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HOME AFFAIRS**Federal Chancellor Faymann in TV programme “ORF Summer Talks”**

On 30 August 2011, Federal Chancellor and SPÖ Chairman Werner Faymann pled once more for a tax on capital and a reform of the Austrian Federal Army in this year’s last “Summer Talks” of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) – a series of interviews with the leaders of the parties represented in Parliament.

According to the Chancellor, a tax on capital could generate additional income of between 500 million and 2 billion euro. Private assets worth more than one million euro should be taxed at rates between 0.3% and 0.7%. This would affect 80,000 persons, i.e. about one percentage of the population, informed Faymann. Companies would for example be entitled to exemptions. And also the pearl necklace would be safe, “nobody will come and check”, the Federal Chancellor stressed emphatically. However, real estate with a value exceeding 1 million euro would be subject to the new tax. Faymann explained that one of the main reasons for his initiative was that Austria was placed second-to-last in an OECD capital tax ranking.

Faymann also plans to reform the so-called “group taxation”. At present, groups may set off foreign losses against their Austrian tax liability. The Chancellor argued that banks were taxed at only 18%, while small and medium-sized enterprises paid an average of 25% of their profits in taxes. Private home builders would not be affected, Faymann stated explicitly.

Regarding the debate on compulsory military service and the reform of the Federal Army, the Chancellor reaffirmed his commitment to the instruments of direct democracy. They should not replace good governance but complement it. Especially in view of the Austrian election system (frequently leading to coalition governments), it would be good to consult the citizens during the parliamentary term, said Faymann.

Council of Ministers: Green light for euro rescue umbrella

Austria was one of the first European governments to endorse the common euro rescue umbrella: “We meet our obligation of contributing to the stabilisation of the euro-zone”, stated Chancellor Werner Faymann after the meeting of the Council of Ministers on 30 August 2011. The aim of the euro rescue umbrella

for countries undergoing periods of turbulence was to help stabilise financial markets.

The guarantees extended by Austria under the euro rescue deal (EFSF) are increased to 21.6 billion euro. With the legislative proposal submitted by the federal government, Austria honours its pledge of raising its share in the increased bailout guarantees of the euro-zone countries. The respective resolution had been adopted by the EU heads of state and government in March.

The callable guarantees under the EFSF (European Financial Stability Facility) total 726 billion euro. Austria’s share amounts to 2.97%. As long as the recipients (Greece, Portugal, Ireland) are able to repay their loans, the Republic of Austria will not have to make any payments.

Telecom Act: more consumer rights

On 30 August 2011, the Council of Ministers passed an Amendment to the Telecommunications Act to strengthen the rights of consumers regarding phone contracts and to protect them more effectively against excessive bills for phone and data services. “This Amendment is expected to create more consumer safety”, explained Minister of Infrastructure Doris Bures.

The Amendment will allow the Austrian Regulatory Authority for Broadcasting and Telecommunications (Rundfunk- und Telekom-Regulierungsbehörde) to issue an ordinance which will place providers under an obligation to make available free and effective bill checking mechanisms to their customers. The customers should be warned when reaching their download limits and also obtain full cost control. Moreover, it should become possible to block data services on request, e.g. to prevent children from excessive downloads.

The minimum term of initial contracts will be limited to 24 months. Providers will have to offer at least one 12-month contract. Furthermore, they should allow consumers to choose between electronic and hardcopy invoices and grant a standard time-limit for disputing phone bills of three months.

Children’s vaccine programme will be expanded

As from next year onwards, free vaccinations will be offered to protect children against pneumococcal and meningococcal infections, announced Minister of Health Alois Stöger on the sidelines of “Forum Alpbach“ on 22 August 2011.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Michael Spindelegger attends meeting of EU foreign ministers in Poland**

The EU foreign ministers deliberated on the initiative of the Arab League to support UN membership of a Palestinian state at their informal meeting in Gdansk and the nearby Baltic Sea resort Sopot on 2 August 2011. Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger suggested that the European countries themselves could submit a Middle East resolution to defuse the conflict about this issue. Europe – to which the Arab countries pay particular attention – should send a joint signal, demanded Spindelegger.

He advocated strongly that the EU should formulate a common position to ensure “that we will not pursue different paths, namely that some countries would grant recognition and some not, while others abstained from taking a position. This would not be a good signal of Europe“, said Spindelegger. The EU should create a text based on its previous Middle East declarations. This paper could then be submitted as a proposal of Europe to the UN General Assembly, stated the Foreign Minister. According to Spindelegger, the EU’s position developed in 2009 and 2010 could serve as a starting point: the Union supported a two-state solution, considered the borders of 1967 the basis for a Middle East deal and proposed Jerusalem as the capital of both countries.

UN mission in Lebanon: Austria sends 160 soldiers

Austria will participate with about 160 male and female soldiers in the UN mission in Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon/UNIFIL) from November onwards. This official announcement was made by Minister of Defence Norbert Darabos on the sidelines of the European Forum Alpbach on 29 August 2011. The Austrian mission preliminarily ending on 31 December 2012 would have logistics tasks. A formal approval of the Council of Ministers and a debate in Parliament are, however, prerequisites for participation of the Austrian Federal Army in the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon.

The main base camp of the Austrian force, which will be responsible for the supply of about 12,000 soldiers, would be located in Naqoura in southwest Lebanon, explained Darabos. Austria had a strong interest in participating in this mission. The training of the soldiers would start in mid-September.

Darabos explained that Austria considered its participation in the mission important as besides the Balkans it also wanted to strengthen its second priority region, the Middle East. The fact that Austria participated with about 1,500 soldiers in (13) missions abroad (this is twice as many as Germany in proportion to its population) made him “proud“, stressed the Minister of Defence. Alongside with civil protection, this was another strong point of the Federal Army. Last but not least, Austria showed very clearly that, while being a neutral state, it was not a ‘free rider’.

The supplies for the mission were made available by the UN, which also refunded parts of the personnel expenses, i.e. 1,000 euro per soldier and month, stated Darabos. Austria’s remaining expenses for the mission had been “earmarked in the budget“, said the Minister of Defence. In the recent budget negotiations 5 million euro had been allocated to future peacekeeping missions abroad.

On 30 August 2011, the Council of Ministers passed an Amendment to the Act on Foreign Missions to create more legal certainty for Austrian soldiers participating in missions abroad. Some of the rules based on international law had been applicable abroad but not in Austria. This legal vacuum has now been eliminated.

Spindelegger in Bern

Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger highlighted the importance of good cooperation among neighbouring countries to cope with international crises at a trilateral meeting with his counterparts from Switzerland and Liechtenstein, Micheline Calmy-Rey and Aurelia Frick, in Bern on 29 August 2011. In concrete terms Spindelegger referred to joint efforts to evacuate citizens from emergencies as recently in North Africa.

Spindelegger described the relations between Austria and Switzerland as “excellent“. The two countries would continue to intensify their close cooperation in the Schengen area. As a result of Spindelegger’s talks in Bern, Austria acts as the Schengen representation of Switzerland in Zagreb, Tirana and Sofia (as from 1 September 2011), while Switzerland will represent Austria in Tiflis (Georgia) as from 1 October 2011.

Africa aid increased to 1.5 million euro

The Council of Ministers gave the go-ahead for increasing aid to Africa to 1.5 million euro on 23 August 2011.

ECONOMY

Employment figures increased

In August the number of employees increased again by 1.5%, peaking at 3,484,000. For the first time in 17 months, also unemployment rose slightly, i.e. by 0.4% or 849 persons to 219,247. Adding the 54,214 persons (-13.8% compared to the same period of the previous year) participating in public training programmes, a total of 273,461 people was jobless in August. But Austria continued to be among Europe's most successful countries in combating unemployment, stated Minister of Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer at the presentation of the latest labour market data on 1 September 2011.

Hundstorfer explained that unemployment had increased by 0.4% as more people were included in the overall statistics. This was due to the decline in training programmes, the inclusion of recipients of guaranteed minimum income in the data as well as the labour market opening for citizens of Eastern European neighbouring countries. The Minister for Social Affairs emphasised that Austria had Europe's lowest unemployment rate (3.7% in July; euro-zone: 10%, EU: 9.5%; based on Eurostat) and recorded a decline in youth unemployment. Hundstorfer admitted, however, that the labour market was showing a minor downward trend.

An analysis of the labour market by groups shows that unemployment of men went down by 1.3% in the past few months, while it increased among women by 2.2%.

As far as youth unemployment was concerned, the number of young people registered as jobless declined by 2.5% in August. The number of apprenticeship seekers dropped by 7.7%. In the age group 50 plus employment (+5.2%) grew more significantly than unemployment (+4.8%). Unemployment of foreigners climbed by 8.2%.

Unemployment in the manufacturing sector decreased again strongly (1%) in August, but failed to reach the level of the recent months. The increase of unemployment of temporary agency workers by 7.3% is interpreted as a "negative leading indicator". The decline in vacancies by 6.7% also suggested a slight downward trend of the labour market.

Based on an analysis by industries, unemployment decreased in trade (-2.5%), the construction sector (-1.9%) and in tourism (-0.6%) but rose in the health and social sector (+5.2%).

The strongest increase in the number of jobless persons was registered in Vienna (+6.8%), whereas the sharpest decline was observed in Vorarlberg (-16.3%).

Looking back on one year of guaranteed minimum income

One year after the introduction of the means-tested guaranteed minimum income, Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer looked back on the first positive results: "The guaranteed minimum income does not only provide social protection but is also a springboard and opportunity for people in difficult life phases", explained Hundstorfer in a joint press conference with the Head of the Public Employment Service Herbert Buchinger on 1 September 2011.

By launching a means-tested guaranteed minimum income scheme in September 2010, we reached a "socio-political milestone" in combating poverty effectively and preventing social exclusion, stressed Hundstorfer. For the first time uniform values in social politics had been defined in Austria. Activation measures ensured fast labour market reintegration and reduced the risk of poverty significantly.

In Austria more than 120,000 persons receive benefits under the means-tested guaranteed income system. Since its introduction, 250,000 people have profited from an increase in unemployment assistance. In the first year, the amount earmarked for unemployment assistance surged by almost 70 million euro. 56% of this total amount went to women.

Since the introduction of the means-tested guaranteed income scheme, 25,000 benefit recipients accepted support proposed by the Public Employment Service. 12,000 beneficiaries have been able to find jobs since September 2010.

Special projects in all the nine Länder of Austria have helped to further improve counselling and labour market integration. The number of persons benefiting from "step2Job" in Vienna has been increased to 7,250 thanks to the success of this project in the past. It provides support to employable social assistance recipients seeking reintegration into the labour market.

Summer tourism: guest record

During the first half of the summer, Austria's tourist industry achieved a plus of 1.7% (30.36 million guest nights). Between May and July, the number of guests increased by 4.3% to a record level of 9.19 million (preliminary figures).

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Ars Electronica 2011 in Linz**

Teaming up with CERN, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, the Ars Electronica festival for art, technology and society titled "Origin – How It All Begins" (artistic directors: Christine Schöpf and Gerfried Stocker) delved into the fascinating world of top-level and fundamental research from 31 August to 6 September 2011. Experts in particle physics reported about it at a symposium. In addition, the actual meaning of the model CERN as a space for different nations to engage in joint research, reflection and invention as well as a model for developing viable concepts of society was explored.

This year's festival edition offered two new highlights. A "Future Festival of the New Generation" titled "Create Your World" was launched, assigning children and young people a prominent role in Ars Electronica. It offered an international platform for discourse on new models and best practices of state-of-the-art education strategies. The focus was on culture education, cooperation between educational and cultural facilities as well as on strategies to communicate science to young people. Besides, the conference "Social Media and Open Society" tried to identify sources of social and political renewal. In this context, the question was raised which role digital media and social networks play in revolts against established regimes (North Africa) and, particularly, in building new democracies.

The renowned festival has turned the spotlight on interdisciplinarity and open meetings between experts and a broad audience since 1979. Symposia, exhibitions, performances and concerts have served as a public platform for investigating social and cultural phenomena emerging from scientific and technological change.

In the framework of the **Prix Ars Electronica 2011**, the Golden Nicas was awarded for projects in seven categories (3611 entries from 74 countries) on 2 September 2011. These "Oscars" of contemporary media art went to Julian Oliver (New Zealand) and Danha Vasiliv (Russia) for their project "Newsweek" in the category Interactive Art. The Chilean organisation for citizens' rights "Fundación Ciudadano Inteligente" won in the category Digital Communities. It had created a web platform for the presidential elections in 2009 to ensure more transparency. In the category Computer Animation/Film/VFX the Nica was conferred on Alessandro Bavari (Italy) for "Metachaos".

Jana Winderen (Norway) won with "Energy Field" in the category Digital Musics & Sound Art. The duo Art Orienté Objet (Marion Laval-Jeantet and Benoît Mangin) won the trophy with their project "May the Horse Live in Me" in the category Hybrid Art. The "next idea", the research prize of voestalpine, went to the Choke Point Project of the Dutch P2P Foundation for raising awareness of how the state and organisations may exercise control at infrastructure level. In the category for young talents "u19 Create Your World" the pupils of the Higher Secondary School for Artistic Design Linz and the Technical College Leonding outshone their rivals with their project "Welterberge:Schulhaus" ("global shelter:school building"). The projects are displayed at Offenes Kulturhaus and form part of the event Höhenrausch2 (Bridges in the Sky).

During the night from 2 to 3 September 2011, the featured artist of the media art festival, Sam Auinger, performed his complex sound installation "100,000 M³ of Moving Air" at St. Mary's Cathedral, which was acclaimed enthusiastically by the audience.

The video project "Linz.Gemeinsam.Leben" ("Linz.Living.Together"), in which 45 employees with a migration background speak about their relationship with Linz, contributed to a positive approach to the subject "migration". It was produced by the group of companies of the City of Linz in cooperation with "Import/Export". www.aec.at/; ORF2, 5 September 2011, 00:00 hrs.

Vienna State Opera 2011/12

During the first season managed by Director Dominique Meyer, the Vienna State Opera saw an impressive attendance average of 98.58%, generating a plus of 2.247 million euro from the prior-year level. For the opera season 2011/12 five opera premiers have been announced, including two premiers (Janáček's "From the House of the Dead", conducted by Franz Welser-Möst, produced by Peter Konwitschny; and Weill's "Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny", conducted by Ingo Metzmacher, directed by Jérôme Deschamps). "La Traviata" led by Bertrand de Billy will be produced by Jean-François Sivadier, while Jürgen Flimm will stage Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito", a coproduction with the Berlin State Opera. The six revivals in the programme comprising 52 works will include "Don Carlo" conducted by Franz Welser-Möst (director: Daniele Abbado) and Wagner's "Ring" under the baton of Christian Thielemann. On closing days, the opera house offers solo concerts.

Wagner's "The Fairies" will be produced for children. Celebrities giving guest performances in the next opera season include Diana Damrau (Lucia di Lammermoor and a recital), Edita Gruberová (in "Roberto Devereux" and a recital), René Fleming (Arabella), Anna Netrebko (2012), Peter Seiffert (Turidu, Othello), Jonas Kaufmann (Faust), Michael Schade and Thomas Quasthoff. The reopening after the summer break will be celebrated on 3 September 2011 with the glamorous revival of "Simon Boccanegra" produced by Peter Stein, starring Plácido Domingo. With "La Traviata" (a coproduction), the first premiere will take place on 9 October 2011. (The impressive production directed by Jean-François Sivadier with Natalie Dessay and Charles Castronovo was presented in Aix-en-Provence in July.). With the second premiere on 11 December 2011, the Janáček cycle is continued. Franz Welser-Möst himself will conduct "From the House of the Dead" (with Sorin Coliban and Misha Didyk).

The **Vienna State Ballet** also looks back on a very successful season. No less than 99.9% of the tickets for "Don Quixote" were sold. Ballet director Manuel Legris, who came to Vienna in 2010 after working for the Paris Opera, planned the important premiere of "Homage to Jerome Robbins" (with music by Philip Glass for "Glass Pieces" and by Frédéric Chopin for "In the Night" and "The Concert") for 12 February 2012. Other premiers will include "La Sylphide" (26 October 2011) and a Nurejev Gala (23 June 2012). A ballet night will be staged at Volksoper on 2 March 2012 ("Carmina Burana", "The Afternoon of a Faun", "Bolero"). "The Sleeping Beauty" and "Anna Karenina" will be re-included in the programme. Legris trains with the ballet company one hour every day. He attends the rehearsals and classes and develops new pieces together with the dancers. While in the past many guest dancers had been invited to work with Vienna's corps de ballet, he gives Vienna-based dancers an opportunity to become soloists.

National Library presents "Old Austria"

The show "Old Austria. People, Countries and Nations in the Habsburg Monarchy" curated by Hans Petschar may be visited in the State Hall of the Austrian National Library (ÖNB) until 30 October 2011. It presents the different nations of the multi-ethnic state as well as the attempts of the empire to depict this multicultural wealth in illustrated books. The respective research activities (starting in 1790 under Emperor Leopold II and ending with the death

of Emperor Francis Joseph in 1916) were part of the Habsburg's political programme. "Die Österreichische Monarchie in Wort und Bild" ("The Austrian Monarchy in Word and Image") initiated by Crown Prince Rudolf in 1883 – referred to as "Crown Prince's Work" – was an essential part of this project. 260 painters, drawers, ethnographers and 430 authors worked on 24 volumes with 4500 illustrations. Some parts such as the statistical tables of the Baron of Metzburg, including a "chart of the Imperial-Royal Army" were, however, kept under lock and key in 1830. The aim of the encyclopaedia was to display harmonious unity in diversity but some passages indicated that national conflicts were looming. The exhibition is a rich source for all those interested in sociology and history. www.onb.ac.at/

African art at Bank Austria Kunstforum

One of the globally most renowned collections of black African tribal art – the Stepic Collection – can be admired in Vienna until 30 September 2011. With the emergence of ethnographic collections in the late 19th century, African aesthetics became accessible to a broad public and inspired artists like Moore, Giacometti, Matisse, Braque and Picasso. Most of the exhibits of the show come from the Grasslands of Cameroon and the Nigerian Nok culture. www.bankaustria-kunstforum.at/

Essl Museum in Klosterneuburg presents Rosa Loy and Neo Rauch

Works never shown before by the artist couple Rosa Loy and Neo Rauch from Leipzig (married since 1985) are presented in the first joint, comprehensive exhibition titled "Behind the Gardens" (closing on 16 November 2011). A dialogue between the exhibits reveals differences and common features. Based on highly different approaches, the works capture irrational moments as well as abysmal expressions of human conditions. www.sammlung-essl.at/

Art project "Nineelevn – We remember" – 10 years after

Artists give individual answers to the question "How did you experience 11 September?" at Vienna's art venue "Ewigkeitsgasse". The exhibition (opening on 11 September in the presence of the American cultural attaché at 1:30 p.m. and closing on 8 October 2011) covers visual arts, literature and music. It will establish links between a "culture of remembrance" of the traumatic terrorist attacks and their aftermath and critical views of the present. www.galeriestudio38.at/NINEELEVN

School year 2011/2012 starts with reforms

The school system faces many reforms at the beginning of the new academic year. The New Secondary School, which has existed as a pilot project since 2008, will be further developed. 434 schools of this type will be available already in autumn. Another large-scale project are all-day facilities for pupils. At present, 120,000 all-day places are available. In this context, the government also supports cooperation between schools and cultural, music or sports associations. Compliance with educational standards will be tested across Austria for the first time from the next school year onwards. These standards define what pupils are supposed to know in the individual subjects in the fourth (German, mathematics) and eight grade (German, mathematics, English).

Cooperation between Technical University Graz and University of Applied Sciences Joanneum

Universities and universities of applied sciences join forces – at least in Styria. The rectors of the Technical University of Graz and the University of Applied Sciences Joanneum, Hans Sünkel and Karl Peter Pfeiffer, agreed to cooperate in the areas of education, research and infrastructure. Minister of Science Karlheinz Töchterle as well as Styria's Research Councillor Kristina Edlinger-Ploder stressed that this project was warmly welcomed and "could by no means be taken for granted".

New "Phoenix" Prize for cooperation between enterprises and research

By instituting a new prize, Minister of Science Karlheinz Töchterle wants to provide a showcase for the commitment of young enterprises to research. The prize "Phoenix – Start-Ups With a Promising Future" will be granted in three categories – for start-ups, for women as innovative entrepreneurs and as a Junior Prize for newcomers. It will be presented for the first time in spring 2012.

Doris Bures: research internships for female students available in autumn

Female students of technical and scientific disciplines will be able to serve high-quality internships in research enterprises and institutions as from autumn, announced Minister of Innovation Bures in the framework of the Alpbach Technology Talks: "More women in research mean more resources for enterprises and better career opportunities for women".

ORF: new directors appointed

On 9 August 2011, incumbent Director-General of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) Alexander Wrabetz was re-elected with 29 out of 35 votes. Secretary of State Josef Ostermayer emphasised that the broad support for Wrabetz in the Foundation Council was a positive sign for a constructive future. At the next meeting of the ORF Foundation Council scheduled for 15 September 2011, the four departmental directors as well as the nine regional directors will be elected.

Minister Reinhold Mitterlehner opened new Youth Information Centre on Media

On 29 August 2011 Minister for Family and Youth Reinhold Mitterlehner opened the new Youth Information Centre on Media of the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth. "With this information and education centre, we wish to raise awareness of the opportunities and risks of the new media among young people and parents", stated the Minister about Europe's only institution of this type. The free services comprise events, seminars and workshops as well as personal counselling and information.

Austrian National Library acquires Wittgenstein's Blue Book

The Austrian National Library acquired a copy of the "Blue Book" from a private owner for its comprehensive collection of works by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was certainly Austria's most important philosopher in the 20th century. The text, which originally had no title, is based on Wittgenstein's dictates to a small circle of close students in his lectures at Cambridge in the years 1933/34. Alongside with the Cambridge Library, the Austrian National Library has one of the most important Wittgenstein collections in the world.

Spectacular discovery in Carnuntum: ruins of gladiator school

On 30 August 2011 experts of the Carnuntum Archaeology Park announced that they had made a "sensational discovery". According to a press release, a large and well-preserved school for Roman gladiators had been discovered on the site of the Archaeology Park in Petronell-Carnuntum (district of Bruck/Leitha). The archaeologists praised the discovery as "unique" in the world – due to the clearly visible building structures, its completeness and size.

SPORTS**Austrian team participates in “Euro Volley 2011” with great optimism**

This year’s American Football and Fistball World Championships are a great success in organisational terms. The next international large-scale event co-hosted by Austria is the “Euro Volley“ will be kicked off on 10 September 2011. Europe’s best 16 teams will compete in Vienna, Innsbruck, Prague and Karlovy Vary, the grand finale will take place in Vienna on 18 September 2011. In the preliminary round of Group A Austria will face Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey.

The volleyball team competing under the red-white-red flag recently achieved a sensational triumph over Brazil.

Fistball World Champs 2011 in Austria set new organisational standards

The Fistball World Championships held in Austria in 2011 were a real feast for sports fans, culminating with the finals on 13 August 2011. The title went to Germany, which had defeated Austria in a gripping duel (4:2). Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos did not only applaud world champion Germany but also praised the Austrian team for its outstanding performance in the final tournament.

Compliments were also paid to the organisational team of the Austrian Firstball Association (ÖFBB). ÖFBB President Karl Weiss was elected president of the International Fistball Association at a recent congress.

Sensational gold medal for canoeists at Canoe Sprint World Champs 2011

The gold medal won in the K-2 500m finals by the Austrian duo Yvonne Schuring and Viktoria Schwarz at the Canoe Sprint World Championships came as a complete surprise. Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos described this success as “another milestone” in canoeing for Austria.

Austrian Army athletes won six medals at the Military World Games

Earning a total of six medals, Austria’s Federal Army athletes were highly successful at the 5th Military World Games in Rio de Janeiro, in which about 4,900 athletes from 112 nations participated.

Gold medals were won by Gernot Kerschbaumer in orienteering (who also clutched a silver medal) and judoka Maximilian Schirnhofner from Salzburg (weight category: -90kg). Silver

in judo went to Hilde Drexler, bronze to Sabrina Filzmoser.

The Games were held under the motto “Peace Through Sport“ to promote peace and understanding between the nations. Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos congratulated the medallists on their impressive proof of excellence.

ÖOC presented anti-doping e-learning tool to NADA

On 29 August 2011, the Austrian Olympic Committee (ÖOC) presented the e-learning tool “Anti-Doping Athlete’s Licence” to the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA), which will be responsible for its further development. The tool had been applied before all IOC events since the Winter Games 2010 in Vancouver. All potential participants in Olympic events have to use this innovative online tool to obtain competition clearance, i.e. a licence. “This training tool has been formally handed over to NADA and is now available for use on a broad basis”, explained ÖOC Secretary-General Peter Mennel. The online course covers the fundamentals of anti-doping education.

Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner reached K2 summit

After some failed attempts in August, the Austrian woman mountaineer reached the second-highest mountain in the world (8,611m) along with the alpinists Maxut Zhumayev, Vassiliy Pivtsov and Darius Zaluski, fulfilling the dream of her life. According to German mountain chronicler Eberhard Jurgalski, only 28 mountaineers in the world succeeded in climbing all 14 of the world’s major peaks. Only ten of them managed to climb them without using supplementary oxygen – and the only woman in this group is Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner.

Going to school by bike

In the current year eleven schools – six in Styria and five in Burgenland – and about 600 pupils participated in “BikeLine” – a project encouraging youngsters to cycle to school together.

The idea is to make the bike again attractive as a means of transport to schools in rural areas. Special routes are developed and meeting points are designated from where pupils can cycle to school together. As the project has been very well received, the campaign will be continued at the beginning of the new term. The objective is to offer “BikeLine” across Austria in spring 2012.