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HOME AFFAIRS

Anti-nuclear power summit – Chancellor Faymann: “coalition of reason”

At the third anti-nuclear power summit in the Federal Chancellery on 16 April 2012, the government, the energy sector and environmental organisations agreed that electric energy labelled as “nuclear electricity” should no longer be sold to Austrian consumers and industries. According to the plans of the government, Austria should become “nuclear-power-free” by 2015 and domestic electricity consumers should be able to decide whether they want to be supplied with nuclear electricity or not.

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann considers this a vital common step against imports of nuclear electricity. “We formed a coalition of reason which will allow us to continue on our path towards a nuclear-free Austria in the future”, said Faymann. The Austrian population had a right to know the sources of the electricity used by them. To enhance Austria’s credibility at European level and to reaffirm its commitment against nuclear power with adequate arguments, the government also had to play a pioneering role in Austria, emphasised the Federal Chancellor.

In a first stage, the government adopted various measures, e.g. a legal requirement to label electricity (with effect 1 January 2015), a ban of electricity with nuclear power certificates as well as the introduction of a “nuclear-power-free seal“ allowing energy utilities to prove that they do not supply or use nuclear electricity.

For household customers the provisions will enter into force already on 1 January 2013. Domestic energy suppliers will enter a voluntary agreement to label and/or supply nuclear-free electricity. Industry customers will be supplied only with nuclear-free energy as from January 2015.

These measures also helped to invalidate the argument that Austria did not produce but import nuclear power, stated Faymann.

Reform of pension funds adopted

The Council of Ministers gave the green light for the reform of the pension fund system (additional company pension plans) on 17 April 2012. The cornerstones of the reform are the “life-phase model” and a so-called “guaranteed pension”.

The life-phase model provides for a choice between conservative and more risky investments. Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann

stressed that every fourth working person in Austria was affected by the pension fund reform. Now each employee could decide on the type of pension investment plan.

Ombudsman Board appointed new Human Rights Advisory Board

On 11 April 2012 the Austrian Ombudsman Board presented its new Human Rights Advisory Board, which will provide advisory services as from 1 July 2012. Just like its predecessor in the Ministry of the Interior, the new Human Rights Advisory Board will be composed of representatives of ministries, NGOs and visiting committees. It has, however, completely different tasks and responsibilities. The new body will be chaired by Renate Kicker (62), a legal and human rights expert from Graz.

As from 1 July 2012 onwards, the Ombudsman Board will monitor the compliance with human rights standards in all places of detention. This will affect about 4,200 public and private institutions, including (remand) prisons but also military barracks, mental institutions, homes for the elderly, nursing homes, shared housing for young people as well as institutions for people with disabilities.

Moreover, the Austrian Ombudsman Board will have a right to push for legal reforms.

Carinthia: all bilingual topographical signposts have been erected

The Ethnic Minorities Act was passed by Parliament as a constitutional law in 2011. Besides other provisions, it contains a list of 164 towns and villages in Carinthia where signposts with bilingual place names have to be erected. According to the Office of the Regional Government of Carinthia, all 164 bilingual signposts have already been mounted.

Innsbruck: runoff election for mayor, Pirate Party in the Municipal Council

According to the official final result of the mayoral and municipal elections in Innsbruck on 15 April 2012, incumbent mayor Christine Oppitz-Plörer of the conservative electoral list “Für Innsbruck“ received 31% of the votes validly cast, the candidate of the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) Christoph Platzgummer garnered 28%. In the Municipal Council both electoral lists have 9 seats. A runoff election for mayor will therefore be held on 29 April 2012. The Greens (8 seats) overtook the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) holding 6 seats. “The Pirate Party of Tyrol” won its first seat, while the Freedom Party received 3 seats.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Fitch: Best rating “triple A” for Austria**

The rating agency Fitch reaffirmed Austria's top rating, i.e. the triple A (AAA) with a stable outlook. Austria had sound economic data, low unemployment and a “relatively favourable” fiscal position within the euro-zone, Fitch justified its rating decision on 17 April 2012. Moreover, the country had a developed, flexible economy, strong domestic institutions as well as a long track record of stability-oriented economic policy. Representatives of the political and economic arenas expressed their satisfaction about Austria's regained top creditworthiness.

According to Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, the triple A rating proved that the government's economic policy was right: “This shows that the Republic of Austria is positioned excellently, enjoys international confidence and is one of the safest and most reliable issuers of government bonds”. Apart from Austria's developed economy and strong institutions, Fitch had also highlighted the Austrian social partnership as a “pillar of a stability-oriented policy”, said the Federal Chancellor. Moreover, Fitch had confirmed that the “stability pact of the federal government was making a vital contribution to budget consolidation”. The decision of the rating agency was expected to help keeping the market interest rates for Austrian government bonds, which are currently historically low, at a level that was commensurate with the growth potential, the employment data, social equilibrium and the country's overall stability, stated Faymann.

Minister of Finance Maria Fekter added that the tax deal recently signed with Switzerland had signalled that Austria would meet its budget targets.

Austria-Switzerland: tax agreement has been signed

Minister of Finance Maria Fekter and her Swiss counterpart Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf signed the tax agreement between Austria and Switzerland in Bern on 13 April 2012. The agreement to tax undeclared bank accounts of Austrian citizens in Switzerland will enter into force on 1 January 2013. The respective tax income will be fully recognised in the budget of 2013. “Thanks to this agreement, we have ensured tax fairness”, stated Minister Fekter after signing the tax deal. The agreement was of crucial importance for Austria as it paved the way for a level playing field in tax competition, said Fekter. In the future the capital

gains tax would be levied either in Austria or in Switzerland.

Austria and Switzerland had agreed that the previously untaxed Austrian capital in Swiss accounts would be subject to a one-off payment at a flat rate of between 15 and 38%. Besides the one-off tax deduction to settle past tax liabilities, a withholding tax on interest income (25%) will be levied. Based on recent calculations, it will yield 50 million euro annually.

The government has provided for an additional tax revenue of about 1 billion euro from previously untaxed Austrian assets in Swiss bank accounts in the budget estimate.

However, it is still unclear how the persons affected will react, whether they will withdraw the money or put up with paying the levy in discharge on previously undeclared Austrian deposits in Switzerland (anonymity will be guaranteed).

Approving the new tax agreement with Switzerland in Vienna on 17 April 2012, the Council of Minister initiated the ratification process in Austria. Now the Parliaments of the two countries were required to become active, stated Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in the press conference after the meeting of the Council of Ministers. He also informed that negotiations on a similar agreement with Liechtenstein had been started.

Federal President Fischer pays official visits to Malta and Lebanon

Federal President Heinz Fischer departed for official visits to Malta (24/25 April 2012) and Lebanon (26/27 April 2012). He is accompanied by his wife Margit, Minister of Defence Norbert Darabos and a trade delegation headed by the Vice President of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO), Richard Schenz.

In Malta President Fischer held official talks with his counterpart George Abela, Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi and other officials.

In Lebanon Heinz Fischer will be received by President Michel Sleimane and meet with Shiite Speaker of Parliament Nabih Berri.

The last item on Fischer's official agenda is a visit to the about 160 Austrian soldiers participating in the mission of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in south Lebanon on the Lebanese-Israeli border.

ECONOMY

Nation branding for Austria

Although Austria usually achieves excellent results in international comparisons of national images, Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner was requested by the federal government to launch a project to analyse and modernise the brand "Austria". "Nation branding for Austria" was not about "developing a new logo or an image campaign for Austria but its aim was to conduct a profound analysis of the identity, strengths and weaknesses of our country as a basis for concrete measures", explained the Minister. Sweden was considered a national branding model to be followed as it highlighted its green policies and practices in applications for hosting large-scale events. The goals of the branding campaign are to strengthen Austria's competitiveness and position as a business location by more effective investment and tourism promotion programmes, providing more powerful incentives to foreign talents, enterprises, researchers and students by recognising innovative ideas as well to create a stronger and more positive profile in international media. Simon Anholt, a globally recognised expert, has been put in charge of process monitoring. The budget of the project "Nation Branding Austria", in which 5 working groups participate, amounts to 740,000 euro.

Largest thermal solar power plant with technology made in Austria

The world's largest thermal solar power plant will start operations in the Saudi-Arabian capital Riyadh. It supplies a university campus with 40,000 students with hot water and heating generated by climate-friendly technology. Both the technical know-how as well as the "hardware" of the plant come from Austria: the Carinthian company GREENoneTEC produced 36,000 m² of solar panels, the Styrian research institute AEE Intec acted as a technical advisor. "Thanks to long-term support programmes for technology and innovation, solar technology made in Austria became a best-selling export hit", stated Minister for Innovation Doris Bures. As far as the domestic use of solar energy is concerned, Austria is ranked fourth globally.

In March 2012 inflation dropped to 2.4%

Based on calculations of the Austrian Statistical Office (Statistik Austria), Austria's inflation rate dropped to 2.4% in March 2012. This is the lowest level since January 2011. The

decline is due to the so-called "statistical base effect". As the prices of mineral oil products had risen substantially already one year ago, the price increase was now lower than in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Safety net for micro-entrepreneurs

Based on a survey of the Austrian Institute for SME Research (co-financed by the Austrian Economic Chamber), Austria has 240,000 one-person enterprises. 44% of them do not plan to change their status or to expand. 70% of the micro-entrepreneurs are satisfied with their occupational situation.

54% of the members of the Austrian Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer Österreich/WKÖ) are one-person enterprises. WKÖ head Christoph Leitl promises them better social protection. He also informed that he did not ask for privileges but rejected discrimination, e.g. with regard to continued pay during sick leave or unequal access to maternity and child-care allowances. A WKÖ member survey will help to gain insights into the priority concerns of the persons affected.

Top marks for business location Austria in international manager survey

"International top managers take a positive view of the viability of the business location Austria and are more optimistic about Europe's competitiveness than expected due to the debt crisis", Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner summarised the findings of a recent survey among 300 international managers. In response to the question which European countries were meeting the requirements of future-oriented business locations, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Austria were given the best marks.

Modernisation of the Austrian railway network

In 2012 several new railway lines will be opened: the Lainz tunnel, the new railway line between Vienna and St. Pölten as well as the Unterinntal line in Tyrol. "2012 is a decisive year for the railways – not only because we celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Austrian Railways. Operations will be kicked off on new lines (i.e. 70 km in tunnels and 100 km of track lines). In addition, the new Central Station will open partially. For our customers this means a quantum leap towards shorter travelling time and more convenience", stated Franz Seiser, CEO of ÖBB Holding AG.

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE**Society of Friends of Music celebrates 200th anniversary in 2012**

In view of this important anniversary, the Society of Friends of Music (Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde) offers a monumental journey through its eventful history and important works at Vienna's Musikverein between 6 May and 17 June 2012. The programme comprises 68 excellent concerts and is concluded with a three-day symposium on world premiers staged at Musikverein.

At the opening concert on 6 May 2012 – including Schubert's Symphony in C Major, dedicated to the Society of Friends of Music – Riccardo Muti will conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. On the same date, Anna Netrebko will give a recital of Russian songs accompanied by Daniel Barenboim. Barenboim will also conduct the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Mozart) on 13 May 2012. He will interpret Bela Bartok on the piano under Pierre Boulez (conducting the Philharmonic Orchestra) on 17 May 2012. Fabio Luisi will present Franz Schmidt's "The Book with Seven Seals". Anne-Sophie Mutter will return to Musikverein with Mozart and Rihm on 30 May 2012.

Another highlight of the programme (1 June 2012) is the re-performance of the concert with which the Brahms Hall was inaugurated in 1870 and in which Clara Schumann participated. Jasminka Stancul and Ildiko Raimondi will inter alia interpret works by Brahms, Schubert and Ernst Rudorff – to find Rudorff's score of "Fantasiestück" ("Fantasy Piece") posed a real challenge to the keepers of the archives. A sophisticated presentation of Arnold Schönberg's "Songs of Gurre" ("Gurrelieder") will be given on 2 June 2012 (world premiere in 1913). Besides the Philharmonic Orchestra led by Zubin Mehta, three choirs, numerous soloists and Thomas Quasthoff as the speaker will be participate in the performance.

Concert-goers will enjoy a highly monumental presentation of the Bruckner Symphony Cycle with Staatskapelle Berlin. Barenboim will conduct all nine symphonies of the great Upper Austrian composer in June. Thus the Manager of Musikverein Thomas Angyan revives the foundation year, when five symphonies by Bruckner received their world premiere.

Danube Festival 2012

This year's Danube Festival (Donaufestival) takes place under the heading "The Expulsion

to Paradise" in Krems from 28 to 30 April as well as from 3 to 5 May 2012. "In times of global financial crises, debt-ridden states, radical social transformation and considerable uncertainty and deliberately created insecurity there is a growing desire for artificial paradises", stated Governor of Lower Austria Pröll. According to Artistic Manager Tomas Zierhofer-Kin, the virtual utopia of "innocence" was to be recreated with the tools of culture.

The CocoRosie Project (on the first festival weekend) is all about creating fairytale lands. Together with outstanding guests, this year's artists-in-residence Bianca & Sierra Casady (US) present the world premier of the popera "Soul Life" (Sierra Casady), the dance performance "Nightshift" (with Bino Sautzvy), the film/music project "Harmless Monster" (CocoRosie create live music for video footage of their fans), the exhibition "Sunday" (with Jean-Marc Ruellan) as well as the CocoRosie All Stars concert "The Eighth Night" (with countless participants).

Electronic legends but also newcomers will make contributions to the sound paradise in the liminal space between acoustic, visual and theatrical experiences created by British video artist and musician Chris Cunningham (first May weekend).

The Dutch collective "Hotel Modern" explores the realm of theatre and performance art at the interface of installation and media art, live filmmaking, puppet theatre and performance art, creating a symbiosis of tragedy and comedy ("Seaplane Mothership" and "Shrimp Tales" at Stadtsaal, one performance per weekend). Sabine Marte presents a world premiere of her performance. God's Entertainment takes the festival visitors on an artistic-touristic discovery trip through the Wachau region.

Kunsthalle Krems exhibits a multimedia installation by John Bock created specifically for the central hall. It conjures up a miraculous landscape of interwoven film and video clips. A photo exhibition of Jean-Marc Ruellan is staged at Forum Frohner. The room installation "Sites of Desire" by Michael Strasser is showcased at the Factory. Schauraum 35/nullnull lures visitors with the installation "cadence irregular" by Werner Schrödl, while Galerie Stadtpark presents two early documentary works by Harun Farocki under the title "All the Right Pictures". Kunsthalle Krems currently hosts the exhibition "Miracles. Art. Science and Religion". Kunstraum Stein exhibits Dan Perjovschi, and Klangraum Krems (Kapitelsaal) is the venue of Hans-Peter Kuhn's sound installation "Out of the Depth".

The films screened at the festival range from the shorts “Animation Avant-garde” to Sigur Rós’ art documentary “Inni” and “The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye”. The festival’s discourse programme explores “ideas of musical paradises” and the “end of feminism”.

www.donaufestival.at

Bavarian-Austrian Regional Exhibition 2012

The cross-border Bavarian-Austria exhibition “Allies – Enemies – Relatives-in-Law” (“Verbündet – Verfeindet – Verschwägert“) will turn the spotlight on the manifold relations between Bavaria and Austria, and in particular on the dynasties of Habsburg and Wittelsbach. The show will be held in parallel in Burghausen in Bavaria as well as in Mattighofen and the former Augustinian Abbey of Ranshofen in Austria from 27 April to 4 November 2012.

The Bavarian presentation (concept by Wolfgang Jahn and others) concentrates on the period from the 8th to 14th century and the common history. Slave trade and Christian mission, agriculture and the coronation of the emperor, knighthood and overseas trade played an important role in the Duchy of Bavaria, then reaching from Lech to Vienna. The people were united by the common “language” Bavarian as well as by life on the Danube shores, the decisive spatial axis. A highlight of the show is Austria’s “birth certificate” dating back to 996. To ensure a conceptual link between the different exhibition venues, the Austrian show (concept by Elisabeth Vavra and others) continues the chronological overview. This outstanding cultural project in the region between Salzburg, Munich and Linz also offers a varied programme of accompanying events.

www.landesausstellung2012.at/;

www.hdbg.de/burghausen/

Crossing Europe 2012

From 24 to 29 April 2012 the Linz-based film festival “Crossing Europe” focuses on contemporary and socio-political art house cinema from Europe, created in particular by a new generation of filmmakers. The presentation of 150 carefully selected films is opened with “Six Million And One” (IL/DE/AT 2011) by Israeli director David Fisher, the literary film “Wuthering Heights” (GB 2011) by British Oscar Award winner Andrea Arnold, “Crulic – The path to Beyond” (RO/PL 2011; director: Anca Damian) as well as the doomsday thriller “Hell” winning critical acclaim in Locarno (DE/CH 2011; director: Tim Fehlbaum). The festival section “Tribute” is devoted to the

oeuvre of Anca Damian (RO). Numerous Upper Austrian film and video productions are represented in the programme section “Local Artists”. www.crossingeurope.at

For the first time two Austrian films at the Cannes International Film Festival

At the 65th Film Festival in Cannes (16 to 27 May 2012) Michael Haneke’s “Amour” and Ulrich Seidl’s “Liebe“ (the first work of his “Paradise” trilogy) will compete for the “Golden Palm”.

Poolinale and Festival du Film Franco-phonie (FFF) in Vienna

After its successful debut in 2011, the Poolinale Music Festival was staged for the second time in Vienna from 18 to 22 April 2012. It was opened with the world premiere of the Austrian production “Eine Möglichkeit zu Leben – Das Nowhere Train Tagebuch” at Filmcasino. Top Kino participated with an exhibition by Icelandic artist Ingibjörg Birgisdóttir, who also presented “Grandma Lo-Fi”, her debut work as a film director. Other contributions included “Sessions“ by the British cult label 4AD, “Get Along” (about the career of Tegan & Sara) and “10 Short Films” illustrating the songs of Bon Iver. The festival closed with Martin Scorsese’s George Harrison documentary.

FFF’12, which has been opened with “Beautiful Lies”, offers a fine selection of French film productions (until 26 April 2012).

www.fffwien.at

Bruno Kreisky Prizes 2011

The prizes were presented by Minister of Education Claudia Schmied at Radiokulturhaus on 20 April 2012. The main prize went to Maja Haderlap, whose novel “Engel des Vergessens” reflects on the history of the Slovene resistance against the NS regime in Carinthia. The special prize for a literary body of work was awarded to the famous (children’s book) author Christine Nöstlinger.

Awards of merit went to Maria Wirth for her book “Christian Broda. Eine politische Biographie“ and economic researcher Markus Marterbauer, who advocates an active and fair distribution policy in “Zahlen bitte”. The special prize for publishers was granted by the Social Democratic Economic Association of Austria to Edition Lex Liszt 12 (Burgenland), focusing on the ethnic minority of Roma, the history of the Jewish communities in Burgenland as well as authors from Burgenland.

www.renner-institut.at

“Long Night of Research” 2012

The “Long Night of Research” is an initiative of the participating Länder. Its aim is to raise awareness of research and development in Austria. On 27 April 2012 8 Länder (the Long Night of Research in Tyrol will take place on 28 April 2012) invite night owls to explore different research areas in 1,382 facilities at 184 different places. “The Long Night of Research” provides unique insights into research to adults and children”, stated Minister of Science and Research Karlheinz Töchterle.

www.lnf2012.at

Austrian Science Fund is of great importance to young researchers

“The annual report of the Science Fund proves impressively that research continues flourishing and that Austria is an attractive research location which can keep up with international standards”, stated Minister of Science and Research Karlheinz Töchterle at the presentation. Never before was the Austrian Science Fund able to finance so many young researchers. The Fund was also of vital importance for basic research at universities: “87 per cent of the applications for funding come from university staff.” www.fwf.ac.at

Opening of “Salzburg Literary Archives”

The “Salzburg Literary Archives” – a literary-historical research centre of the University, the City and the Land of Salzburg – were formally opened on 19 April 2012. They collect and investigate living and posthumous estates of authors with ties to Salzburg and make them available for academic research.

The documents archived comprise original manuscripts and records by authors such as Barbara Frischmuth, Peter Handke, Gert Jonke, Stefan Zweig, Franz Innenhofer, Hermann Bahr, Carl Zuckmayer. The core of the Archives is the collection of literary estates started by the former rector of the University of Salzburg, Adolf Haslinger, in 1977. Another important holding is the archival material of the Salzburg-based publishing house Residenzverlag.

Centre of Meteorology and Geodynamics develops new ground-penetrating radar

The Centre of Meteorology and Geodynamics (Zentralanstalt für Meteorologie und Geodynamik/ZAMG), a research facility of the Ministry of Science and Research is one of the oldest weather services in the world (founded

in 1851). It is among the global leaders in meteorology, climate research and geophysics. On 20 April 2012 a newly developed ground-penetrating system was presented. It supplies three-dimensional images of the subsurface down to several metres in unprecedented detail. In the near future it will be used for research at the famous Viking burial site in Gokstad (Norway). The archaeological site of Carnuntum (Lower Austria) will be re-examined with this system in the next three years.

www.zamg.at

Karl von Vogelsang State Prize winners

On 20 April 2012 the renowned “Karl von Vogelsang State Prizes for History and Social Sciences” were granted to Larry Wolff from New York University for his work “The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture“ as well as to historian Ines Hopfer-Pfister for “Geraubte Identität. Die Gewaltsame ‚Eindeutschung‘ von polnischen Kindern in der NS-Zeit” (literally translated: “Stolen Identity. The Forced ‘Germanisation’ of Polish Children in the NS Period”).

Rector of Vienna University is pleased about new address

The fact that the “request expressed many times” of renaming Dr.-Karl-Lueger-Ring had finally been complied with was a “great pleasure” for the University of Vienna, especially with a view to its 650th anniversary in 2015, emphasised Rector Heinz Engl. The new address “Universitätsring 1, 1010 Vienna” also underlined “the University’s importance for the city”, stated the Rector.

Internet Ombudsman presents Annual Report for 2011

The Annual Report for 2011 presented on 19 April 2012 by the Internet Ombudsman shows very clearly that consumer enquiries have become increasingly diverse and complex. On the one hand, there is an increase in complaints about services – from betting and gambling to online dating sites – and complicated contractual arrangements (e.g. booking of trips). But more and more consumers also voice concerns about data protection, copyrights and a wide range of Internet fraud. About 84 per cent of the complaints were dealt with successfully. The Internet Ombudsman is a body for out-of-court settlement recognised by the European Commission and supported by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection as well as the Federal Chamber of Labour. www.ombudsmann.at

SPORTS**Olympic Summer Games: the countdown to London has begun**

24 athletes from Austria qualifying to date for the XXX. Olympic Summer Games in London (27 July to 12 August 2012) have been accredited by the Austrian Olympic Committee (Österreichisches Olympisches Komitee / ÖOC). The next nomination phases will take place on 9 May and 9 July 2012. "I expect that the Austrian Olympic team will have 70 to 85 members", stated ÖOC Secretary-General Peter Mennel at a "countdown" press conference in Vienna 17 April 2012 – about 100 days before the beginning of the Olympic Games.

The closing date for nomination with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is 9 July 2012. The weekend before is the last chance for athletes to qualify. At present about 50 athletes competing under the red-white-red flag have a guaranteed ticket to London. Thanks to their good position in the ranking, dressage rider Viktoria Max-Theurer, fencer Roland Schlosser and judokas Ludwig Paischer and Sabrina Filzmoser will definitely participate in the Olympic Games.

The official outfitting of the athletes will take place in Vienna on 14/15 July 2012. The athletes will take the oath and participate in the official farewell ceremony hosted by Federal President Heinz Fischer at Hofburg in Vienna one day later (16 July 2012). On this day, the ÖOC will also move into the Olympic Village in London. But not all the athletes will live in the Olympic Village, the sailors, canoeists and rowers (provided that they qualify) will be accommodated in different apartments.

The "Austria House" in London does not only have a great location (opposite the famous Tower) but the building at Trinity Square is also steeped in history. It was built by Samuel Wyatt between 1794 and 1796 and was used as the headquarters of the Lighthouse Service of England, Wales and the Channel Islands for more than 200 years.

Ice hockey: Austria moves up to Group A World Championship in 2013

The Austrian ice hockey team made it back to the elite. On 19 April 2012 the team of the Austrian Ice Hockey Association (ÖEHV) beat Hungary 7:2 (1:2, 2:0, 4:0) at the World Championship/Division 1A in Ljubljana, reaching promotion to the Group A World Championship in 2013 (3 to 19 May) in Stockholm and Helsinki. In the final on 21 April 2012 the Austrian team was defeated by host

Slovenia (2:3) and became second in the final ranking of the Group B World Championship (but will still move up to the Group A World Championship). By returning to the elite, the Austrian team has not only achieved an athletic goal but has also helped to promote young athletes. After a dispute of several years, the Austrian Ice Hockey Association (Österreichischer Eishockeyverband ÖEHV) and the league (Erste Bank Eishockey Liga Austria/EBEL) – which found a cooperation platform in the Austria Hockey Board (AHB) supported by the sponsor of the association and league Erste Bank – will finally pull together.

Vienna City Marathon 2012: Red-White-Red Team – "Clean Running Manifesto"

On 15 April 2012 the "Red-White-Red Team", the high-profile platform of the Ministry of Sport, was represented by a relay team in the 29th Vienna City Marathon, Austria's largest mass sports event. The four runners (Mirneta and Mirnesa Becirovic / jiu-jitsu, Sonja Reisinger-Zinkl / mountain bike orienteering and Youth Olympics winner of 2010 Luis Knabl / triathlon) achieved a remarkable 29th rank (3:12/16) among 1,800 relay teams.

The "Clean Running Manifesto" was an important initiative on the sidelines of the Vienna City Marathon. It has been supported by more than 50,000 persons from 142 nations since 2008. This year the campaign was under the aegis of Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos and the Red-White-Red Team. "Our elite athletes of the Red-White-Red Team participating in the marathon sent out a message that promotes clean sport. By signing the Clean Running Manifesto, we took another step in this direction", stated Darabos.

Railways bought 10 bike wagons

The Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB) acquired ten bicycle transport wagons (with 24 bicycle racks and 36 seats) for their "Regio Biking" programme. Between 7 April and 7 October, the refitted combined wagons with an eye-catching exterior design will be used for connecting transport services or along popular cycle routes on the Danube, Mur, Mürz, March and Lake Neusiedel. If city shuttles are taken into account, the transport capacity increases to over 40 bikes. During the winter season the wagons may be used for transporting skis to winter resorts. At the press conference on the new bike transport service, the Bike & Train Schedule issued by the regional government and the Styrian Transport Network was presented to the public as well.