkans.

Chancellor Faymann supports Lithuania’s call for NPP stress tests

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann supported the call of Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė for so-called “stress tests” for nuclear power plants in all member states of the Organization for Security and Co-operation

in Europe (OSCE). This was announced by Chancellor Faymann on 13 April 2011 after a meeting with Grybauskaitė. In the preliminaries of the meeting, the Lithuanian President had launched this appeal to the Permanent Council of the OSCE in Vienna. This year Lithuania is chairing the organisation.

Faymann and Grybauskaitė also discussed energy security issues in Europe as well as current economic developments.

At a commemorative demonstration held at Stephansplatz in Vienna on 25 April 2011 to mark the Chernobyl NPP disaster (1986), Faymann pled once more for a sustainable energy policy as well as joint efforts against the nuclear lobby.

Turkish President Gül pays state visit to Austria in early May

Turkish President Abdullah Gül will pay a state visit to Austria from 2 to 4 May 2011. He will be accompanied by his wife Hayrünnisa and a large delegation with high-ranking political and economic representatives. The political programme includes talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer and Vienna’s Mayor Michael Häupl. In addition, an Austro-Turkish economic forum will be held by the Economic Chamber Austria. During his visit to Austria, President Abdullah Gül will also make a stop in Salzburg.

Spindelegger attends UN debate on rule of law in New York

On 11 April 2011, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger participated in the UN General Assembly on “The Rule of Law and Global Challenges“. Austria had supported the efforts of the UN to strengthen the rule of law at international level since 2004. The UN offered a great opportunity to incorporate new standards regarding the rule of law and human rights in the future constitutions of the Arab countries undergoing transformation, explained Spindelegger in an interview with the Austrian Press Agency (APA) after a closed-door meeting of the Arab Group.

Spindelegger informed the Arab diplomats about his recent trip to the Middle East. They welcomed his appeal to Israel to lift the Gaza Strip blockade. According to Spindelegger, the UN had to develop mechanisms which would make it easier to cope with transformation in conflict regions.

ECONOMY**Austria placed third in EU-wide use of renewable energies**

According to an EU comparison, Austria is doing fairly well as far as the use of renewable energies is concerned. Among the EU-27, the Alpine Republic boasts the third highest share of renewable energies in the total energy consumption. Based on Eurostat data of 11 April 2011, Latvia had been the number one with 36% in 2009, followed by Sweden (34%) and Austria 27%. The EU average was 9.0%. Malta (which does not use any renewable energies), Luxembourg (with a share of merely 2.8%) and Great Britain (3.0%) were on the bottom of the list. In the period 1999 to 2009 the share of renewable energies increased most sharply in Denmark (from 8 to 17%), Sweden (from 27 to 34), Germany (from 2 to 8), Portugal (from 13 to 19), Slovakia (from 3 to 7) and Austria (from 23 to 27). The EU average rose from 5.4 to 9.0%.

As far as oil is concerned, Austria ranks thirteenth. Its oil consumption rate of 39.6% corresponds to the EU average. With a gas share of 22.2%, the country occupies place 14 in the EU. Austria ranks seventeenth in the consumption of solid fuels (9.0%).

IMF issues upward revision of growth forecast for Austria

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) issued an upward revision of its growth forecast for the Austrian economy. After predicting a growth rate of 1.6% for 2011 in autumn, the IMF now expects an increase in the GDP by 2.4% in real terms in the current year as well as a 2.3%-growth in 2012. In 2010 the Austrian gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 2.0% in real terms.

With its latest GDP forecast of 2.4% for 2011, the IMF is close to the assumptions of the domestic economic institutes: Wifo (Economic Research Institute) and IHS (Institute for Advanced Studies) had predicted growth rates of 2.5% and 2.3% for 2011 in April. Forecasting a real GDP growth of 2.3% for 2012, the IMF is even more optimistic than Wifo and IHS, assuming growth rates of 2.0 and 2.1%, respectively, in their latest outlooks.

Wifo: Austrian labour market will not be flooded by Eastern Europeans

After the opening of the domestic labour market on 1 May 2011 to Eastern Europeans, no massive influx of workers from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary is expected,

informed a study by Wifo (Economic Research Institute) commissioned by the Ministry for Social Affairs and Labour. Wifo assumes an annual inflow of up to 16,500 workers and about 26,000 jobseekers from a total of eight Eastern European EU Member States. The majority was likely to have “qualifications of skilled workers”. With wealth increasing in the respective countries, the influx to Austria would decrease. Besides the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, other countries affected by the opening of the Austrian labour market were Slovenia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) and the Chamber of Labour (AK) do not foresee any major problems arising from the labour market opening. During the transition period of seven years, Austria had been able to prepare adequately. The labour market conditions for Austrian nationals would not deteriorate “as collective agreements defining minimum wages were in force practically throughout Austria“, said Bernhard Achitz, Executive Secretary of the ÖGB, reminding of the law against wage and social dumping adopted in late March. The ÖGB, the AK, the Ministry of Social Affairs and other organisations will launch an information campaign for shop stewards and staff representatives in early May.

Oil price pushed inflation to 3.1. percent in March

Austria's high inflation rate continued to climb in March. According to the Austrian statistical office “Statistik Austria”, the inflation rate increased by 3.1% year-on-year, after 3.0% in February and 2.4% in January. Almost one third of the inflation rate is attributable to the price hike of oil products by 22% within one year. Petrol prices surged by 21%. Excluding oil products and foodstuffs, the consumer price index (CPI) for March would have increased only by 1.8%.

Monetary assets of the Austrian households rose to 461 billion euro

Based on the data presented by the Austrian National Bank (OeNB) on 14 April 2011, the monetary assets of the Austrian households rose by approximately 21 billion euro to about 461 billion euro in 2010. Besides the decline in investments (compared to 2009), this was mainly due to price increases in the share markets. The market value of the securities held by Austrian households exceeded for the first time the level of 100 billion euro.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Exhibitions at the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg**

Until 3 July 2011, the Museum der Moderne (MdM) Mönchsberg presents “Alberto Giacometti. The Origin of Space“ – a retrospective of Giacometti’s mature work (1901-1966) raising the question of the relationship between space, time and figure. The focus of the show is on sculptures created between 1945 and 1965 as well as on the paintings dating back to the same period. These works – mostly portraits of people close to the artist – provide insights in Giacometti’s struggle for form. The visitors of this exhibition may experience Giacometti’s efforts to achieve “resemblance” and to depict his models as “portraits in space”. At the same time they may sense the artist’s doubts who described his work as a “continuous failure”. The works presented in the exhibition staged in cooperation with Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg come from the artist’s estate (Fondation Alberto et Annette Giacometti, Paris) as well as international museums and private collections. They offer multi-faceted insights into the fascinating oeuvre of one of the most important painters and sculptors of the 20th century.

To complement the main exhibition, MdM Mönchsberg presents “The Studio of the Artist”. This show organised in cooperation with Fotostiftung Schweiz displays 70 photos on Giacometti. The spotlight is not turned on portraits by famous photographers but on pictures taken in the studio or showing the artist working or preparing exhibitions. The works selected include sensitive, atmospheric photos by Ernst Scheidegger and Kurt Blum.

In parallel to the Giacometti exhibition, the Museum also stages “Bruce Nauman, Fred Sandback, Franz West“ – a show of works illustrating subsequent and contemporary artistic positions in sculpture and installation art (closing on 19 July 2011). The common feature of these artists is that they substantially broadened the concept of sculpture.

Until 3 July 2011, MdM will lure visitors with the exhibition “Immendorff / Lüpertz – MAP Collection”. The works of the artists Jörg Immendorff and Markus Lüpertz, who were friends, reflect mutual influences until Immendorff died in 2007. The show curated by Veit Ziegelmaier has therefore been conceived as an “artistic dialogue”. Considering art an instrument to express political views, Immendorff explored for example the division and reunification of Germany in his works – while the

paintings of Lüpertz burst with expressive power. The retrospective spans a period of about 50 years in the work of the two artists.

www.museumdermoderne.at/

Museum Gugging: “gaston chaissac!”

Museum Gugging devotes its summer exhibition (closing on 25 September 2011) to the French painter and radical autodidact Gaston Chaissac (1910-1964), a permanent outsider of the international art scene. 125 well-known works – drawings, collages, paintings, sculptures and “totems“ – are showcased. In addition, 50 drawings are for the first time made available to the public by Chaissac’s daughter. The outsider artist used all kinds of surfaces for his artwork, e.g. canvas, cardboard, stone, wood, corrugated sheet or wooden boards. Gaston Chaissac was recognised as an artist only after his death although he had influenced eminencies such as Jean Dubuffet. Dubuffet initially classified Chaissac as a creator of Art Brut for his seemingly childlike and naïve simplicity but soon changed his opinion. He remained the only one to buy the works of Chaissac, who was ten years younger than Dubuffet. Living a secluded life in the countryside, Chaissac was not influenced by fashionable art trends. His drawings which, according to his own words, depicted intimate thoughts, dreams, aspirations and disappointment, were concealed from the public by Chaissac’s daughter for a long time. They are a worthwhile discovery. www.gugging.org

Lower Austria’s exhibition: “Conquering – discovering – experiencing”

27 communities of the region “Roman Territory Carnuntum” in the district of Bruck an der Leitha are responsible for Lower Austria’s official exhibition in 2011. The show documents the transformation of the region over the millenniums. It does not only explore the natural, cultural, economic and settlement history but also traces technical developments. Petronell-Carnuntum, Bad Deutsch-Altenburg and Hainburg (Archeology Park Carnuntum, Petronell Open-Air Museum and Museum Carnuntinum as well as Kulturfabrik Hainburg) are venues of this exhibition. In Petronell-Carnuntum visitors may stroll through the excavation site and see parts of the Roman settlement Carnuntum reconstructed true to the original. Sumptuous villas and an authentic Roman thermal bath illustrate the beauty and lifestyle of an antique metropolis. A 3D model is used for visualising the dimensions of the former Roman settlement. Museum Carnunti-

num presents spectacular archaeological finds. In the exhibition “Images of Gods – Images of Humans“ reconstructions, short films and visual displays offer an overview of ancient Roman worship practices. Kulturfabrik Hainburg (a former imperial and royal tobacco factory) provides insights into the world of the great conquerors from prehistory to the 21st century. The region owes its attractiveness to renowned cultural institutions, and its proximity to Vienna and Bratislava is certainly an advantage.
www.noe-landesausstellung.at

Vienna’s pop festival

From 5 to 8 May 2011, the platform “karlsplatz.org” organises for the second time “Wiener Popfest” – Vienna’s pop festival. Festival curator Robert Rotifer relies on alternative artists but does not only cater to a niche segment. Efforts to spark the interest of a larger audience in innovative Austrian pop music benefit the artists themselves. The festival spots the latest trends and developments in pop music. Presenting 26 concerts, the open-air spectacle offers a diverse cross-section of contemporary music production (free admission). Besides the “Lake Stage” at Karlsplatz, Wien-Museum, the Vienna University of Technology, “project space” (the second exhibition premises of Kunsthalle) and “brut“ serve as festival venues. In parallel to the live music programme, a two-day conference delves into the conditions of contemporary pop creation and the economic aspects of the new (Austrian) pop music. Esthetical aspects and the economic opportunities and risks of a rapidly changing industry are addressed in discussion rounds, workshops and lectures. The concerts form an integral part of the conference. Topics such as gender and pop music, the status quo of music journalism or ethics of the flourishing free culture scene will be discussed in “sessions”. Festival manager Christoph Möderndorfer stressed that the unexpected success of last year’s festival both with the audience and the artists demonstrated the importance of a new live platform for the manifold qualities within the Austrian pop music scene. According to Executive City Councillor for Culture Andreas Mailath-Pokorny the aim of the pop festival was not just to present concerts but also to establish networks among pop artists.
<http://popfest.at>

Romy Gala Night at Vienna’s Hofburg

The gala night of the Austrian Film and TV Prize “Romy” – sponsored by the daily “Kurier” and initiated by Rudolf John – took place

for the 22nd time on 16 April 2011. Doris Golphashin was the moderator of the award ceremony. Star guests were Donald Sutherland, Sophia Milos, who presented the Prize of the Jury, and Hayden Panettiere, who became famous in the TV series “Heroes“. The audience elected Ursula Strauss (police inspector in “Schnell ermittelt“) “Most Popular Actress” and Fritz Karl “Most Popular Actor”. Mirjam Weichselbraun won the title “Most Popular Moderator” in the category “show”, while Volker Piesczek won this title in the category “entertainment”. The presenters of the TV news show (ZIB) Marie-Claire Zimmermann and Tarek Leitner shared a Romy trophy in the category “information”. Harald Schmidt, Gert Voss and Andre Heller won the Romy for the “Best TV Documentary“ with their film “Scheitern, Scheitern, besser Scheitern“. Comedian Robert Palfrader received already his fourth Romy. The Prize of the Jury went to Donald Sutherland and Natalie Wörner for their performance in the TV series “Die Säulen der Erde“ (“The Pillars of the Earth”). The Romy for the “Most Popular Actor” in a TV series was awarded to German actress Diana Amft (“Doctor’s Diary“). Udo Jürgens received the platinum Romy trophy for his lifetime achievements.

Two days before the gala night at Hofburg, tribute was paid to the prize winners of the categories “TV and cinema feature films” as well as “TV and cinema documentaries” at Hotel Sofitel.

Andreas Prochaska won the award as the director of the comedy “Die unabsichtliche Entführung der Frau Elfriede Ott“, in which he participated also as a script writer and actor. (“Best Cinema Feature Film“ and “Best Feature Film Script“). The Romy in the category “Best TV Film Director” went to David Schalko for “Aufschneider“. Andreas Prochaska’s TV thriller “Spuren des Bösen“ starring Nina Proll, Erwin Steinhauer and Heino Ferch earned three Romy trophies. One of them went to Czech cameraman David Slama: “Beste TV Film Camera Work“. The prize in the category “Best Cinema Feature Film Producer” was granted to Dieter Pochlatko for “Vielleicht in einem anderen Leben“. Carl-Friedrich Koschnick won in the category “Best Cinema Feature Film Camera Work” with his drama “Jud Süß – Film ohne Gewissen“. Tribute was also paid to director Klaus Hundsichler in the category “Best Cinema Documentary” for “Gypsy spirit, Harri Stojka – eine Reise“.

Karlheinz Töchterle appointed as new Minister of Science

Chairman of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) Michael Spindelegger nominated Karlheinz Töchterle, Rector of the University of Innsbruck and full professor of classical philology, as Minister of Science. Töchterle enjoys a good reputation among rectors, and expectations are very high. The reform of university financing will certainly be the greatest challenge facing Töchterle, and also the University Plan is awaiting completion.

Claudia Schmied presents bill promoting all-day schooling

Minister of Education Claudia Schmied submitted a legislative package to facilitate the realisation of all-day schooling: "Each child in need of care outside normal school hours should benefit from quality full-day care programmes at public schools." Including places in after-school care centres, about 210,000 all-day places for children are to be made available.

The key principles of the new all-day school programmes are smaller groups and more flexible timetables. Moreover, a part-term university course in leisure education lasting two terms will be introduced. The new laws are to enter into force as from the academic year 2011/12.

Doris Bures: Austria's R&D expenditure increases significantly in 2011

According to an estimate of the Austrian statistical office (Statistik Austria), the expenditure on research and development in Austria will rise by 5.0 percent to a total of 8.286 billion euro in the current year. Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures was pleased to inform that "this increase affects both the public sector and private companies." Statistik Austria expects the research expenditure of the private sector to grow by 5.9 percent in 2011.

As the gross domestic product (GDP) is again increasing strongly in 2011, the research ratio will remain on the prior-year level of 2.79 percent. Thus Austria's research ratio is considerably higher than the EU-15 average, which was about 2.1 percent in 2009.

Christa Neuper new Rector of the University of Graz

Brain researcher and Head of the Department of Psychology Christa Neuper is the new Rector of Karl Franzens University in Graz. She announced plans "to provide strong impetus, above all in the area of research". Congratulat-

ing her, Minister for Women's Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek emphasised: "The appointment of Ms. Neuper brings us closer to our target of increasing the number of women in leading positions at Austrian universities."

Eva Blimlinger new Rector at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna

Historian Eva Blimlinger became the new Rector of the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Minister for Women's Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek extended her congratulations and welcomed the fact that Eva Blimlinger was the fourth female rector to be appointed at an Austrian university just within the last few months.

Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture on "Facebook"

By launching its official Facebook fan page, the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture became Austria's first ministry using this channel as part of its overall communication strategy. Besides discussions, news on education and cultural policy, information about events, calls for proposals and scholarships, the page provides an opportunity to glimpse behind the scenes and to learn more about the work of Claudia Schmied and her Ministry.

<http://www.facebook.com/bmukk>

Alfred Adler's urn rediscovered in Edinburgh and returned to Vienna

Alfred Adler, the founder of the school of individual psychology, died during a lecture tour in Aberdeen, Scotland on 28 May 1937. Now the lost ashes of the doctor were rediscovered by the honorary Austrian consul in Scotland, John Clifford, in Edinburgh. 74 years after his death, the Viennese psychoanalyst and "inventor" of the inferiority complex will be buried in a grave of honour of the City of Vienna at the Central Cemetery.

Late Roman graves discovered in Bregenz

During excavations in Bregenz, a team of the Federal Office for the Protection of Historic Monuments discovered numerous graves dating back to the late Roman period. The site includes sixteen so-called inhumation graves and nine remains of cremation burials. The archaeological finds were about 1,700 years old and documented the transition from cremation burial to inhumation in the fourth and fifth century, explained the archaeologists Maria Bader and Andreas Picker.

SPORTS POLICY**Sabrina Filzmoser dedicates her second European championship title to Claudia Heill**

A huge success in judo for Austria! Sabrina Filzmoser won the gold medal in the light-weight division (57 kg) at the European Judo Championships on 21 April 2011 – only some days after the funeral of Claudia Heill, who had been her team colleague for many years.

The 29-year-old woman born in Wels, Olympic silver medallist in Beijing and second in last year's European Championships in Vienna won her second European championship title after 2008. Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos congratulated: "Sabrina Filzmoser excelled in the tournament and won all rounds. She has outshone three-times European champion Ribeiro in the finals and her gold medal was well-deserved." "As the Federal Minister of Defence and Sport, I am very pleased that Sabrina Filzmoser – an active army athlete – also triumphed on behalf of the Austrian Federal Army. I am very moved by the fact that Sabrina delivered this outstanding performance in a phase of deep mourning in the Austrian judo family", stated Darabos.

Sabrina Filzmoser dedicated this gold medal spontaneously to her former training colleague Claudia Heill.

Besides the European championship title, the team of the Austrian Judo Association (ÖJV) celebrated a number of other great achievements in Istanbul. The 27-year-old Viennese Hilde Drexler earned bronze in the category up to 63 kg against Alice Schlesinger from Israel. After being ranked third at Universiade, it is her first medal at European Championships and, consequently, her greatest success. Peter Scharinger (up to 73 kg) was defeated narrowly in the battle for bronze and finished fifth. This gives us good cause to hope that we will also achieve top results at the forthcoming Judo World Cup in Russia.

European Year of Volunteering 2011: sport makes also a contribution

In the framework of the European Year of Volunteering 2011, the European Commission set the following priorities:

- improving the quality of voluntary service
- creating a favourable framework for volunteering in the EU
- support for volunteering by employers
- promoting the mobility of volunteers
- volunteering as a tool against social exclusion

- supporting volunteer projects for older people and strengthening intergenerational dialogue

The Ministry of Sport is represented in a number of expert working groups of the European Commission as well as in the Council Working Group for Sport, which deal among other things with the European Year of Volunteering 2011.

The Hungarian Council Presidency organised a conference in Budapest in January 2011, which focused on the recognition of the economic and social achievements of volunteering. Among the subjects discussed were policy frameworks for data protection in connection with volunteering and the recognition of skills acquired through voluntary work.

Additional meetings on volunteering have been scheduled for 2011. A conference on voluntary helpers will take place in May. The conference on volunteering in Athens in October will examine the contributions of various social groups to voluntary work. The closing conference of the European Year of Volunteering will be held in Warsaw in December. Furthermore, the Polish Council Presidency will organise the conference "Volunteering in Sport" in September 2011.

In Austria a national steering committee on the European Year of Volunteering 2011 – led by the Ministry of Social Affairs – was set up in June 2009. The Ministry of Sport is a member of the national steering committee.

The financial resources required for implementing measures and organising events were earmarked in the sports budget. Projects in the framework of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 are funded from the budget for innovative projects in accordance with the Federal Sports Funding Act. In this context, the fact should be highlighted that the federal sports funding system promotes volunteering in sport organisations, especially since a significant part of the activities could not be realised without the help of volunteers. Ensuring the necessary financial framework, the federal funding system facilitates voluntary work.

According to a Eurobarometer survey presented by the European Commission, volunteering in sport has reached an above-average level in Austria, i.e. 15% of the citizens – compared to an EU-average of 7%.