

## NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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**HOME AFFAIRS****Presidential election 2010: Heinz Fischer re-elected**

On 25 April 2010, Austria elected its head of state. As expected, incumbent Federal President Heinz Fischer won the race for this position. Based on the preliminary results (excluding postal votes), 2.3 million Austrians gave him their support for a second time. This corresponds to a share of 78.9% of all valid ballots (about 2.9 million). Hence, Heinz Fischer achieved the second-best result in the history of the Second Republic, which had been surpassed only by Rudolf Kirchschläger, who captured about 79.9% of the votes at his re-election in 1980.

Freedom Party (FPÖ) candidate Barbara Rosenkranz won 15.6% of the valid votes, Rudolf Gehring (Christian Party of Austria) received 5.4%.

About 6.4 million people (2004: 6.0 million) were eligible to vote in Austria, including 3.3 million women and 3.1 million men. Voter turnout was approximately 49.2%.

Fischer will be sworn in by the Federal Assembly on 8 July 2010, the last day of his first term of office. His second (and last) term as Austria's Federal President will end in 2015.

**Budget: government adopted financial framework 2011 to 2014**

On 20 April 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted the financial framework for the period 2011 to 2014. According to it, the budget deficit will be cut from currently 4.7% to 2.3%.

The so-called Federal Financing Framework Act for the period 2011 to 2014 was presented by Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll. In view of the need for budgetary consolidation, it lays down a ceiling on expenditure for the ministries as well as measures to increase revenue. No details were provided but it is clear that the ministries will have to expect drastic cuts. In 2011 alone, the individual ministries have to save about 1.6 billion euro; this is significantly more than originally planned. The ministers want to present their austerity plans and proposals for concrete measures in autumn.

By adopting the Federal Financing Framework Act, a plan for the next years had been prepared, now the "individual austerity measures" had to be discussed in detail, stated Federal Chancellor Faymann after the Council of Ministers. "It is a fact that we are well prepared and stick to our timetable. Austria is a leader in budgetary consolidation in Europe", said

Chancellor Faymann. Minister of Finance Pröll stressed that "Austria was the first and only in Europe to set budget limits that are anchored in the law and therefore binding".

The Federal Chancellor emphasised once more that he advocated socially fair taxes. His proposals did not aim at "placing undue burden on the population at large but at ensuring a fair balance". Now, those "who have more and have previously given less" should make their contribution to consolidation. Faymann explicitly mentioned the bank tax, the financial transactions tax, the abolition of speculation periods, the elimination of tax privileges for foundations and group taxation as well as stricter rules against tax evasion and tax fraud. The Federal Republic, the Länder and municipalities are to cut expenses by a total of 5.1 billion euro by the year 2014. An additional tax revenue of 4.1 billion euro has been planned. Minister Pröll described this, however, as an "optimal scenario" and said that it was likely that "a lower level" would be achieved.

**2,900 public service positions are cut - savings effect: 350 million euro**

On 20 April 2010, the Council of Ministers gave the green light for the personnel plan for the period 2011 to 2014. In this period the federal government will eliminate about 2,900 public service posts provided for in the budget. Every second position becoming vacant due to retirement will not be filled, explained Minister Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek, who is responsible for the public service. The expenditure cuts are expected to amount to about 350 million euro – "a substantial contribution to the necessary austerity programme" emphasised Heinisch-Hosek.

The police would not be affected by these measures, on the contrary, up to 1,000 additional police officers would be hired by 2013. Moreover, cuts would not affect teachers, judicial personnel as well as labour inspectorate staff, reiterated Heinisch-Hosek.

**Go-ahead for "Terrorism Prevention Act"**

Another important piece of legislation was adopted by the government on 20 April 2010: the "Terrorism Prevention Act" submitted by Minister of Justice Claudia Bandion-Ortner. It does not only make training in so-called "terror camps" a criminal offence but also those approving terrorist attacks may face sentences of up to two years.

**EUROPE INTERNATIONAL****Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin pays visit to Vienna**

On 24 April 2010, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin arrived in Vienna for a two-day visit. His trip was motivated by the European Judo Championships at the Dusika Stadium in Vienna, which Putin – who holds the Black Belt himself and is Honorary President of the European Judo Union (EJU) – wanted to attend (see Sports Policy). Putin was accompanied inter alia by Russian Minister for Energy Sergey Shmatko.

Putin's official programme also included political talks with Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann. Both sides praised the "very good" bilateral relations. An important topic of the talks between Faymann and Putin was the security of energy supplies. In a joint press conference Faymann stressed that Austria relies very much on renewable energies but that the gas supplies from Russia were indispensable for the security of Austria's energy supply. Putin underlined that Russia was a reliable provider covering Europe's natural gas demand "for many years to come". A diversification of the gas pipelines was necessary "to be able to expand supply channels to Europe", said Putin – especially in view of the Nabucco project ensuring Europe's supply with gas from the Caspian region under the lead of the Austrian mineral oil group OMV.

An intergovernmental agreement on cooperation regarding the establishment and operation of the Russian gas pipeline South Stream was signed by Russia and Austria in the presence of the two heads of government.

The intergovernmental agreement provided a legal framework for constructing a section of the pipeline running through Austria. South Stream will be connected to the gas containers in Baumgarten (Lower Austria) and Arnoldstein (Carinthia). The pipeline starts at the eastern Black Sea coast and runs through the Black Sea. In Bulgaria it branches into two pipelines, one going to Hungary and Austria, the other one to Greece and Italy. The investment requirements are estimated at 25 billion euro. The pipeline is expected to start operations in 2015. With an annual capacity of 63 billion cubic metres, it will be used for about 35% of the Russian gas exports to Europe.

Putin repeatedly stressed the good economic cooperation with Austria. Despite the financial crisis, Austria had increased its direct investments in Russia significantly; currently, more

than 2,000 Austrian enterprises were active in the Russian Federation. Russia was interested in intensifying this cooperation, especially in the high-tech sector, stated Putin.

**Help for Greece**

On 23 April 2010, Greece asked the EU Member States and the International Monetary Fund for financial aid. The euro-zone countries expressed their intention to extend a helping hand to Athens by granting up to 30 billion euro in the first year. The major share of up to 8.4 billion euro would be provided by Germany, while Austria would contribute up to 858 million euro. The IMF promised an additional amount of 15 billion euro.

**Spindelegger met counterparts from Romania, Hungary and Albania**

Engaging in intensive contacts with his counterparts in Romania, Hungary and Albania over the past weeks, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger presented once more Austria's strong commitment to and foreign policy priorities in (South) Eastern Europe. Spindelegger received Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi in Vienna on 13 April 2010, who informed him about Romania's plans to join the Schengen area in March 2011. Another subject was the Danube Region Strategy initiated by the two countries. Spindelegger hopes for aid from the EU regional funding scheme.

The Austrian Foreign Minister met with his Hungarian counterpart Péter Balázs in Győr (Hungary) on 15 April 2010. They discussed bilateral issues such as school cooperation, but also questions regarding the Western Balkans and the EU.

At a meeting with Albanian Foreign Minister Ilir Meta, Spindelegger clearly declared himself in favour of abolishing visa requirements for Albanian citizens travelling to the EU.

**Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki in Vienna**

After his meeting with his Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki in Vienna on 25 April 2010, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger informed about "very clear and open talks with significant differences in opinion". Spindelegger said that he had presented emphatically the clear expectations of the international community and of Austria regarding Iran's nuclear programme. A radical change of Iran's policy was required, including guarantees about the exclusively civil use of nuclear energy and regarding human rights", stressed the Austrian Foreign Minister.

## ECONOMY

### **Expo 2010 in Shanghai: opportunities for Austria**

Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner presented the Austrian programme for the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai on 19 April 2010, together with President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Christoph Leitl and Government Commissioner Hannes Androsch. In view of the economic crisis, this world exhibition was the absolutely most important Expo ever and an “excellent” opportunity to position Austria even more strongly in one of the best markets in the world“, said Mitterlehner. Austria would not only present itself as a tourist destination in Shanghai but planned to turn the spotlight on its know-how translated into ecological innovation in the industrial, technological and services sectors, Mitterlehner concluded the key objectives of Austria’s presence at the Expo in Shanghai.

The Expo will be opened on 1 May 2010. With more than 240 participants, a budget exceeding 3 billion euro and an expected audience of 70 million visitors, it is the largest world exhibition ever. The Expo motto “Better City, Better Life“ perfectly matches Austria’s extensive know-how, stressed the Minister. Innovative environmental and energy efficiency technologies were among the largest growth markets in China from which domestic companies could profit enormously. Moreover, Austria offered an outstanding portfolio of services which was gaining in importance. “We have a very good starting position, especially in fields like urban development and pioneering architecture. We think that there is a substantial growth potential in this area”, said Mitterlehner.

The Ministry of Economy and the Federal Austrian Economic Chamber (WKÖ) expect Austria to reap enormous advertising and image effects from the Expo in China as well as the entire eastern Asian region. In concrete terms, China’s share in Austria’s total exports is expected to double from 2.1% to approximately 4% within the next three years and the export volume is likely to expand to 4 billion euro, explained WKÖ boss Leitl. 30,000 jobs were connected to these exports. At present, about 370 domestic enterprises had around 630 establishments in China. In the framework of the Expo in Shanghai, roughly 1,000 Austrian companies will take advantage of the opportunity to establish business contacts and to present their products.

“The aim of the Austrian Pavilion is to make the Chinese as well as international visitors interested in Austria, its culture and beautiful landscape. Austria was ranking among the top five travel destinations of the Chinese already now”, stressed Minister Mitterlehner. The costs of Austria’s presence at the Expo in Shanghai will amount to up to 16 million euro. Three quarters of this investment are covered by the Ministry of Economy, one quarter by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber.

According to Leitl, Austria’s export data demonstrate that Austria has in fact great opportunities. Today, China is Austria’s main trading partner in Asia and second-largest overseas market, after the USA. In the past 10 years, Austria’s exports to China have more than tripled, surging by 7.2% to 2 billion euro even during the economic crisis in 2009.

According to Government Commissioner Androsch, Austria decided to present itself in its own Pavilion not only because it wanted to pay respect to the host country but also intended to give a signal to the international community. “Our pavilion with its distinct flowing shape and its white-and-red colour design embodies pioneering architecture of ultimate perfection. It showcases our high-tech capacities“, stated Androsch.

### **Government adopted measures against money laundering**

The federal government adopted a set of measures to prevent money laundering and the financing of terrorism in the Council of Ministers’ session on 20 April 2010. The package is a response to the Evaluation Report of the OECD’s Financial Action Task Force, which identified shortcomings in the combat against money laundering in Austria and called for a further relaxation of banking secrecy rules.

Amendments to laws are to increase transparency of stock corporations and private foundations. The Financial Market Supervisory Authority and the Financial Intelligence Unit competent for alleged money laundering activities are given more powers. Banks have to notify all transactions of assets suspected to have been acquired through criminal activities to the authorities.

Banking secrecy rules are relaxed only partly, but not in cases of tax evasion. Banks will have to report suspected cases of money laundering and terrorist financing but also any suspicion of gains from criminal activities. Moreover, money laundering of one’s own funds will become a punishable criminal offence in Austria.

**CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE****Ceremony: 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kreisky I Cabinet**

When Bruno Kreisky became Federal Chancellor on 21 April, 40 years ago, a new era was ushered in, which has marked the Austrian Social Democracy to the present day. Kreisky stayed in office for 13 years, enjoying the support of an absolute majority during twelve years. This is something the present Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) can only dream of. It had plenty of opportunity to dream at the anniversary celebrations at Theater Akzent on 21 April 2010, to which Chairman of the Federation of Austrian Senior Citizens Karl Blecha had invited. However, the legendary former Chancellor Kreisky was celebrated in the absence of Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, who had to attend the European Affairs Question Time session at the National Council, where he reaffirmed once more his support for a EU financial transactions tax.

Franz Vranitzky also could not come. The former Chancellor did not return in time from Hiroshima (Japan) due to the chaos in air traffic caused by the eruption of the Icelandic volcano. Rather pithily, the daily "Der Standard" had reminded Vranitzky of what his politically ingenious and grumpy predecessor had in general stood for: "I do not want to state commonplaces such as free textbooks and free public transport for pupils – for me personally Kreisky was above all somebody who stood up against provincialism, anti-intellectualism and narrow-mindedness in this country".

Music of the 1970s, interpreted by Barbara Helfgott with Rondo Vienna, got the audience – among them many senior citizens – into the right mood.

As the representative of the incumbent government, Minister for Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer had the honour of recalling the memorable achievements of the Kreisky era. He perceived many parallels with today. Even then, the SPÖ had been committed to putting up resistance against those who thought that the welfare state was excessive. And like in the past, today the crucial issues were poverty and jobs. The Social Minister promised the senior citizens that they did not have to fear pension cuts despite austerity programmes. The level of pension benefits would of course have to be discussed but pensions remained secure.

After his statement, a short documentary about the life and work of Kreisky was shown, which also presented SPÖ advertising slogans for the budget of 1971. The sound track of the film

could be used even today to save money on advertising agencies. The SPÖ praised itself for having secured pensions and denounced the ÖVP for having tried to prevent this.

This remark and others were qualified by former leader of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) Josef Taus, who had fought many a battle with Kreisky. He claimed for example that the indexing of pensions to inflation had been an achievement of his party, for Kreisky he also found big words: "The Sun King" had been the most successful party politician in history.

Kreisky's long-term political companion and later opponent, former Minister of Finance and Vice Chancellor Hannes Androsch, a down-to-earth realist, summarised the work of the "elder" quasi philosophically and probably also had the current situation in mind when he stated: "You can realise something, however, the prerequisite for that is not to be afraid of courage but to have political courage".

**Girls' Day: young women need courage for non-traditional jobs**

To celebrate Girls' Day on 22 April 2010, Minister of Transport Doris Bures and Minister for Women's Affairs Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek invited about 100 Viennese pupils to visit the Twin City Liner, a catamaran of the passenger shipping line LOD offering regular cruise services on the Danube between 28 April and 31 October 2010 (duration of the trip is about 90 minutes). However, the Ministers' aim was not to beat the advertising drum for an interesting trip through pristine riverine landscapes, e.g. the Danube Wetlands National Park (Nationalpark Donauauen) or passing the Freudenu sluce but "to encourage young women to start non-traditional jobs", especially in view of the two female captains. Giving a short overview of the challenges of their job, the two women emphasised: "One has to be self-confident and know how to assert oneself".

"The aim of Girl's Day is to make a contribution to informing young women about the great and exciting job opportunities available to them", said Bures. Heinisch-Hosek pointed out that the majority of young women in Austria still concentrated on three traditional apprenticeships: secretary, hairdresser and sales assistant. The Minister for Women's Affairs appealed to them: "Be choosy and self-confident, you have so many options". The Minister of Transport added: "We women are creative and committed, we make important contributions in enterprises. Companies ignoring our potential, are only harming themselves".

After the meeting with the two ministers and two captains, the girls participated in a one-hour cruise on the Twin City Liner, had a look around the boat and informed themselves on various job opportunities in the shipping sector. [www.twin-cityliner.at](http://www.twin-cityliner.at)

### **Romanian Foreign Minister Baconschi pays visit to Klosterneuburg Monastery**

In the framework of his official visit to Austria, Romanian Foreign Minister Theodor Baconschi visited Klosterneuburg Monastery in Lower Austria on 12 April 2010. He thanked Prior Bernhard Backovsky for his commitment to cultural activities. The intensive contacts of the Augustine canons with Romania started in 2000 by supporting Patres Georg Sporschill's project for Romanian street children.

In early 2006, Klosterneuburg Monastery and the Romanian Cultural Institute in Vienna signed a cooperation agreement, which has so far led to about 20 joint events: concerts (including several charity events for the street children project) and exhibitions in Klosterneuburg and in Vienna (for example, the Harry Weber Photo Exhibition), in Budapest, Szeged, Timișoara and Bucharest. At the beginning of June, sculptor Peter Jecza (Timișoara) will exhibit his works in the Convent Gardens in the framework of the "Monastery Garden Festival". In his talks with Backovsky, Baconschi, an Orthodox theologian, did not only address culture but also religious issues. The relations with the – predominantly – Orthodox Church to the Greek-Catholic Church in Romania were developing in the right direction. Monastic life had been flourishing over the past 20 years. But one should bear in mind that the popularity of monasteries was partly due to attempts to escape precarious social conditions. [www.stift-klosterneuburg.at](http://www.stift-klosterneuburg.at)

### **Minister of Culture Schmied: the state has to be a stable partner of the arts**

"The state has to be a stable partner of the arts. This is what I stand for, this is what I fight for", said Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied recently at a panel discussion under the motto "Collections in Austria – Dream and Reality" staged at the Museum of Modern Art (MUMOK). She stressed that state-owned collections were an "absolute necessity", a "room for knowledge and reflection as well as a guarantor of the new". The more comprehensive the cultural archives of a civilisation, the larger its progress. "I am of the opinion that the commitment to the state's responsibility, the commitment to the autonomy of artists and

their institutions, the commitment to communicating art are cultural policy guidelines to be applied to collecting. Based on my approach to cultural policy, state-owned collections are an absolute necessity", stressed the Minister.

Due to present-day demands on state-owned collections, new forms of cooperation were necessary – especially between private and public collections. Furthermore, collection strategies and more in-depth academic treatment are prerequisites for cooperation and art education.

According to the Minister, it was important that the federal museums – individually and jointly – made efforts to allocate a fixed amount from the basic government funding to collection activities. In this context, Schmied drew attention to the fact that legally guaranteed basic funding was unique in Europe and that it had been increased from 70 to 82 million euro in the past three years. On 1 January 2010 free admission for young people was introduced in all federal museums.

In response to demands for more regulation "by the authority" voiced in the discussion, the Minister underlined the great value of autonomy, which was also a duty to show some initiative. The conception of a collection strategy was a prerequisite for cooperation. Every museum had to develop a strategy by taking into account history, its holdings and its research priorities. On this basis, coordination and cooperation among art museums became possible. In fact, this approach had also ensured that the cooperation between MUMOK and Belvedere became a success. Schmied gave a clear rebuff to the idea of an authoritarian cultural policy.

### **Museum of Folk Life: May Day. Demonstration. Tradition. Representation**

The Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art presents an exhibition (30 April to 12 September 2010) that traces the history of the events around Labour Day celebrating its 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. After having been held internationally for the first time in 1890, May Day has become a paradigmatic date of the labour movement, which is linked with numerous meanings, associations and projections. Looking back on a 120-year history, May Day exemplifies the historical developments, ruptures and transformations of a century of modernity and finally post-modernity.

The exhibition shows both transformation and continuity – from the emergence of the labour movement more than 100 years ago, the culture and class struggles of the inter-war period,

its totalitarian reinterpretation and new symbolic connotations under the Austro-Fascist and NS regimes, the scenarios of reconstruction, the “economic miracle” and the Cold War to the age of Neoliberalism, posing a growing threat to the social position of the working population. As the number of participants in the annual May demonstrations – for example in Vienna – shows, (mass) manifestation as a political battle cry remains an obvious mobilising factor, even in its traditional form.

“120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1<sup>st</sup> May“ is a joint project of the Association for Austrian Trade Union Education (Verband Österreichischer Gewerkschaftlicher Bildung/VÖGB) – that provided the project idea –, the Association of the History of the Labour Movement (Verein für Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung/VGA) and the Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art. Ten curators, e.g. Wolfgang Maderthaler and Michaela Maier, who are also the editors of a comprehensive, richly illustrated catalogue, made decisive contributions.

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

### **Eva Schlegel is Austria's curator at the Venice Biennale 2011**

Minister of Culture Claudia Schmied appointed Eva Schlegel as the curator of Austria's contribution to the 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale 2011 (from early June to the end of November). After Lee Springschitz (1976), Elisabeth Schweeger (2001), Valie Export and Silvia Eiblmayr (2009), Schlegel is only the fifth woman curator competent for the Austrian Pavilion at the Art Biennale. Her task is to position Austria as a contemporary art nation.

Eva Schlegel was born in Hall (Tirol) in 1960, she lives and works in Vienna. She studied at the Vienna University of Applied Arts and was a professor for art and photography at the Academy of Visual Arts from 1997 to 2006. Since 2008, she has chaired the University Council of Linz University of Art and Industrial Design. Besides numerous solo and group exhibitions, she became also known for her architectural interventions, e.g. at the 6<sup>th</sup> International Architecture Exhibition (curated by Hans Hollein) in the framework of the Biennale of 1996.

### **President Klaus opens Egon Schiele exhibition in Český Krumlov**

To mark the forthcoming 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birthday of Egon Schiele on 12 June 2010, an exhibition on the ingenious expressionist from Tulln (Lower Austria) was ceremoniously opened at the Egon Schiele Art Centrum

– founded by Serge Sabarsky and Gerwald Sonnberger – in Český Krumlov (Czech Republic). Member of the Board of Leopold Museum Elisabeth Leopold and Managing Director Peter Weinhäupl – presenting formal greetings on behalf of Museum Director Rudolf Leopold – were thanked personally for supporting the exhibition by Czech President Václav Klaus and the head of the National Gallery of Prague, Milan Knížák.

Numerous important personalities from the political and cultural arenas attended the opening to admire Schiele's fantastic landscapes, nature studies and townscapes, among them the Mayor of Krumlov, Luboš Jedlička, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Austria Jan Koukal, Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to the Czech Republic Ferdinand Trauttmansdorff, Director of the Schiele Art Center Hana Jirmusová, Director of the St. Etienne Gallery in New York Jane Kallir as well as the artists Ona B., Bernadette Huber, Alois Mitter, Lucie Novotná, Roman Týc and Robert Schad. Egon Schiele (1890-1918), whose mother came from this small town in Southern Bohemia, always enjoyed going to Krumlov. In 1910 he wrote: “I want to leave Vienna (...) it is the Bohemian Woods where I want to go“. In 1911 he moved with his then girlfriend Wally Neuzil to Krumlov. They lived in the so-called “garden house” on the Vltava river. He was fascinated by the morbidity of the town, its melancholy. He painted and drew visionary townscapes, whose motifs can be recognised still today.

A large number of the works created in Krumlov are an important part of the permanent collection of the Vienna-based Leopold Museum. [www.leopoldmuseum.at](http://www.leopoldmuseum.at)

### **Bulgaria: Austrian Music Weeks devoted to Gustav Mahler**

The Austrian Music Weeks – opened with a concert by the Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra led by Alexei Kornienko – will offer 14 concerts in six Bulgarian cities as well as two master classes in Plovdiv and Sofia before closing on 21 May 2010. This year the Music Weeks – starring outstanding instrumentalists – are devoted to Gustav Mahler, whose 150<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary will be celebrated on 7 July 2010. For the first time, the music festival offers – besides classical music – other musical styles such as jazz, folklore, rock and digital music. [www.austrianmusicweeks-bg.com](http://www.austrianmusicweeks-bg.com)

## SPORTS POLICY

### **Guaranteed federal sports funding will be doubled to a minimum of 80 million**

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos and Reinhold Lopatka, former Secretary of State for Sport, now competent for Finance, reached an agreement: sport will be made available a minimum of 80 million euro (previously 40 million euro) from the special federal sports funding system. Hence, the Minister of Sport succeeded in doubling the amount guaranteed to sport. The government programme had envisaged an increase of the minimum level from 40 to merely 60 million euro. As from the year 2013, the funds will continue increasing – depending on the development of the taxes payable by the Lottery license holder under the gambling law.

“I am very pleased about this success for the Austrian sport. In this way, we offer the sports associations more planning certainty in times of crisis and guarantee the promotion of sports also against the insecure background of the new legal framework for gambling at European level”, said Darabos.

Thus the Minister of Sport fulfilled his promise of not accepting any cuts affecting the Austrian sport. Norbert Darabos also managed to prevent a cap for sports funding that had been considered by the Ministry of Finance in the first draft for a bill. As from 2013, the 80 million euro will go up to the extent to which the federal taxes paid by the Lottery license holder under the gambling law increase from the prior-year level. The new Lottery license will also be granted this year.

Minister of Sport Darabos: “Sports funding will be adjusted to the development of the Lottery also in the future, allowing dynamic effects. In fact, one of the goals of the government’s sports programme is to increase dynamism.”

### **Meeting of sports ministers: Darabos calls for European crack-down**

On 21 April 2010, the first informal meeting of EU ministers of sport took place since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. Austria was represented by a top-level official, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos.

The discussions focused on the EU’s new powers in sports. Federal Minister Norbert Darabos demanded EU-wide strict anti-doping laws based on the model of Austria. “It is not acceptable that individual EU Member States such as Austria take tough action against doping offences, while others lean back and pursue

a rather half-hearted policy”, said Darabos. Doping was a worldwide problem, stated the Austrian Minister of Sport: “We will not succeed unless we join forces in the battle against the abuse of doping substances. In Austria we set a milestone by enshrining the prosecution of doping offenders in criminal law. Austria has one of the severest anti-doping laws of Europe. Other countries should follow our example.”

The aim of the meeting in Madrid was to prepare the first formal meeting of ministers of sport in the history of the EU to be held in Brussels on 10 May 2010.

The Lisbon Treaty grants the European Union new powers in the field of sport. Formal meetings of EU ministers of sport are to be held twice a year. Moreover, an EU sports programme will be developed.

### **European Judo Championship surpassed all expectations**

Our domestic judokas surpassed all expectations at the European Judo Championships in Vienna. Having watched the fights of the silver medallists Sabrina Filzmoser and Ludwig Paischer as well as third-placed Andreas Mitterfellner live, Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos stated: “The domestic judo sport has seized the great opportunity offered by European Championships held in their home country. I congratulate all medal winners and the organisers on the perfect organisation.” Darabos watched a major part of the fights together with the guest of honour of the European Championships, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

### **Darabos congratulated ice-hockey team winning World Championship, Group B**

Minister of Sport Darabos was highly pleased that the domestic ice-hockey team moved up to Group A after winning the World Championship, Group B, in the Netherlands.

Darabos: “I congratulate the team of Bill Gilligan very warmly. Our ice-hockey cracks demonstrated consistency and strong nerves during the entire tournament in Tilburg, winning every game. Above all the defensive performance was impressive, in five games our team conceded only five goals. The fact that the Austrian team moved up is all the more gratifying as the next A Group World Championship will take place in Slovakia and many Austrian ice-hockey fans will travel there and watch live how Austria participates in world-class ice-hockey.”