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**HOME AFFAIRS****Corruption: Faymann supports ÖVP's call for ban on commissions**

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann welcomed the proposal of Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger (People's Party) to ban dubious commissions paid in the context of contracts awarded by companies owned by or close to the state. "I fully support this proposal", stated Faymann after the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 13 September 2011. However, the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) advocated a "broader set of measures", added Secretary of State for Financial Affairs Andreas Schieder.

Spindelegger recommended for example that intermediaries should be excluded from deals by government-owned companies. If necessary, the transaction would have to be cancelled retroactively.

**The first "income reports" are available**

"Equality should be enshrined in the mission statements of all enterprises", suggested Minister for Women's Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek. Since 31 July 2011, Austrian companies with more than 1,000 employees have a legal obligation to submit "income reports". The Minister explained that she had contacted the 180 enterprises affected in summer. Almost half of them had already answered. This was a very good result, said Heinisch-Hosek.

"We achieved that enterprises really prepare gender pay reports and, what is more, many of them also examine their pay models very closely", stated Heinisch-Hosek. "The income reports have provoked a broad discussion on fair pay and encourage the management to improve equality between women and men."

**Agreement on anti-terrorism package**

The anti-terrorism package discussed by the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP) has been finalised. Individuals publicly advocating violence or acquiring knowledge they could use to carry out terrorist attacks may be subject to (duly authorised) police surveillance. Previously a similar regulation applied to groups consisting of at least three persons.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, a legal basis for "preliminary analyses" was being created. Information provided by foreign secret services about persons maintaining contact with people associated with terrorism may be stored. The courts will also obtain more rights regarding hate speech offences.

**Child custody: family mediation centres launched as a pilot project in autumn**

The pilot project of establishing family mediation centres responsible for child custody matters has been announced quite a while ago. As Minister of Justice Beatrix Karl informed, it will be kicked off in autumn. A working group continues its deliberations on expanding joint custody – an issue arousing controversy in the coalition. The Minister affirmed, however, that she was "not that naïve to believe that joint custody will be feasible in all cases". The reform of the law on family names was another item high on the agenda. Based on its work schedule, the government plans to launch the family law package no later than in autumn 2012. New rules for child visitation are also envisaged.

**Long-term care: Rudolf Hundstorfer calls for solution by the end of 2012**

Talks on the structural reform of the Austrian long-term care system started on 23 September 2011. The subjects for debate comprise future financing schemes for the long-term care sector as well as quality and training standards.

The number of recipients of long-term care benefits is increasing continuously. Based on an initiative of Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer, the discussion on strategies to finance the surging expenses has started.

The Minister expected clarity about the future development of the long-term care system at the end of the negotiations as the current model would end in 2012. Hundstorfer pointed out that the status quo of the healthcare sector in Austria was very good. With regard to long-term care benefits, Austria was a "world champion", nowhere else would so many people draw long-term care benefits, i.e. 5.1 per cent.

**Caritas study cafés for children and young people**

The formal opening of Caritas study cafés was held in Graz on 22 September 2011 in the presence of Secretary of State for Integration Sebastian Kurz and Caritas President Franz Küberl. The study cafés co-funded by the Secretariat of State for Integration provide learning support to kids and young people, notably those with a migration background. The staff of the cafés does not only help pupils doing their homework and preparing for tests and exams but also wants to nurture a passion for learning. By providing healthy snacks with fruit, vegetables and wholemeal bread, this initiative strives to make the youngsters fit for their study sessions.

**EUROPE INTERNATIONAL****Austria's political leaders attend UN General Assembly in New York**

At this year's session of the UN General Assembly in New York (21 to 24 September 2011) Austria was represented by Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger.

On the sidelines of this annual assembly of the 193 UN Member States, numerous bilateral meetings were held. The General Debate focused on the application of the Palestinian leadership for full membership in the UN.

Federal President Fischer met inter alia with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Jordanian King Abdullah II. Bilateral talks were also held with the President of the new UN member South Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit, and Iraqi head of state Jalal Talabani as well as Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Lebanese President Michel Suleiman and Bolivian President Juan Evo Morales.

Besides President Fischer, Faymann and Spindelegger also participated in the opening debate. The Federal Chancellor took advantage of the occasion to hold talks with Ronald Lauder, President of the Jewish World Congress and former US Ambassador to Austria.

Spindelegger met with numerous politicians, including US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the foreign ministers of Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon as well as the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Nabil Elaraby. The Austrian Foreign Minister visited the 9/11 Memorial at Ground Zero. Moreover, he held talks with members of different Jewish organisations and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Austria advocated a common position of the EU with regard to the Palestinian question, Foreign Minister Spindelegger reiterated in his speech to the UN General Assembly on 24 September 2011. According to him, Austria was confident that a united and strong EU could bring Israel and Palestine back to the negotiating table. "There is no alternative to direct negotiations", said Spindelegger. The Middle East quartet of the UN, the EU, the USA and Russia had drawn up a roadmap and had also proposed a concrete timetable. A solution of the conflict was to be achieved by the end of 2012.

**Austria becomes member of the UN Human Rights Council**

After Austria was elected as a new member into the UN Human Rights Council, Secretary of State Wolfgang Waldner stressed the "crucial role" of this institution in the global protection of human rights and presented the priorities for the three-year term in his keynote speech in Geneva on 19 September 2011. Austria pledged its commitment to the protection of religious minorities and journalists as well as to child rights. The civil society was "an important partner" in implementing this programme. With regard to the combat against racism, Waldner highlighted Austria's efforts to promote concrete measures in the framework of the UN.

Austria attached also great importance to ending impunity for severe human rights violations and to introducing a right to compensation for victims and their families. During his official visit, Secretary of State Waldner also met with leading representatives of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and of Geneva-based humanitarian organisations. Together with the Chairman of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child Jean Zermatten, Waldner opened an exhibition on children of imprisoned parents organised by Austria in cooperation with a group of international children's rights NGOs.

On International Children's Day (20 September 2011), Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger emphasised Austria's commitment to the campaign to protect children against violence and exploitation as well as to programmatic cooperation with UNICEF.

**Chancellor Faymann: a stable euro-zone is in Austria's national interest**

After the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 13 September 2011, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann presented the position of the Austrian government on aid for Greece: "We do not wish to fuel the controversy over aid to Greece and to make the situation even more difficult." He explained that insolvency did not mean "that it will not cost us anything. In any case we have to weigh the pros and cons for Austria. Even the weakest Member States will be crucial for a stable euro-zone and stable trade". The Federal Chancellor hoped that Greece would meet the requirements for additional loans. "We are now waiting for the report of the troika (ECB, EU, IMF). On its basis, we will continue to deliberate and prepare very carefully for all contingencies", said Chancellor Faymann.

**ECONOMY****Increase in tourism despite the rain**

Despite the poor weather in July, the Austrian tourism industry may look back on a good summer season. From May to the end of August, the number of guest nights rose by 2.1 per cent (to 47.6 million), compared to the same period of the previous year. The number of guests also increased significantly, i.e. by 4.3 per cent to 13.4 million. These are the latest data published by the Austrian Statistical Office (Statistik Austria). However, the statistics also show that tourists stayed at their holiday destination for shorter periods.

The Austrian accommodation and restaurant sector owes it to its foreign guests that the summer season was not affected too profoundly by the rainfall. Many Germans rediscovered their passion for the Alps. The number of hotel nights of Swiss tourists also showed a markedly favourable trend (plus 10 per cent). The increase in hotel nights of guests from Central and Eastern European countries was particularly strong; guest nights of visitors from Russia and Poland achieved remarkable growth rates of 31.3 per cent and 19.3 per cent, respectively.

**Increased production**

In July the production index of the domestic economy climbed by 4.4 per cent year-on-year but decreased by 1.3 per cent from the previous month. This means that production is losing momentum as in June it had still increased by 5.5 per cent year-on-year and dropped by only 0.8 per cent from prior-month level.

Based on consumption categories, energy and capital goods were the segments increasing most sharply. Grouped by production sectors, manufacturing rose most significantly, i.e. 5.5 per cent year-on-year. The trend in the construction sector was less favourable.

**Austria's budget deficit could drop below three per cent**

Austria's growth will halve to 1.6 per cent in 2012. Nevertheless, the focus will continue to be on budget consolidation. "Austria is taking advantage of the strong growth in the current year, and we could even achieve a budget deficit of below three per cent", said Governor of the Austrian National Bank Ewald Nowotny. Austria had planned to reach a deficit below the Maastricht threshold of three per cent only in 2012 but in view of the nervous markets there was an urgent need in the EU for good news. In fact, it would be good news if there

was another country complying with the Stability Pact, said Nowotny.

**Austria takes centre stage at the Izmir Trade Fair**

From 8 to 18 September 2011, Austria became for the first time a partner country of the Izmir Trade Fair, the largest and oldest trade show in Turkey. The comprehensive economic as well as culinary programme was rounded off by a number of political and cultural events hosted by the Austrian Embassy in Ankara and the Cultural Forum in Istanbul.

**AUA hopes for soft landing in Russia**

For Austrian Airlines (AUA), whose Supervisory Board appointed Jaan Albrecht as the new CEO on 22 September 2011, the end of the lengthy negotiations on landing rights with Russia is in sight. The Russian Ministry of Transport is backing down in the "airline nationality conflict". AUA seems to have secured its landing rights. Russia is obviously prepared to change anachronistic rules in the aviation law.

**The Day of Industry: education is a prerequisite for innovation**

This year's Day of Industry held at Aula der Wissenschaften (Science Auditorium) in Vienna turned the spotlight on education and innovation.

Veit Sorger, President of the Federation of Austrian Industrialists, emphasised that the industrial sector required motivated and above all excellently trained people to promote innovation. "Austria's industry stands for innovation, and innovation requires education", stated Sorger. Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures and Minister of Science Karlheinz Töchterle presented their initiatives to strengthen Austria as a business location to the gathering of Austrian industrialists.

**Wine glasses by Zalto glass manufacturer are a connoisseur's tip**

Five years ago, Martin Hinterleitner from Vienna and his colleague Josef Karner from Lower Austria took over the production facility of the small glass factory Zalto in the Lower Austrian region "Upper Waldviertel".

Glass manufacturer Zalto has earned renown for its wine glasses of the series "Denk Art" among wine connoisseurs from all over the world. 80,000 mouth-blown wine glasses are manufactured per year and supplied to wine-growers, restaurants and wholesalers from New York to Tokyo.

## CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE

**Upcoming event in Lower Austria: “Literature in the Fog” in Heidenreichstein**

The literature festival in the northwest of the Waldviertel region takes place under the motto “Literature in the Fog”. On 21 and 22 October 2011 Somali writer Nuruddin Farah will be the guest of honour. The writer in Diaspora is one of the most important authors of Africa. His body of work revolves around the collapse of Somalia and the fight for survival of the population. Farah gives insights into the effects of violence and suppression, especially against women, and presents freedom, independence and social responsibility as possible alternatives. His descriptions of present-day Africa are thrilling and very clear.

[www.literaturimnebel.at/](http://www.literaturimnebel.at/)

**Kunsthalle Krems: “Lucas Bosch Gelatin” and Matthias Griebler**

The show “**Lucas Bosch Gelatin**” (closing on 6 November 2011) juxtaposes the disturbing imagery of the Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516) and his contemporaries with the works of present-day artists Sarah Lucas from the UK and the Austrian artists collective Gelatin (Wolfgang Gantner, Ali Janka, Florian Reither, Tobias Urban).

Gelatin has already attracted international attention thanks to unconventional performances and giant art installations. Just like Sarah Lucas, the group broadens the scope of the key theme of the fantastic, grotesque and absurd, re-interpreting objects and placing the ordinary into new contexts. The open and experimental design of the show (conceived by Brigitte Borchhardt-Birbaumer and Hans-Peter Wiplinger) encourages dialogue and facilitates the examination of basic constellations of different epochs. Aspects of deviation, alienation and contradiction – the nocturnal knowledge gained through dreams as “the other side of reason” – bridge the gap of 500 years between the artists of the past and those of the present.

In the past few years, **Matthias Griebler** (born in 1972) developed a comprehensive graphic oeuvre reaching from subtle drawings in different techniques and etchings, cut-outs to spacious installations. The centrepiece of his body of work are drawings characterised by precision, virtuosity and witty intelligence. The exhibition at the Factory of Kunsthalle Krems (running until 2 October 2011) is the first solo show devoted to this artist by an Austrian art institution. Griebler is considered an art world insider tip.

[www.kunsthalle.at/](http://www.kunsthalle.at/)

**steirischer herbst 2011**

“Second Worlds” – the leitmotif of the Styrian art festival “steirischer herbst” – explores social, political and psychological parallel worlds by shifting perspectives. The exhibition “Second World” developed by the Croatian curators’ team What, How & for Whom (WHW) also tries to realise this potential by serving as a projection surface for an imaginary and political reorientation. The festival conference “The Patient” examines the role diseases play in this context. As a gated community, the festival district (designed by Maruša Sagadin) also represents a world within the world addressing the subject of “admission and exclusion”.

The festival opening took place on 23 September 2011 with Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker’s dance piece “Cesena” with music of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, exchanging the world of the musicians and that of the dancers. It was followed by Gunilla Heilborn’s “Potato Country”. In the performance “Time to get ready for love” the ensemble “Theater im Bahnhof” tries to revive the past. Eszter Salamon wants to find out how to get rid of the body in her new work “Tales Of The Bodiless” (sound by Cédric Dambain and Terre Thaemlitz).

Hotel, Room 113 (in the festival district) invited the performance artists Hans Rosenström, Ann Liv Young, Orthographe, Heine Røsdal Avdal and Yukiko Shinozaki (deepblue). In a shop the group Apparatus 22 offers a “nightmare therapy”, while Stephen Fiehn and Tyler B. Myers (Cupola Bobber) run a “Public Question Library”. Michikazu Matsune opens his peculiar “Tourist Office” and theatre-maker Jan Ritsema turns a shop into an agora, where 14 artists discuss the concept of public space. The outcome of their discussions will be incorporated in the premiere of “Shakespeare’s As You Like It, A Body Part”.

The festival opens a window to the dramatic world of Argentine-Spanish director Rodrigo García. His piece “Gólgota Picnic” is a furious condemnation of Western civilisation. Young authors reflect on models of cooperation on the stage that cover a wide range of performances and projects. Other exhibitions, the concert series “musikprotokoll” and a movie night enhance the ambitious programme. The festival ends on 16 October 2011.

[www.steirischerherbst.at](http://www.steirischerherbst.at)

**World Press Photo and "Objektiv 11"**

The best international press photos of the last year (171 photos by 54 photographers) – reviving events that have almost been forgotten – are presented at Vienna's photo gallery West-Licht until 9 October 2011. The major part of these photos has been described as "hardcore" by Erik de Kruijf (World Press Photo Foundation), but some of them also bring smiles to the faces of the visitors.

Austria's best press photos are displayed in a parallel exhibition. The Austria Press Photography Award "Objektiv 2011" initiated by the Austrian Press Agency (APA) and Canon Austria was granted in six categories. Heinz Stephan Tesarek became the winner of the Grand Prize and of the category "series" with his photo documentation of the presidential elections in Belarus ("The Call of the Dictator" published in the weekly "News") as well as of the category "local news" ("eyes wide shot" showing young drug consumers in Ukraine). The category "foreign and domestic politics" was won by APA photographer Roland Schlager (photo of Social Minister Hundstorfer and Chairman of the People's Party Karlheinz Kopf during a break of a meeting on the transparency database). The prize in the category "economy" went to Stephan Boroviczeny ("Cleaning Ballerina" published in the daily "Kurier"). Erich Reismann became the number one in the category "art and culture" (photo of actress Gertraud Jesserer published in the theatre magazine "Drama"). Andreas Reichart emerged as the winner of the category "sport" (Nordic Ski World Championships in Oslo, photo agency Gepa pictures). With 650 entries by more than 200 photographers, the photo contest achieved a new record in 2011.

**Yiddish Cultural Autumn Festival 2011**

The objective of Vienna's Yiddish cultural autumn festival organised by the Jewish Institute of Adult Education is to present a wide spectrum of Yiddish culture, to which artists from Austria and abroad contribute.

The events staged between 9 October and 29 November 2011 are ushered in by Arkady Abram Gendler at Konzerthaus. The Klezmer legend collected and authored Yiddish songs in the underground music scene for 50 years despite the strict prohibition of the Soviet regime (the Vienna Jewish Choir presents "Kinderjorn", conducted by Roman Grinberg). The programme includes performances by Vienna-based singer Sveta Kundish (22 October), Mendy Cahan, who was enthusiastically acclaimed last year (30 October), the Chorny/

Gergus duo from Chişinău (Bessarabian-Yiddish programme, 3 November), by Roman Grinberg & Band with singer Tini Kainrath ("Swingt Oyf Yiddish", 6 November) and chief cantor Barzilai (29 November).

[www.jiddischerkulturherbst.at/](http://www.jiddischerkulturherbst.at/)

**Braunau Contemporary History Days**

Representatives from the birth places of Mussolini and Stalin as well as the Obersalzberg community Berchtesgaden participated for the first time in this festival (held under the motto "Difficult Heritage" from 23 to 25 September 2011) to exchange views with the Mayor of Braunau. On 23 September 2011 the permanent exhibition "Documentation of Obersalzberg" (opened in 1999) was presented by historian Albert Feiber in the presence of Berchtesgaden's Mayor Franz Rasp. Giorgio Frassinetti, Mayor of Predappio (Italy), joined a discussion with Braunau's Mayor Hannes Waidbacher and the Director of the Tbilisi Literature Museum Lasha Bakradze on the subject "Unwanted Heritage? Difficult Heritage?" on 24 September 2011. On 25 September 2011 Hollywood producer Branko Lustig ("Schindler's List"), who had been interned in Auschwitz as a child, supported the initiative of Andreas Maislinger (founder of the memorial service) to convert the building where Hitler had been born into a "House of Responsibility". Backing this project, Waidbacher proposed that the Republic of Austria should buy the building and make it accessible to the public as the last tenants had moved out.

**Historic film summer cinema at Hartheim Palace in Upper Austria**

The historic film summer cinema "im fokus" staged at Hartheim Palace – a place of learning and commemoration – offers a new perspective. While films shaped by the ideology of the Third Reich had dominated the programme in the past, this year's summer cinema (20 to 23 September) presented films about National Socialism produced abroad. The screening of US anti-Nazi films of the period 1942 to 1944 started with "Hangman also die!" (about the life of František Svoboda, co-authored by Berthold Brecht).

The now traditional film retrospective at the Mauthausen Memorial (17 to 20 August 2011) focused on survival during the NS regime.

**OECD study "Education at a Glance"**

On 13 September 2011 the OECD presented the study "Education at a Glance 2011". According to the data on Austria, the expenditure

on education as a share in the total budget increased, while it decreased slightly as a percentage of the GDP. Minister of Education Claudia Schmied was satisfied with the progress of the educational reform in Austria documented in the OECD study: “Many reforms are now being realised in the classroom. Topping OECD and EU rankings, we are ‘world champions’ in vocational education. This is a key factor behind Austria’s low youth unemployment, which is the envy of many countries.”

Convinced that this study confirmed his stance, Minister of Science and Research Karlheinz Töchterle stated: “We need to improve the framework to ensure that more students complete their studies”. He proposes access rules and university tuition fees as adequate measures. [OECD study “Education at a Glance”](#)

### **Plan to expand the new comprehensive school system**

A plan to expand the system of new comprehensive schools was drawn up by Minister of Education Claudia Schmied (Social Democratic Party) and Education Spokesman of the People’s Party Werner Amon together with the President of the Regional School Board. All lower secondary schools in Austria should be converted into new comprehensive schools by 2015. The number of schools to be transformed annually in the individual Länder has been laid down recently. Minister Schmied invited also the first four grades of the academic secondary schools “to participate in this success model”. Amon described the agreement as a “good basis for political and programmatic negotiations on preparing the necessary legislation for this project”.

### **Vienna University of Economics among the top 20**

With its “international business management” programme, the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration was placed 18<sup>th</sup> (out of 65) in this year’s “Global Masters in Management” ranking of the “Financial Times”. It had moved up six ranks compared to last year, as the university informed in a press release.

Rector Christoph Badelt described this result as “sensational” since his university had to compete with tertiary-education institutions allowed to restrict access and/or charge fees.

### **Network of political communication formed by five universities**

Five universities from Austria, Hungary, Germany and Romania called into life an international network of political communication. According to political scientist Peter Filzmaier, the aim of “netPol” was to realise transnational education programmes and research projects as well as to establish doctoral programmes, which are expected to be kicked off in Krems and Budapest in 2012/13.

### **Austria will launch first nano-satellites in 2012**

The first two Austrian nano-satellites of the Technical University of Graz and the University of Vienna are ready for takeoff. They will be shot into orbit onboard of an Indian rocket in 2012 and observe the highest-mass and brightest stars in the sky for at least two years. The data provided by the nano-satellites are expected to improve theories about the composition of stars and the history of the universe.

### **European Health Forum Gastein**

The “European Health Forum Gastein 2011” held from 5 to 8 October 2011 addressed European health policy topics. The focus of this year’s meeting was on “Innovation and Health”. The conference was organised in close cooperation with the European Commission, the WHO, the OECD, the World Bank and the EU’s Committee of the Regions.

### **Werner Faymann pays visit to Californian elite university “Caltech”**

Accompanied by California’s former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chancellor Werner Faymann paid a visit to the California Institute of Technology (“Caltech”) on 24 September 2011. Schwarzenegger guided the Chancellor through the pioneering laboratories experimenting with alternative energies. A presentation was given of the latest solar cells, which are the most efficient in the world and provide high energy output also in latitudes with low sun exposure, as well as of fuels expected to reduce CO2 emissions by 80 per cent.

### **ORF production runs for Prix Europa**

Two productions of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) – including the documentary “Bruno Kreisky. Politics and Passion” of the series “People & Powers” – as well as four ORF radio productions were nominated for the Prix Europa 2011 (out of 640 entries from Europe). The European Broadcasting Festival is held in Berlin from 22 to 29 October 2011.

**SPORTS****“Day of Sport“ at Heldenplatz**

The eleventh edition of the “Day of Sport”, (24 September 2011) has once more proved to be a crowd-puller.

“The entire Austrian sport scene flocked to Heldenplatz“, concluded Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos, under whose aegis Austria’s largest open-air sport festival took place.

The “Day of Sport” was an opportunity to meet domestic elite athletes as well as to try out almost all sports disciplines.

“We offered a well-balanced programme, covering elite and mass sports as well as sports disciplines that are fun and trendy“, stated Darabos. The supreme goal of encouraging as many people as possible to practise some sport has again been achieved in a very impressive way. Information and entertainment was offered to the visitors of the “Day of Sport” in 112 information stalls and 130 try-out facilities as well as in a comprehensive accompanying programme.

**Federal Chancellery hosted reception for Austria’s ski aces**

“Skiing has always been important for the Austrian identity, and we are very proud of the top performance of our winter sports athletes“, stated Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in his review of the successful ski season 2010/2011 at a reception hosted by the Federal Chancellery for athletes of the Austrian Ski Association (ÖSV) on 14 September 2011.

The invitation to this festive event was accepted by numerous elite athletes of the Alpine and Nordic disciplines, who will soon start intensive training for the season 2011/2012. Among the guests were also President of the Austrian Ski Association Peter Schröcksnadel, Secretary-General Klaus Leistner as well as numerous coaches and officials. Together with Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos and Secretary of State Josef Ostermayer, the Federal Chancellor congratulated the athletes on the remarkable number of medals won. Darabos also praised the athletic achievements of the ÖSV team and the “good structure and profession management of the ÖSV”. “Austria and winter sports are inseparably linked. The achievements in high-performance sport make also a vital contribution to tourism in Austria“, stated Darabos. In view of the Ski World Cup in Schladming in 2013, he expressed his hope that the athletes would be able to repeat the tremendous success of the past season.

**Upper Austria wants to increase participation in school ski courses**

In 2011 the regional government of Upper Austria invests half a million euro in free ski lift tickets for school ski courses. Since the beginning of the campaign in 2008, the number of participants has risen from 7,000 to 9,000. The programme has been developed to increase the number of kids with a passion for skiing and to help parents to pay for school ski courses, stressed representatives of the regional government and the tourist industry. Moreover, they expected these measures to boost capacity utilisation in winter on a long-term basis.

**Federal Chancellor and Minister of Sport at Euro Volley 2011**

Unfortunately, the great sensation the Austrian team had hoped for did not materialise, but from an organisational point of view the “Euro Volley 2011“ (ending on 18 September 2011) was a tremendous success. The atmosphere was great, particularly in the matches of the preliminary round in which the Austrian team played as well as in the final tournaments in Vienna. The first match of the Austrian team against Slovenia was attended by Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos and many sports celebrities. The match against Turkey as well as the excellent final game between Serbia and Italy was watched live by Minister Darabos.

**Canoeist Corinna Kuhnle wins gold**

After earning the world champion title in Slovenia last year, 24-year-old Federal Army athlete Corinna Kuhnle won again gold in the wild water slalom event in the Canoe World Championships in Slovakia. Minister Darabos congratulated: “I am highly pleased about this achievement, we succeeded once more in defending the world champion title in wild water slalom. As the Minister for National Defence, I am proud that Corinna Kuhnle, being an active Army athlete, triumphed also on behalf of the Austrian Federal Army.“

**Jürgen Melzer wins US Open and Davis Cup team remains in World Group**

Austrian tennis star Jürgen Melzer and his German partner Philipp Petzschner won the Grand Slam title in the men’s double at the US Open. After Wimbledon, this is his second Grand Slam title in the men’s double in 2011. The Austrian Davis Cup team remains in the World Group after defeating Belgium in the play-offs and will compete against Russia in 2012.