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HOME AFFAIRS**Bilingual topographical sign posts – Faymann: achieving more together**

The federal government gave the green light for implementing the agreement on bilingual topographical signposts in Carinthia (including a schedule for mounting the first ones) in the session of the Council of Ministers on 7 June 2011. “Thanks to constructive cooperation, a good solution was found” after lengthy discussions, stated Chancellor Werner Faymann.

Based on the package adopted by the government, 164 towns and villages in Carinthia will receive German-Slovene signposts. The government bill had been forwarded to the Constitutional Affairs Committee of the National Council and was expected to be adopted with at least a two-thirds majority of the votes in the last plenary session in early July before the summer break (6 to 8 July 2011), Faymann commented on the schedule. The mounting of the signposts would start in August. “This is a vital step clearly showing that we can achieve more by acting together than by fighting one another“, emphasised the Chancellor.

Vice Chancellor Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger referred to a “historic step for Austria“. The settlement of this conflict also eased the strain in the bilateral relations between Slovenia and Austria, said Spindelegger. Besides the Ethnic Groups Act, the Council of Ministers adopted subsidies of 4 million euro earmarked for Carinthia and Burgenland. These so-called “Referendum Donations“ were granted in commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the referendum held in these two Länder in 1921, when territorial claims were settled with a clear vote in favour of Austria.

Electoral law: reform of postal vote, Habsburg clause was repealed

On 16 June 2011, the National Council passed the Amendment to the Electoral Act 2011 with the votes of the coalition parties – Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) and Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) – as well as two opposition parties, i.e. the Greens and the Alliance for the Future of Austria (BZÖ). The latest amendment entails changes of the postal vote introduced by the electoral law reform in 2007: “Tactical voting“ after the end of (e.g. federal or EU) elections will no longer be possible as the eight-day grace period is abolished. In the future the postal ballots must be received by the respective district election authority no later than at 5 p.m. of the election day. To prevent abuse (e.g. by using postal ballots of other

persons eligible to vote), postal voters have to prove their identity when applying for or picking up postal ballots.

Legal provisions concerning the exclusion of prisoners from elections will be reformed. Persons sentenced to imprisonment of more than one year will not automatically lose eligibility to vote. Courts will have to decide on a case-by-case basis whether prisoners sentenced to more than five years or serving at least one year for offences against the state (terrorism, violation of the law prohibiting National Socialism, electoral offences) may vote.

The so-called “Habsburg clause“ prohibiting members of (former) ruling houses from running for the office of president has been fully repealed. Members of the House of Habsburg will be allowed to present their candidacy in presidential elections. The new regulations are to enter into force on 1 October 2011.

Free nursery year continued

In the session of the Council of Ministers on 15 June 2011, the federal government committed itself to provide continued financing for the free nursery year and adopted the new Eco-Electricity Act (see Economy). The compulsory free nursery year for children aged five years (half-day care) will benefit from annual public subsidies of 70 million euro until 2013. The basis is an agreement on expanding nursery care between the Federal Republic and the Länder (pursuant to §15a of the Federal Constitution Act on the Organisation and Financing of the Health Sector). Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann stated that early support in nurseries offered “great educational opportunities for all children, especially those with inadequate German language skills“.

EHEC: – Berlakovich: regaining consumer confidence

In late July EU compensation would be made available to the vegetable growers hit by the outbreak of EHEC, informed the Ministry of Agriculture on 15 June 2011. Damages had to be reported to the EU Commission by the end of June. Compensation would be paid for vegetables destroyed, but not for revenue losses.

Minister of Agriculture Nikolaus Berlakovich described the increase in EU aid from 150 million to 210 million euro as “a negotiation success“. To facilitate bureaucratic procedures, he called for an Agricultural Crisis Fund with major EU contributions. The Minister considered it vital to regain consumer confidence and to launch marketing measures, for which 1 million euro was made available.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Chancellor Faymann praises outcome of nuclear referendum in Italy**

The clear “no” of the Italian population to the plans of the government of Silvio Berlusconi to revive the nuclear power programme (referendum on 12 June 2011) was generally well received in Austria. According to Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, the referendum in Italy demonstrated very clearly that there was strong activism against atomic power and major support for the anti-nuclear movement“. Moreover, voter turnout reflected “once more the interest and involvement of the citizens in direct democracy“, stated Chancellor Faymann in an interview with the daily “Österreich” on 14 June 2011.

The Chancellor referred to another “stage win“ in the combat for a nuclear-free Europe. Germany and Switzerland had already committed themselves to phasing out nuclear power by 2022 and 2034, respectively. The “no” vote in the referendum in Italy stressed the pressing need to prepare a Europe-wide citizens’ movement against nuclear power, underlined Faymann. The Federal Chancellor considered it realistic that all European nuclear power stations could be shut down by 2050.

Federal President Fischer pays visit to South Tyrol

Federal President Heinz Fischer paid his first official visit to South Tyrol on 10 June 2011. In the episcopal city Bressanone (German name: Brixen) he held talks with Governor Luis Durnwalder. The talks revolved around issues such as a dual citizenship for South Tyroleans, current debates on the self-determination of South Tyrol as well as the relationship between Bolzano (German: Bozen) and Rome.

The question of the dual citizenship was taken “seriously” and examined “carefully”, stated Fischer. A high-ranking delegation of the governing South Tyrolean People’s Party (SVP) will attend an official meeting in Vienna at the end of June.

South Tyrol should feel that Vienna “continued to pay great attention” to this region. Austria recognised the autonomy of South Tyrol, observed the treaty and would “not take any steps to suspend autonomy“, emphasised Fischer.

WEF regional meeting at Hofburg in Vienna

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann formally opened the World Economic Forum (WEF)

meeting in Vienna on 8 June 2011. The two-day regional meeting was devoted to the Central Asian region. About 500 high-ranking participants from the economic and political arenas, including heads of state and government, discussed the economic challenges and opportunities of a profitable expansion into a huge emerging market. Europe and Central Asia shared common interests, e.g. in the area of infrastructure and innovation. Accordingly, the motto of this WEF summit at Hofburg in Vienna was “Expanding the Frontiers of Innovation“.

Austria has also made efforts to intensify and expand existing cooperation. The Black Sea and Caspian Sea region does not only have abundant natural resources but also stands for economic growth and, consequently, profitable business.

In his opening speech Faymann hailed the Nabucco pipeline (the Austrian mineral oil group OMV played a leading role in planning), which would transport gas from this region to Europe and was therefore “of the utmost strategic importance for Europe in the context of energy security”. Foreign Minister Spindelegger described Central Asia as a “promising market“. The Black Sea area was already the third-largest export market for Austrian products (after Germany and Italy).

On the sidelines of the meeting, Faymann held talks with heads of state and government from Hungary, Armenia, Montenegro, Ukraine, Georgia and Kirghizstan.

Austria welcomed candidacy of UN chief Ban Ki-moon for 2nd term

Austria supports the candidacy of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for a second five-year term. On 7 June 2011 Federal President Heinz Fischer welcomed Ban’s announcement to run for re-election. He had “deserved our full support for his candidacy for a second term”, stated Fischer in a press release. Fischer highlighted Ban’s commitment and drew attention to the “excellent cooperation” between the UN Secretary-General and Austria – as well as Vienna as one of the seats of the UN.

US study: Austria among the top ten in the Rule of Law Index

Austria was ranked among the top ten – out of 66 countries – in a comparative study of the “World Justice Project“ (WJP) on the rule of law. In the category “respect for fundamental rights”, Austria is placed fourth. The best results have been achieved by Sweden and Norway.

ECONOMY**National Bank raised GDP forecast for Austria**

The Austrian National Bank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank/OeNB) issued an upward revision of its GDP forecast for Austria. Based on the latest data presented on 17 June 2011, it expects Austria's GDP growth to exceed the euro-zone average also in the years 2012 and 2013. Based on the Austrian National Bank, it is likely that the budget deficit will decrease more significantly than expected. This was mainly due to the favourable economic development, rather than a decline of the debt ratio, explained OeNB Governor Ewald Nowotny.

In Austria the GDP is expected to grow by 3.2% in the current year, while forecasts for the euro-zone range between 1.5% and 2.3%.

The OeNB analysts assume that the Austrian budget deficit will drop to 2.6% of the GDP (gross domestic product) in 2012 and to 2.3% in 2013 – after a projected deficit of 3.0% in the current year and a deficit of 4.6% in 2010.

According to Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner, the upward revision of the data demonstrates the “strong performance of the Austrian enterprises“. The domestic economy had reached the pre-crisis level already in the first quarter of 2011, i.e. much earlier than expected. This proved that Austria had coped well with structural changes and created a sound basis for an upswing, said Mitterlehner. Exports were the main growth engine. In line with the OeNB forecast, they are expected to climb by 10% in 2011.

In the light of the planned fiscal consolidation, OeNB chief Nowotny called for reforms, notably in the pension and healthcare sector, reiterating the demand of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which had, however, also noted the upswing of the Austrian economy.

Amended Eco-Electricity Act: funding climbs to 500 million euro in 2015

On 15 June 2011 the federal government presented its draft amendment to the Eco-Electricity Act to the Council of Ministers. The funding volume is to increase from currently 350 million euro to 500 million euro in 2015. The annual funding amount doubles from 21 million euro to 40 million euro.

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann referred to an “important step on Austria's path towards energy independence“. Austria is to become independent of nuclear electricity imports by 2015. The share of green electricity, especially hydroelectric power, is to go up from 70% to

80% by 2020. As far as renewable energies were concerned, Austria was already “among the leaders in Europe“, said Faymann. The country should achieve full self-sufficiency in energy by 2050. Therefore it was vital to continue strengthening alternative energy sources and boosting energy efficiency, stated Faymann.

Vice Chancellor Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger described the government's eco-electricity bill as a “milestone“. The new model provided an incentive to quick and efficient investment“, stressed also Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner. The aim was to adjust subsidised charges as soon as possible to a market level so as to create more room for the further development of green electricity in the future. Efficient measures to expand eco-electricity would trigger new investment in green technologies, and this would enable Austria to move to electricity self-sufficiency, emphasised Mitterlehner.

Plans provide, inter alia, for a three-fold increase in the wind energy output – from 1,000 megawatt (MW) to 3,000 MW – by the year 2020 and an increase in solar energy production from currently 100 MW to 1,100 MW. As far as the cost contributions made by eco-electricity consumers were concerned, a cap of 20 euro per year was introduced for 300,000 low-income households in Austria. This corresponds to the amount previously charged. The contributions to the costs made by households decrease from above 40% to about 35%.

OMV – Austria's number one group

As a ranking of the economic magazine “trend“ presented on 14 June 2011 showed, the mineral oil group OMV remained Austria's largest enterprise and successfully widened its lead over its rivals in the contest for rank number one in 2010. Last year the OMV reported sales of 23.2 billion euro (+30%), the building group Strabag is ranked second with a revenue of 12.8 billion euro (-1.9%). The food groups Rewe (e.g. Billa, Merkur) and Spar are placed third and fourth. Their sales total 11.84 billion euro (+2.5%) and 11.71 billion euro (+4.3%), respectively.

The revenue of the Austrian subsidiary of the Russian gas group Gazprom (rank 5) surged by about 50% to 11.53 billion euro in 2010. The steel group voestalpine (rank 6) boosted its turnover by 28.1% to 10.95 billion euro. The Vorarlberg-based aluminium producer Steiner reported an increase in sales of 58.6% to 9.04 billion euro.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE

Salzburger Festspiele 2011

In 2011 artistic manager Markus Hinterhäuser is at the helm of the Salzburg Festival ("Salzburger Festspiele"). Alexander Pereira will succeed him in 2012. The programme of the festival (27 July to 30 August 2011) comprises a total of 185 events and 14 venues. Instead of a motto, the festival chose a quotation by the philosophising composer and humanist Luigi Nono about the true purpose of art as its leitmotif: "To awaken the ear, the eye and human thought". The opening speech will be given by German human rights activist Joachim Gauck. Hinterhäuser's **programme highlights** include new productions of Verdi's "Macbeth" (director Peter Stein, conductor Riccardo Muti), Leo Janáček's most eccentric stage work "The Makropulos Affair" (production by Christoph Marthaler, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra led by Esa-Pekka Salonen, Angela Denoke playing the role of Emilia Marty), the concertante performance of the one-act opera "Le Rossignol" by Igor Stravinsky and Tchaikovsky's "Iolanta" (Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, Ivor Bolton, Anna Netrebko). Hinterhäuser incorporated also projects of his predecessor Jürgen Flimm into the programme, namely the Mozart operas "Don Giovanni" (Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yannick Nézet-Seguin), "The Marriage of Figaro" (Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under Robin Ticciati) and "Cosi fan tutte" (Musiciens du Louvre led by Marc Minkowski) adapted by director Claus Guth. Richard Strauss' "Woman Without a Shadow" (Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conductor Christian Thielemann, director Christoph Loy) will also be offered to the festival-goers.

The new productions of Goethe's Faust 1 and 2 on Perner island in Hallein by Nicolas Steemann (together with Philipp Hochmair) and of "Measure for Measure" at Landestheater are – besides the restaging of "Jedermann" ("Everyman") and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" – the main attractions of this year's **performing art programme**. The series "Dichter zu Gast" ("Invited Poets") will accompany the Faust productions and Peter Handke's latest play "Immer noch Sturm" (production Dimiter Gotscheff, stage design by Nestroy Prize winner Katrin Brack). The programme section "Auf eigene Faust" will be opened with the screening of Murnau's silent film classic, for which Tobias Schwenke composed a music score commissioned by the Friends of the Salzburg Festival. It is followed

by a reading by Klaus Maria Brandauer (pianist Lars Vogt). The premiere of Daniel Kehlmann's "Geister in Princeton" (director Christopher Hampton) is a commissioned work about the life of the scientist Kurt Gödel. The Faust version of dramatist Jon Fosse (Ibsen Award winner) is followed by a conversation of psychoanalyst Margarete Mitscherlich with Patrycia Ziolkowska (the Gretchen in the Faust performances) on the radical nature of old age. The series is concluded with a concert – Austrian singer and composer Eva Jantschitsch (project Gustav) presents songs on Goethe's Faust (guest singer Ben Becker).

The cycles "The Fifth Continent" juxtaposing exemplary compositions of the last few decades and "Mahler Scenes" will take centre stage in the **concert programme 2011**. "The Fifth Continent" features Nono's "Prometeo" (conductor Ingo Metzmacher, sound director André Richard), the music theatre work "Neither" by Morton Feldman (inspired in a text by Samuel Beckett) and the three-act play Macbeth by Salvatore Sciarrino. This programme section includes a choreography by Sasha Waltz & Guests – "Continu" with music by Edgard Varèse ("Arcana"), Claude Vivier and Iannis Xenakis – as well as works by John Cage ("Ryoanji"), Karlheinz Stockhausen, Giacinto Scelsi and Georg Friedrich Haas.

The "Mahler Scenes" do not only offer works by Mahler (e.g. Symphony No. 4, "The Song of the Earth") but also Schönberg, Berg and Webern as well as Janáček, Viktor Ullmann, Karl Amadeus Hartmann and Alfred Schnittke. The audience will be delighted by performances by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Pierre Boulez, the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra led by Gustavo Dudamel as well as renowned performers such as Piotr Beczala, Christian Gerhaher, András Schiff, Leif Ove Andsnes, Christopher Maltman, Bruno Ganz and Matthias Goerne.

All string quartets by Shostakovich will be performed by the German Mandelring Quartett. In the framework of the chamber concert series, the Hagen Quartett, the Zehetmair Quartett and the Belcea Quartet will give performances. Camerata Salzburg will for the first time work with conductor Kent Nagano. ORF Radio Symphonieorchester Wien under Cornelius Meister, the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester under Sir Colin Davis, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia under Antonio Pappano, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Riccardo Muti as well as the Berlin Philharmonic Or-

chestra under Sir Simon Rattle were also invited as guest orchestras. The impressive programme is rounded off by song recitals (e.g. Angela Denoke and Thomas Quasthoff), solo concerts with eminent musicians and the traditional Mozart matinees.

The Vienna Philharmonics will be available for four premieres per season as from 2012. From 2013 onwards, one opera per year will receive its world premiere, and compositions have already been commissioned for the period up to 2016, informed Alexander Pereira. After 2012 the festival programme will not include any revivals of past productions.

www.salzburgerfestspiele.at

Salzburger Pfingstfestspiele 2011

In 2011 the Salzburg Whitsun Festival ("Salzburger Pfingstfestspiele") celebrated a brilliant success with a theme-based programme. Delving into the richness and diversity of the Neapolitan School with examples of operas, oratorios and concerts, Riccardo Muti came very close to the ideal of a unique and singular festival in the fifth edition of this cultural event. In 2012 Cecilia Bartoli will be in charge of the artistic management of the festival.

Salzburger Osterfestspiele

Christian Thielemann will become chief conductor of Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden in 2012 and manage the Salzburg Easter Festival ("Salzburger Osterfestspiele") as from 2013. He was music director of Deutsche Oper Berlin, Wagner conductor at the Bayreuth Festival and director of the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra.

Styriarte 2011

The Styrian art festival "Styriarte" will present a programme spanning several epochs (artistic director: Mathis Huber) in Graz from 24 June to 24 July 2011. The motto "The easy is difficult to achieve" has been drawn from the music theory textbook "Gradus ad Parnassum" by Johann Joseph Fux. The Austrian Baroque composer addressed the fundamental question how to create quality music that still appealed to the audience already 300 years ago. Styriarte turns the spotlight on a semi-staged version of Smetana's opera "The Bartered Bride" under conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt. The libretto by Emanuel Züngel, which Smetana had commissioned and authorised personally – today displayed at the Smetana Museum in Prague – will be presented for the first time. The project "Officium Novum" with the Hilliard Ensemble and jazz saxophonist Jan Garbarek, "Folías

Criollas" developed by Jordi Savall with Temembe Ensemble Continuo, Hespèrion XXI and Capella Reial de Catalunya, The King's Singers, the "recreation" orchestra under Michael Hofstetter and musicians such as cellist Heinrich Schiff (Beethoven, Berg, Brahms), the duo Tal & Groethuysen (Goldberg Variations), Rudolf Leopold ("Yesterday" performed with eight cellists) and trombone player Bertl Müller (project "dsudl") explore the festival's key question: What makes music popular? <http://styriarte.com/>

Theatre festival Schäxpir in Linz

The festival under the motto "Let's leave the city" (artistic managers: Renate Plöchl and Stephan Rabl) caters for the young and the young at heart. Staged from 23 June to 3 July 2011, it presents the latest European trends in children's and youth theatre in 48 productions from 10 countries. The focus is on circus and magic, participation and young theatre. 6 plays awarded the Jungwild Prize (a prize for young talents to promote performing arts created for young audiences) in 2010 and 2011 will be presented. "In mir ist ein Tornado" – the play by Christina Scheutz winning the prize in 2011 – will receive its world premiere. In two tents at Domplatz the audience is taken into a world where illusion and magic collide. Justus Neumann's "Circus Elysium" will perform "Das Nibelungenlied". "ohnetitel" will transform the venue into "Circus Coney Island" with three-minute tricks. teatro GLiMT from Denmark and Danstheater AYA from the Netherlands plan to stun and amaze the audience with acrobatics and dance, while the Belgian group "Studio ORKA" lures theatre-goers to Wildberg Palace and a garden centre. Plays from Austria include "Material Girl" by Theater Phönix (based on Aristophanes, about greed and the quest for meaning), "Du Hitler" by u\hof (about frustration and thirst for power), "Old Woman Melodies" by Playground Meridian & The same person (about old age and dreams) as well as Sehnsucht nach Linz" by CIE. Schauacker. <http://schaexpir.at/>

Elfriede Jelinek – dramatist of the Year

The socio-critical collage "Winterreise" earned Elfriede Jelinek the Mühlheim Dramatists Award 2011 (prize money 15,000 euro). The jury of the Mühlheim theatre festival selected the Austrian author and Literature Nobel Prize laureate for the fourth time. Drawing on the song cycle of Franz Schubert and Wilhelm Müller, the scenes of Jelinek's play depict the cold and devastation of a materialist society.

Plans to introduce “early warning systems” in higher schools

In the future the pupils of intermediate and higher academic and vocational schools (secondary level) will not have to repeat a school year because of failing a single subject. Instead, they will be required to repeat only individual modules into which the content of a subject taught in a term is divided. The question where to draw the line when taking a decision if pupils are allowed to move up to a higher level should be discussed again after review, informed the Austrian People’s Party. Pupils having to repeat a year will not lose passes gained in other subjects in the previous year. This would help to eliminate “large-scale grade repetitions”, stated Minister of Education Claudia Schmied.

Secretary of State Ostermayer: “federal government promotes media diversity”

“The federal government had formulated clear objectives for the media sector already in its government programme. Together we wish to safeguard the diversity and competitiveness of the Austrian media landscape as well as to strengthen the dual broadcasting system”, said Secretary of State Josef Ostermayer at the 10th anniversary celebrations of the media authorities Rundfunk & Telekom Regulierungs-GmbH (RTR) and KommAustria in Vienna. Despite the financial and debt crisis, the Austrian federal government was aware of its mandate and did not cut media funding. The roadmap for the future focused particularly on press funding and the adoption of the Media Transparency Act, stated Ostermayer.

EU innovation report: Austria moving up to the “world forefront”

According to Minister of Science and Research Karlheinz Töchterle, the EU’s Innovation Union Competitiveness Report was “a gratifying testimony but also motivation and mandate for Austria to continue pursuing its ambitious goals in science, research and innovation“. The report published every two years was presented on 9 June 2011. From the perspective of the European Commission, Austria was approaching a position at the “world forefront“ in the area of research and development. Special mention was made of the Austrian innovation initiatives in the motor vehicle industry and the sector of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), explained Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures. In her opinion, the findings of the report recognised the value of Austria’s research strategy (FTI).

Official visit of Karlheinz Töchterle to Israel

His first official trip (at bilateral level) took the Minister of Science and Research to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (18 to 21 June 2011).

“In the field of basic research Israel is exemplary, in the best sense of the word”, said the Minister. He drew attention to the Weizmann Institute of Science, which had served as a model for the Institute of Science and Technology (IST) Austria. But Israel’s universities also offered valuable points of departure, the Minister stated, highlighting existing cooperation, e.g. with the Hebrew University. Another issue discussed was the problem of access to universities, which was solved in a completely different way in Israel. According to Töchterle, the Austrian model of unrestricted university access had caused surprise.

Establishment of a platform of the archives of contemporary political history

“The platform of the archives of contemporary political history allows us to secure valuable research infrastructure for the political history of the entire 20th century, to bundle the strengths of individual facilities and to enhance (international) visibility”, said Minister of Science and Research Karlheinz Töchterle.

The inventories of the Bruno Kreisky Archives, the Dr. Wilfried Haslauer Library, the Karl von Vogelsang Institute as well as of the Association of the History of the Labour Movement will be used for research based on an integrated and trans-disciplinary approach. The findings will be made available to the scientific community and interested public. The development and implementation of a network of digital archives is a long-term objective.

Optogenetics: Austrian revolutionises neurosciences

The two most important science journals “Nature” and “Science” agree that optogenetics are one of the most important breakthroughs of the decade. The fundamentals of this research method had been presented in 2002 by the Austrian Gero Miesenböck (then active at the University of Yale), who had already held a lecture on optogenetics before the Nobel Foundation. “By using different methods to influence brain cells with light it has for the first time become possible to intervene in the information flow and signal transmission in a concrete and targeted way as well as to test which intervention leads to which result”, explained Gero Miesenböck.

SPORTS POLICY

Youth Olympic Games 2012 in Innsbruck: third Olympic Village

In 2012 the Youth Olympic Winter Games will be held in Innsbruck for the first time. More than 1,000 young people from all over the world are expected. The third Olympic Village is built in Innsbruck for this purpose in cooperation between the City of Innsbruck, the Land of Tyrol and the federal government. Federal funds amounting to almost 10 million euro have been made available for the Youth Olympic Games (YOG).

After the Youth Olympic Games were premiered in Singapore in 2010, Innsbruck is preparing for its first great Olympic appearance since 1976. In January 2012 Tyrol's capital will be turned again into an Olympic city. The federal government, the Land of Tyrol and the City of Innsbruck have prepared a major investment package for this event. 5 million euro will be made available for realising the games, about 1.5 million euro will be allocated to the renovation of the ski jump hill in Seefeld. In addition, the Austrian Federal Army will provide support services worth 2.5 million euro. Last but not least, the Austrian federal associations for the different sports disciplines will receive special financial aid totalling 500,000 euro in the preliminaries of the games. "The Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck are undoubtedly one of the greatest sports highlights in Austria. Besides the Alpine Skiing World Cup, they are the largest mass-sport event in our country in the next years", explained Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos during a visit to the building site of the Olympic Village on 8 June 2011. "I consider the idea of the youth games a great opportunity for the Olympic movement. We will certainly send out a powerful message when we share the Olympic idea with young people and overcome purely competition-oriented thinking and the frequently excessive commercialisation of high-performance sport – a message that sport can build bridges between the people", emphasised Darabos.

Kick-off for great sporting events

In 2011 the latest campaign of the Ministry of Sport "Join in the game" concentrates on team sports. From July to September, three top events will take place in Austria.

After the European Football Championships 2008 and the European Handball Championships 2010, the American Football World Championships (8 to 16 July 2011), the Fists-

ball World Championships (7 to 14 August 2011) and the European Volleyball Championships (10 to 18 September 2011) will be held in Austria.

These important sporting events were kicked off with the third Day of Action of the "RED-WHITE-RED TEAM" in Innsbruck's Tivoli Stadium on 8 June 2011. Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos attended the Day of Action, which had also attracted numerous world champions and Olympic medallists in various disciplines, including double Olympic champion Benjamin Raich (slalom, giant slalom) as well as the luge world champions and Olympic winners Andreas and Wolfgang Linger.

The RED-WHITE-RED TEAM is the high-performance sports promotion programme of the Ministry of Sport. It is composed of the 500 best athletes of the Republic of Austria. The RED-WHITE-RED TEAM is committed to optimising the performance of Austria's top athletes and to improve the training environment through well-aimed measures.

The RED-WHITE-RED TEAM does not only pursue financial goals to promote sports but also serves as a high-publicity platform for elite sports that communicates vital social and sports-relevant concerns of the federal government.

The key slogan "Join in the game" forming part of the latest information campaign of the RED-WHITE-RED TEAM for the three forthcoming events was not a random choice but selected carefully as it enshrines several messages. All individuals – high-performance athletes, amateurs or sport consumers – have a desire to play and an urge to move. Large-scale sports events offer an ideal opportunity to arouse the enthusiasm of the spectators and to motivate the young and old to engage in sport and exercise.

Under the slogan "Join in the game", TV spots will be shot to familiarise the public with the objectives of the new information campaign on the one hand and to ensure a seamless continuation of previous campaigns such as "We are winners" or "Don't petrify – move!" on the other hand.