

## NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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**HOME AFFAIRS****Commemorating the NS victims and the liberation of Mauthausen 65 years ago**

65 years ago, on 5 May 1945, the National Socialist concentration camp Mauthausen was liberated by US troops. 5 May has been observed as Remembrance Day against Violence and Racism since 1989. To mark the occasion, Austria's official representatives held a commemorative ceremony in the historic meeting hall in the Austrian Parliament building. Besides President Heinz Fischer and Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer, the federal government as well as numerous Members of Parliament attended the event. Former Polish Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski (88), a resistance fighter and Auschwitz survivor himself, urged in his commemorative speech "to deal with the past in a responsible manner".

The focus of this year's commemorative ceremony was on a group of pupils who had traced an incident referred to as the "Hare Hunting of Mühlvierele". In February 1945 about 500 Soviet inmates tried to escape from Mauthausen and were killed in an unparalleled manhunt, in which the local population joined in.

After the commemorative ceremony in Parliament, Chancellor Faymann and Bartoszewski held face-to-face talks. Faymann praised Bartoszewski's commitment to dialogue, public education about the past and reconciliation.

The centrepiece of this year's liberation ceremony in the former Mauthausen concentration camp and its subcamps was the memorial ceremony in Mauthausen on 9 May 2010 attended by delegations from all over the world. It turned the spotlight on children and young people detained in the concentration camp. In March 1945, 15,000 kids and teens (aged between four and 20 years) were registered under their names in Mauthausen. In Mauthausen and its 49 subcamps (mostly on Austrian territory) about 200,000 people were detained in inhumane conditions. About half of them did not survive this murderous annihilation machinery.

**Government celebrated 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the rebirth of Austria**

The federal government commemorated the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Austrian Declaration of Independence in a ceremony on 27 April 2010. On 27 April 1945 the provisional state government formed by the Social Democrats (SPÖ), the People's Party (ÖVP) and the KPÖ (Communist Party of Austria) led by then Chancellor Karl Renner proclaimed Austria's independence from the German Reich.

After the wreath-laying ceremony in the crypt at Burgtor (outer gate to Hofburg) in Vienna, Chancellor Faymann held a speech to pupils in a marquee at Heldenplatz. Faymann reminded of the founding fathers of the Second Republic. By establishing independence, they "laid the foundations for our present society", namely clear commitment to democracy and freedom, anti-Fascism, openness and solidarity.

The Federal Chancellor urged the Austrian parties to demonstrate humility when it came to respecting the will of the people and to fulfil their duty of "participating in democracy actively and anytime". Otherwise, there was a danger of radicalization and rifts in society, of which there was "dramatic evidence" in Austria's contemporary history.

Moreover, the Republic had to fight all attempts to weaken the achievements of democracy, demanded Faymann. He distanced himself vehemently and emphatically from violence, Fascism and National Socialism. Especially today, the numerous victims of the fight against the NS dictatorship and for freedom had to be commemorated. Without their sacrifice, Austria would not have regained its freedom. According to Faymann, it was also indispensable to communicate clearly that Austria recognised its shared responsibility for the war of aggression of Hitler's Germany.

"We must not yield an inch if irresponsible political rivals ignoring the historical facts call for less strict enforcement of the laws prohibiting National Socialism" because they continued to cling to "old" views. Any violation of these laws caused damage to the Republic of Austria and its people, Faymann pled fervently. Thanks to its "visionary, self-confident policy" Austria now enjoyed an uncontested position in the world, and as the seat of the UN and other international organisations Vienna had become a hub for understanding, reconciliation and peace, emphasized Faymann.

15 years ago, the population had voted in favour of Austria's EU membership as it understood that growing global problems such as the financial crisis, climate change, security of energy supplies, migration, crime or international security could no longer be coped with at national level. Only a united Europe would be able to co-shape the world on the basis of fundamental values, Faymann expressed his conviction.

The 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Federation of Austrian Trade Unions (Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund) was also celebrated on 27 April 2010. Its merits were praised by Chancellor Faymann and President Heinz Fischer.

**EUROPE INTERNATIONAL****EU/Greece: Federal Chancellor Faymann at special summit in Brussels**

The heads of state and government of the euro-zone held a special summit on a bailout package for Greece in Brussels on 7 May 2010. Austria was represented by Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann. The euro-zone countries formally agreed on details and a timetable for the financial aid amounting to 110 billion euro to be handed out to Athens. In the context of its general rescue campaign for the euro, the EU will also create a permanent crisis resolution mechanism for the euro-zone. The EU wanted “to get away from the instrument of bilateral aid and introduce Community measures”, explained Federal Chancellor Faymann. At a meeting of ministers of finance in Brussels on 9 May 2010, the EU and the IMF adopted a 750-billion-euro emergency rescue package for euro-zone countries at risk to protect the single currency against speculative attacks in the financial markets. If required, the EU and the IMF will be able to activate jointly 60 billion euro; this amount will be supplemented by 440 billion euro (granted as guarantees) from the euro-zone members and a maximum of 250 billion euro from the IMF itself. According to the Finance Minister Josef Pröll, this results in a total guarantee limit of 12 to 13 billion euro.

**Loan to Greece: Austria's share is 2.3 billion euro**

Just like all the other euro-zone countries, Austria participated in the rescue package for the highly indebted Greece. In the session of the Council of Ministers on 4 May 2010, the federal government approved an increase of the credit limit. The currently known share of Austria in the rescue package of the euro-zone countries (80 billion euro) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF; 30 billion euro) for Greece amounts to about 2.3 billion euro. Previously, the legal cap was 2 billion euro. The respective amendments still have to be endorsed by the National Council.

“A joint approach to aid for Greece is indispensable to avoid conflagration”, stated Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann after the session of the Council of Ministers. Faymann also stressed that Greece would receive the credit only if it fulfilled strict conditions and that the money would be paid out in several instalments. “The 2.3 billion euro are not a gift but a loan facility of a limited duration of three years and a which five-percent interest rate

will be charged on it”, said Faymann. At present, it was impossible to predict whether additional funds would become necessary.

**Spindelegger at UN Nuclear Conference in New York – meeting with Clinton**

The almost 190 signatories of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty met for their regular Review Conference in New York on 3 May 2010. At the four-week meeting, deliberations are to be held on progress in implementing the Treaty as well as on strengthening control mechanisms. Austria was represented by Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad caused a scandal at the meeting. He accused the USA of not only having used the bomb in the past but of threatening other countries with it in the present. After this statement, the delegations of the USA and several European countries, among them Great Britain, France, Germany and Austria (currently non-permanent Member of the UN Security Council) walked out of the meeting hall.

During his stay in New York, Spindelegger also met with his US counterpart Hillary Clinton for an “in-depth exchange of ideas”. Clinton welcomed the “clear words” of Spindelegger to Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki during his official visit to Vienna on 25 April 2010. Austria's Foreign Minister had requested Iran to offer guarantees that the Iranian nuclear programme served exclusively civilian purposes. Iran had to regain the confidence of the international community.

Spindelegger acknowledged the recent initiatives of the USA to provide fresh impetus to global disarmament efforts.

**Spindelegger pays official visit to Finland and Sweden**

Austrian Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger paid official visits to Finland and Sweden from 24 to 27 April 2010. In Helsinki, Spindelegger held talks with various officials, including President Tarja Halonen and his counterpart Alexander Stubb. The two countries called for better coordination of the Baltic Sea and Danube Region Strategies of the EU.

In Stockholm, Minister Spindelegger conferred with Minister of Labour Sven Otto Littorin about labour market policy, focusing on the issue of older workers. In Sweden the share of older workers in the active population is significantly higher than in Austria.

**ECONOMY****Siemens: Brigitte Ederer appointed as Head of Human Resources and Europe**

Siemens Austria boss Brigitte Ederer (54) will become Head of Human Resources and of the Business Unit "Europe" of the Siemens Group headquartered in Munich as from 1 July 2010. Ederer's supervisor will be the Group's CEO Peter Löscher, who is also Austrian. The future Head of Human Resources represented in the Managing Board of the Siemens headquarters will be responsible for about 400,000 employees. In addition, the former member of the Municipal Council of Vienna and committed European politician – as Secretary of State for European Affairs in Franz Vranitzky's Cabinet she participated in Austria's EU accession negotiations – will chair the Supervisory Board of Siemens AG Österreich. In Munich, Ederer succeeds to Siegfried Russwurm, who becomes Head of the Sector "Industry".

Besides Barbara Kux responsible for procurement, Ederer is the second woman moving up to a leading position in the enterprise. Moreover, she is only the third woman in the managing board of a group listed on the German Stock Exchange (DAX). Ederer was born in Vienna on 27 February 1956 and graduated in economics.

The Munich-based technology group Siemens is active in three sectors: health, energy and industry. More than half of the turnover totaling 77.3 billion euro (2008) is achieved in the regions Europe, CIS and Africa.

**China – Austria: a promising market for environmental technology**

"We want to participate in the greening of the Chinese dragon", said Minister of the Environment Niki Berlakovich to Austrian media representatives in Beijing on 5 May 2010 during a four-day trade mission to Beijing, Nanjing and Shanghai (EXPO 2010). He was accompanied by the President of the Vienna Economic Chamber (WKW), Brigitte Jank, and numerous company representatives. The aim of the tour through the Middle Kingdom was to explore market and business opportunities for so-called "green technologies".

In view of massive environmental problems, the Chinese government invests 250 billion euro alone into environmental protection in the next two years. China plans to spend a total of 40% of the GDP on infrastructure projects – more than any other country in the world. "These are very promising prospects Austria has to take advantage of now", underlined

Minister Berlakovich. In talks with for example the Chinese Ministers for Environment and Agriculture the strong interest in cooperation with Austrian companies had been manifest.

WKW head Jank also perceived a great potential for marketing domestic environmental technology in China. The country was a growing market with increasing income. Air and water pollution as well as the growing waste mountains in urban agglomerations were major challenges facing the Chinese economy and society, explained Jank. 70% of the rivers and lakes of China were polluted by waste water, about one third of the population did not have access to clean potable water and 16 of the 20 cities with the worst air quality in the world were located in China.

China is Austria's largest trading partner in Asia. Austrian exports to China are expected to double to 4 billion euro in the next five years. In 2007 Austrian companies supplied environmental technology worth 110 million euro to China; this corresponds to more than 5% of the domestic exports to China. Among the large-scale projects of Austrian companies currently realized in China are a biodiesel plant of BDI in Hong Kong, a sinter plant by AE&E as well as a sewage treatment plant by VA Tech Wabag in Beijing.

**Forecast: fast recovery in 2010 – Austria's GDP grows by 1.3 percent**

According to the spring forecast of the European Commission, the economy will recover faster than originally expected. Austria's economy is likely to grow by 1.3% in 2010; this is 0.2 percentage points above the level assumed in autumn. The growth forecasts for the EU-27 were revised upwards by a quarter of a percentage point; a plus of 1.0% is expected for the current year. A growth rate of 0.9% (+0.2 percentage points) is estimated for the euro-zone.

**Trade supports economy – 3.1 percent sales plus in the first quarter**

Austria's stationary trade reported a sales plus of 3.8% in nominal terms in the first quarter of 2010, corresponding to a real growth of 3.1%. This means that Austria's retail trade is developing better than the overall economy. "It is trade and the consumers that support the economy", the Chairman of the Federal Trade Department of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKÖ) was pleased to state on 27 April 2010.

**CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE****State Prize for Educational Journalism to editor Lisa Nimmervoll**

On 3 May, the World Press Freedom Day, Minister of Education Claudia Schmied granted the Austrian State Prize as well as the Educational Journalism Advancement Award for the second time: to Lisa Nimmervoll, editor of the daily "Standard", and Tina Goebel, editor of the magazine "profil". The presentation speeches were held by former "Standard" editor-in-chief Gerfried Sperl and "profil" editor Robert Buchacher.

State Prize winner Lisa Nimmervoll was born in Linz in 1972. After studying sociology at the University of Linz, she worked for the Upper Austrian branch of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) and at the office of "Standard" in Linz. Since 2000, she has been the editor for domestic policy of "Standard" in Vienna, focusing on educational policy.

"With this prize, I want to send out a signal to show how important responsible journalism is for discourse on educational policy and for education in general. This new prize has won recognition as an important public distinction and sets an example as a 'best practice'", stated Minister of Education Schmied.

The jury acknowledged the great expertise in educational policy but also the outstanding linguistic skills of the State Prize winner. Moreover, it highlighted that the winner of the Educational Journalism Advancement Award stood out for her lively "dialogic" journalism and the use of new media.

**Franziska Ullmann and Peter Ebner at the Venice Architecture Biennale**

Under the title, "People meet in architecture" the 12<sup>th</sup> Venice Architecture Biennale will take place from 29 August to 21 November 2010. 43 architects, engineers and artists from all over the world will participate in the exhibition. "The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century ends with numerous radical changes. In this context, architecture may become the voice of new values and new lifestyles. This Architecture Biennale should offer an opportunity to experiment with the countless possibilities of architecture", said the new Director of the Architecture Biennale, Japanese architect Kazuyo Sejima, who selected also two Austrians for the main show, namely Franziska Ullmann and Peter Ebner. "Each participant may use the exhibition space assigned to him/her completely independently and make a personal interpretation of the theme of the 12<sup>th</sup> Architec-

ture Biennale. Thus every architect will be able to present his/her perception of the interplay between environment and society", stated Sejima, who designed some of the most interesting architecture projects of the past few years, e.g. the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, the Christian Dior Building in Tokyo and the last pavilion of Serpentine Gallery in London. The architect, who had worked for a long time with Arata Isozaki, the doyen of Japanese architecture, will receive the Pritzker Prize together with her colleague Ryue Nishizawa on 17 May 2010.

Besides numerous new projects, the Architecture Biennale will also present films on large screens, photos and three-dimensional prints. In addition to the international presentation in the 300-meter-long "Arsenale" shipyards, individual countries will display their contributions in 56 national pavilions situated in the park "Giardini della Biennale" also in 2010. US Architect Eric Owen Moss is the curator of the Austrian contribution titled "Austria under Construction: Austrian Architecture around the World; International Architecture in Austria".

[www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org)

**Karl and Schmied struggle to solve the problem of crowded universities**

Minister of Science Beatrix Karl (Austrian People's Party) hopes that a solution on the new student orientation programme ("STEP New") will be found still before the summer. Talks with the coalition partner would start soon, she stated before the Council of Ministers on 4 May 2010. Minister of Education Schmied (Social Democratic Party) expressed her willingness to conduct constructive talks. The new programme should become effective only from the academic year 2011/2012 onwards, explained Minister Karl, for the universities needed time for implementation. Schmied emphasized that it was much too early to assess the proposal. It was clear to her that access to universities had to remain free but needed to be organized. Schmied rejected the criticism of the Association of Austrian Students (Österreichische Hochschülerschaft / ÖH) that the programme "STEP New" could mean the end of unrestricted university access. It all depended on the arrangements. Intensive talks had to be held on the University Act (Universitätsgesetz) as well as for example a model for funding university places. She could not imagine that the successful completion of the programme "STEP New" would depend only on a single exam. In this context, Karl stressed that there were different models, e.g.

multi-phase programmes. The special requirements of the different studies could be taken into account and the universities could be given more leeway. She also considered it possible to subject university places in individual disciplines to special requirements. But the Minister of Science clarified that this would not be a knockout system. According to her, a qualitative admission procedure was envisaged, the aim were not fewer students but a better distribution as currently 60 percent of the students chose only ten percent of the disciplines.

On 4 May 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted a decree in accordance with the Emergency Clause of the University Act. Based on this decree, admission restrictions for journalism studies were introduced. The government did not come up with a solution for architecture studies and the bachelor programme in economics and social sciences (University of Economics), for which requests had been submitted to reduce the number of new students.

Minister Karl stated in response to the question whether "STEP New" was to replace the so-called "Emergency Clause" in the University Act that this clause had proven to be insufficient and implied legal uncertainty. But what was needed was transparency for the students and planning certainty for the universities. Schmied also stressed that the programme "STEP New" was "absolutely indispensable".

### **Vienna: Boris Pahor received the Austrian Cross of Honour**

Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied awarded the Grand Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art to Slovenian writer Boris Pahor, 96, at a ceremony in the Audience Hall of the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture on 26 April 2010. Schmied: "The texts of Boris Pahor are literary documents about an era, human testimonies of the past and an impressive warning for the future. Boris Pahor has lived his life caught in a clash between state domination and personal subversion. His biography is an attempt at self-determination in a world of various kinds of tutelage. But it is also a struggle for mere survival".

Born in Trieste in 1913, still during the Hapsburg monarchy, Boris Pahor belonged to the Slovenian minority (18 percent), that had been suppressed by the Italians after the end of WWI. and was forbidden to use its mother tongue in public life. In 1922, Mussolini's Fascists rigidly started the Italianisation of the Slovenes. After studying in Koper and Gorizia (former German name: Görz), he was con-

scripted into the Italian Army and sent to Libya in 1940 to fight against the British. He then became an interpreter for Yugoslav officers held as prisoners of war at Lake Garda. After the collapse of Fascism in Italy in autumn 1943, Pahor returned to Trieste, joined the Slovenian liberation movement, was arrested in January 1944, handed over to Gestapo, deported to Dachau and later to three other concentration camps. In 1945, he was freed from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Boris Pahor told Maria Handler of the Austrian Press Agency (APA): "As an interpreter and a nurse, I accompanied people before their death in the crematorium. I want to write about these people whom nobody talks about anymore. People from all over the world and of all religions were detained in the camps and they had to work for the German Reich until their death". Pahor returned to Trieste, studied literature and then taught at Slovenian grammar schools for more than 20 years. Since 1975, he has lived as a writer in Trieste-Barkovlje. Today he is renowned as one of the great masters of Slovenian contemporary literature. His work is mentioned in the same breath as that of Jean Améry, Primo Levi, Jorge Semprún or Imre Kertész.

Pahor started his literary career by writing novellas. In 1967, he authored the novel "Necropolis". Recent German translations of his work are: "Villa am See" ("The Villa by the Lake"), "Nomaden ohne Oase" (Nomads without an Oasis), "Im Labyrinth" ("In the Labyrinth") and "Geheime Sprachgeschenke" ("The Steamer Sounds a Horn for Her"). His novel "Die Verdunkelung" (Hermagoras Verlag, Klagenfurt/Ljubljana/Vienna 2009 – original: "Zatemnitev", 1975; English translation: "Twilight") with strongly autobiographical characteristics drew the critics' special praise.

At the ceremony the great old man was by no means forthcoming, explaining that his "Slovenian compatriots in Carinthia were exposed to strong assimilation, even though everybody realizes that the decision whether to comply with the provisions of the Austrian State Treaty or not is left to the local officialdom in Carinthia". He added: "Maybe objections will be raised that somebody receiving an award should not admonish the bestower but I think that as members of a united Europe we can exchange our views openly". The author also told APA: "It is completely incomprehensible that such an attitude is adopted in a culturally refined environment. A cultural nation like Austria should solve this problem effortlessly. Local politicians should not be allowed

to decide about a state treaty. Austria should not be submissive to Carinthia“.

### **JMW: Turks in Vienna. The history of a Jewish Community**

The Jewish Museum Vienna (JMW) presents the exhibition “Turks in Vienna. The History of a Jewish Community” from 12 May to 31 October 2010. 1492 was a fateful year for Spain. The 800-year Arab-Muslim rule was brought to an end by the final Reconquista, the Jews were ousted from the country and Christopher Columbus discovered the New World. The exhibition focuses on the effects of one of these three decisive historical events marking the end of the Middle Ages in Europe: the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, who found a new home in Northern Africa, in some Italian cities and above all the Ottoman Empire. Having fled first to Portugal, the Jews later left the Iberian peninsula and moved to the Netherlands and northern Germany. In the wake of the Ottoman conquests in Europe, the Jews of Spanish descent, the so-called Sephardic Jews succeeded in founding culturally and economically important communities in the Balkans. Already at the time of the Jewish ghetto “Unteres Werd”, in today’s 2<sup>nd</sup> district of Vienna, there was contact between the Viennese Jews and the Sephardic – i.e. the Turkish – Jews. But the Turkish Jewish were granted freedom of movement only after peace treaties were signed between the Hapsburg and the Ottoman Empires in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

After the foundation of the Turkish-Jewish community in Vienna, it was guaranteed freedom of worship and religion by virtue of an Imperial Edict. In 1887 the impressive Moorish-style Sephardic-Turkish temple in Zirkusgasse was consecrated. The portraits of the Hapsburg and Ottoman rulers in the vestibule of the temple expressed loyal respect to the two majesties and countries. In 1938 this temple was destroyed like almost all the other synagogues and prayer houses in Vienna, a major part of the members of the community were deported and killed.

The Sephardic Jews of Vienna were mediators between the Orient and Occident in many ways – as merchants and traders. The exhibition also spotlights their role as representatives of the Austrian Mail Services in Constantinople and in the Levant, of the shipping company “Austrian Lloyd” and the Orient Express train. The Sephardic Turks were mediators also in the cultural sphere. In Constantinople they established the first print shop and in Vienna a

Sephardic press. The Sephardic Jews also provided important stimuli to the rabbinic tradition. The rich medieval Spanish-Jewish poetry was handed down over the generations and Jewish music was further developed. The Sephardic Jews also allowed the Western world to experience Arabic philosophy and medicine. Sephardic journalists published their texts in the entire Ladino-speaking world, which also bred eminent writers like Elias Canetti, to mention just one example.

All these aspects of the Sephardic Diaspora and its contribution to the cultural history of the Eastern and Western world are examined in this exhibition. [www.jmw.at](http://www.jmw.at)

### **T-B A21: contemporary artistic positions from Turkey**

The gallery T-B A21 (Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary) in Vienna showcases “Tactics of Invisibility” – 15 artistic positions from Turkey and their Diaspora (closing on 15 September 2010). The exhibition presented in Vienna, Istanbul and Berlin tries to investigate and address local contexts based on the discourse generated by the theme of the show. The presentation in Vienna is not limited to the premises of the T-B A21 gallery; a poster created by the artists’ collective Hafriyat is displayed outdoors in Himmelfortgasse (1<sup>st</sup> district of Vienna), while the KlausEngelhorn Depot in Ottakring accommodates the works of Esra Ersen.

As a contribution to the art programme of “Istanbul as the European Capital of Culture 2010“, T-B A21 presents the sound structure “The Morning Line” by Matthew Ritchie and Aranda\Lasch at Eminönü square in Istanbul from 22 May to 19 September 2010. The eight-metre-high and 20-metre-long pavilion built from 17 tons of black-coated aluminium was conceived as an interdisciplinary project exploring the interplay between art, architecture, music, mathematics, cosmology and science.

### **Schmied presents Austrian Children’s and Juvenile Book Prizes 2010**

Minister of Education Schmied presented the prizes 2010 for artistically outstanding books (text, typography and illustrations) at forumKloster in Gleisdorf (Styria) on 4 May 2010. Prize-winning works are the children’s book by Peter Turrini/Verena Ballhaus: “Was macht man, wenn... Ratschläge für den kleinen Mann” (Vienna: Annette Betz Verlag 2009) and the book for teens by Gabi Kreslehner: “Charlottes Traum” (Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg 2009).

**SPORTS POLICY****Increasingly unpopular school skiing:  
Darabos invited to a round table**

The school ski trips statistics of the recent years are alarming. Fewer and fewer kids and teens in Austria participate in ski courses organized by the schools. In the long run, this trend poses a threat to Austria's status as the number one skiing nation.

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos plans to take countermeasures. He invited representatives of business, sports and the school system to gather around a table and to work jointly on a trend reversal. "The large number of pupils getting a taste for winter sports in ski courses every year has been the basis for our country's success in ski sports. If these figures drop drastically, the number of people practicing skiing as a mass sport or as a competitive sport will also decline very soon", stated Darabos, who therefore wants to launch countermeasures together with the Austrian Skiing Association (ÖSV), the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Ministry of the Interior.

On 30 April 2010, Minister of Sport Darabos invited stakeholders of different spheres to participate in a round-table meeting at the House of Sports (Haus des Sports) in Vienna and to develop a common model for solving the problem. The results are to be presented at the beginning of the next school year.

**First formal meeting of sports ministers  
on issues for the future in Brussels**

The EU ministers of sport held their first ever formal meeting – for which the Lisbon Treaty laid the foundation – in Brussels on 10 May 2010. Austria will be represented by Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos. Sport comes within the remit of the Council of Education, Youth, Culture and Audiovisual Media.

Under the Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, the European Union became also competent for sport. Cooperation and coordination among the Member States is being formalized. An exchange among ministers will be the top item on the agenda devoted to sport. The aim of this debate is to allow the Member States to present their proposals regarding key issues and challenges that should be addressed by the EU sports policy in the wake of the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. On this basis, the European Commission will be provided with important input for planning its work for the next years.

At the first formal meeting of ministers no decisions are expected to be adopted. To im-

plement the new Lisbon Treaty provisions on sport, the European Commission plans a new framework, which is to be based on an EU agenda for developing an EU sports policy and for cooperation in sport for the next years.

This agenda may draw on the experience gained by implementing the White Paper on Sport (2007). Furthermore, it will cover new initiatives based on the EU's new competence for sport under the Lisbon Treaty. Consultations with interest representations have already started and will be intensified over the next months.

**New EU competence for sport**

Under Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU was granted competence for supporting, coordinating and supplementing action in sport. Article 165 of the Lisbon Treaty also calls on the EU to contribute to promoting sport issues and to developing the European dimension in sport through EU activities as well as to support cooperation with third countries and international organisations.

The specific elements of Article 165 may be used as a foundation for developing the new EU sports agenda:

- promoting the social and educational functions of sport;
- supporting structures for volunteering in sport;
- recognising the specific nature of sport with regard to EU legislation;
- promoting fairness and openness of sports competitions;
- protecting the physical and mental integrity of athletes;
- promoting cooperation among the organisations responsible for sport;
- cooperation with third countries and competent international organisations.

Under the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty, direct support for sport at EU level has become possible. Moreover, the potential of this sector can be fully developed in a new and formal political context, which is supported by funding and probably also by recommendations of the Council. The next step is to clarify how these new instruments can be used.

Other Treaty provisions (regarding the internal market, competition, health, education, social inclusion, employment and fundamental rights) also remain applicable to sport.