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Government presented stability programme for period up to 2013

On 26 January 2010, the federal government adopted a stability programme providing for a decrease of the budget deficit to a level below 3% by 2013. Expenditure is to be cut by 5.8 billion euro to reduce the deficit gradually from 4.7% in the current year to 2.7% at the end of 2013. This stability plan approved by the Council of Ministers also became necessary as the EU Commission had opened an excessive deficit procedure against Austria – as well as all the other Member States. According to the EU rules, the budget deficit may not exceed 3% of the GDP.

The stability programme proves that the coalition government takes “joint action” when “meaningful” austerity measures have to be taken, Chancellor Faymann informed reporters. The aim of budget consolidation was not to increase taxes but the focus was on the expenditure side. “The potential of cost-savings would be explored carefully in all ministries“, said Faymann. Cuts in social services and in education were to be avoided. The Chancellor called once more for the introduction of a financial transactions tax as well as a solidarity tax levied on banks. The coalition government was in complete agreement regarding the financial transactions tax which was being discussed across the EU based on the Austrian proposal. “We will continue to deliberate on the introduction of the solidarity tax“, said Faymann (see Economy).

Minister of Finance Josef Pröll was in favour of “prioritising expenditure cuts” but also suggested to examine options to increase income. The coalition partners had reached a consensus that tax income could be increased only by introducing the (EU-wide) financial transactions tax.

According to the Ministry of Finance, adoption of the budget 2011 (including the budget speech of the Minister of Finance in Parliament) could be postponed from autumn 2010 to next year. This was mainly due to the fact that negotiations on the administrative reform and austerity measures, which had to be agreed on with the Länder, were still underway. ■

Beatrix Karl is new Minister of Science

Beatrix Karl (42) is Austria’s new Minister of Science, succeeding to EU Commissioner-designate Johannes Hahn. She will be sworn in by the Federal President on 26 January 2010. Karl had been spokeswoman for science of the Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP) and Secretary-General of the Austrian Employees’ Federation (ÖAAB).

Party leader Josef Pröll Karl described her as “an almost logical” candidate. She comes from Styria, where elections to the regional parliament will take place this year and was associate professor for labour, social and European law at a university (Graz). Since October 2006 she has been a member of the ÖVP in the National Council.

The new head of ministry plans to respond with “renewal” to the “difficult situation” at Austrian universities and in research. Karl calls for the re-introduction of university fees and access restrictions. In her inaugural speech to the National Council (29 January 2010), she focused on dialogue with the students and stressed that, alongside with specialist training, universities had to provide education. She considered the implementation of the Bologna process (bachelor, master and PhD studies) at all Austrian universities crucial. Furthermore, Karl demanded a Europe-wide follow-up regulation of a quota system for medical universities as well as a research financing law. ■

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National Integration Plan

On 19 January 2010, the Council of Ministers adopted the National Action Plan for Integration. Newcomers to Austria will be required to furnish proof of basic German language skills before their arrival. However, this does not apply to qualified personnel, asylum seekers and seasonal workers. Other key provisions include educational support to migrants, facilitated labour market access, measures against wage dumping, projects to combat xenophobia and racism. ■

Presidential election: 25 April 2010

On 29 January 2010, the Main Committee of the National Council decided that the presidential election would be held on 25 April 2010. ■

Guaranteed minimum income enters into force on 1 September 2010

The means-tested guaranteed minimum income will be introduced in Austria on 1 September 2010. Singles will receive 744 euro monthly. ■

Haiti earthquake relief: government makes available 2 million euro

At the Council of Ministers' session on 26 January 2010 the federal government increased the emergency aid for earthquake victims in Haiti from 800,000 euro to 2.8 million euro. Chancellor Werner Faymann also took advantage of the occasion to thank private donors. In the past few days, private donations had shown "that we are a country always ready to help", said Faymann.

The Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) declared 25 January the day of the campaign "Nachbar in Not" ("Neighbour in Need") under the motto "Austria helps Haiti". The highlight was a charity gala during primetime. About 1.4 million euro were donated just on this day. With the previous donations of "Neighbour in Need", this adds up to a total of 6.9 million euro for people in Haiti (status: 26 January 2010).

The campaign "Neighbour in Need" is under the aegis of President Heinz Fischer, who was also a live guest of the TV charity programme. Fischer emphasised the need to assume responsibility in a globalised world: "The pictures from Haiti do not leave anybody indifferent", said Fischer. Besides numerous voluntaries of relief organisations and representatives of politics, economics, Church, art and the media, Federal Chancellor Faymann and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll also answered the donation hotline (0800 222 444).

The relief organisations cooperating with "Neighbour in Need" are the Austria Red Cross, Caritas Austria, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (Workers' Samaritan Federation), Care Österreich, Diakonie Österreich, Hilfswerk Austria, Malteser Hospitaldienst and Volkshilfe Österreich. "Neighbour in Need" was founded in 1992 and is a working community of Caritas, Red Cross and the ORF as the media partner.

"Neighbour in Need" donation website:

<http://nachbarinnot.ORF.at>; toll-free donation hotline: 0800 22 20 20; bank account for donations "Nachbar in Not" – Haiti Earthquake: PSK: 90 150 300, BLZ: 60000, BIC: OPSKATWW, IBAN: AT 54600000090150300 ■

Federal Chancellor Faymann: "Never forget, never remain silent!"

To mark the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 65th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentra-

tion camp in Poland, leading Austrian politicians condemned the horrible crimes of the NS regime and called for vigilance against anti-Semitism and racism. "The terrible crimes against humanity, which were committed by the murderous regime of the Third Reich based on an inhumane ideology, must never be forgotten", emphasised Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in a press release. On the anniversary of the liberation of the concentration and annihilation camp Auschwitz, the world commemorated the 6 million Jews, among them 1.5 million children. Especially in times of economic crisis in which hopes were deceived by making false promises, it was crucial to react vehemently to demagogues and Holocaust deniers and to call on young people to engage in democratic vigilance. It was indispensable to fight against the first signs of re-emerging Nazism and to protect democracy using all possible means available to a state governed by the rule of law, said Faymann.

Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger underlined that today Auschwitz was a worldwide "symbol of the National Socialist genocide" and the "negation of human dignity". Spindelegger urged to be highly vigilant against new forms of anti-Semitism. Austria was aware of its responsibility for the victims and survivors of the Shoah, stated Spindelegger in a press release.

At the official commemorations at the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where more than 1.1 million people had been killed, Austria was represented by Speaker of Parliament Barbara Prammer, who paid a three-day working visit to Poland. We do not only owe the preservation of the memorial site to the victims but also to future generations as we have "to counteract worrying developments that can already be observed at present". It was "indispensable" that Austria made a financial contribution to the memorial site, said Prammer after a visit to the Austrian exhibition at the museum of the former concentration camp.

Her talks in Poland had shown that Austria's activities of the past, including the establishment of the National Fund and the General Settlement Fund, had been clearly recognised. The redesign of the Austrian pavilion, which has already been approved, was just another step, stated Prammer. But many other steps were still necessary to raise awareness, especially among young people, that the Holocaust and its emergence would always remain a topical issue, said Prammer. ■

Banks: Federal Chancellor Faymann demands solidarity contribution

Chancellor Werner Faymann presented details of the solidarity tax on banks, proposed by him on several occasions. He wanted to follow the example of US President Barack Obama, who urged US banks to share the burden of the crisis. He expected to reap additional budget funds of 500 million euro per year from this measure, said Faymann after the Council of Ministers' session on 19 January 2010. Cost-savings were certainly a key element of budget consolidation but the banking sector should also make a contribution. Faymann emphasised that this was a proposal for discussion but a solution at European level was desirable. According to estimates, the tax could amount to 0.07% of the balance sheet total, in the USA 0.15% were envisaged, explained Faymann. "A kind of solidarity tax for banks was justified and should be prepared also in Austria", said the Chancellor. According to him, a contribution of the banking sector was reasonable as there was also a statutory insurance for drivers. "One should not only talk retrospectively about the damages but also discuss 'fire prevention' prospectively", emphasised Faymann. However, he would prefer Europe-wide rules as justice could be organised more effectively at international level. Nevertheless this could "not be used as an excuse for not acting in one's own country", stated the Chancellor. This was something one had to discuss with the coalition partner. He did not share the concerns that the costs would ultimately be passed on to the consumers. "This logic had not been applied to huge gains and the high income of managers. The expenses charged to customers were not decreased", said Faymann, who considers the amount "quite reasonable". The Chancellor scheduled a bank summit with the heads of the large banks and credit groups to be held on 22 February 2010. The bank solidarity tax will be the top item on the agenda. In an interview with the daily "Kronen Zeitung" (24 January 2010), the Chancellor pressed ahead towards a bank tax in Austria. He was in favour of "a bank solidarity tax instead of other new taxes" and expressed his firm commitment to the "consistent further development of this project". Faymann again rejected an increase of mass taxes, e.g. VAT. The population seems to back his policy. In a poll conducted by the Austrian Society for Marketing (OGM) for the magazine "News", 59% of the interviewees were in favour of a bank tax.

Minister of Finance Pröll had stated on various occasions (e.g. after deliberations with the EU ministers of finance in Brussels on 19 January 2010) that he would request the Austrian National Bank (OeNB) to assess this question. An evaluation had to be made within the next months. In the months ahead he would give priority to consolidating the budget on the expenditure side.

The Minister underlined in an interview with "Kurier" (29 January 2010) that it was "clear that the banks had to make co-payments and support budget consolidation". By no means should the burden of the tax be shifted on to customers and borrowers. Pröll called again for an EU-wide financial transactions tax. Pressure on own funds has never been higher. "This has to be the response to the crisis", said Pröll. But "the financial community also had to be subject to stricter regulations and checks", and the soaring costs of pensions, the health sector and administration had to be curbed", stated the Minister.

In his statement to the National Council on 29 January 2010 Pröll described the fact that despite the economic crisis Austria had achieved a budget deficit of only 3.5% in 2009, which complied with the budget target, as a "spot landing" accomplished by only very few EU Member States. According to him, this was due to the tax reform, the economic stimulus packages and the strict budget discipline of the ministries. ■

Hypo Alpe Adria Bank has a new Supervisory Board

The Carinthian Hypo Alpe Adria Bank saved through emergency nationalisation in December appointed a new Supervisory Board on 21 January 2010. Former Economic Minister (Austrian People's Party) Johannes Ditz was elected Chairman, his deputy is former Social Democratic Science Minister and incumbent head of Kontrollbank, Rudolf Scholten. Other members are the former head of the Austrian Rail Company (ÖBB) and of RHI Helmut Draxler as well as Kommunalkredit CEO Alois Steinbichler. Ditz plans to prepare the bank for sale within three years. ■

CEESEG AG: stock exchange holding

Vienna Stock Exchange and its subsidiaries in Ljubljana, Prague and Budapest came under the umbrella of the holding company CEESEG AG (CEE Stock Exchange Group), the largest stock exchange group of Central and Eastern Europe. ■

Chancellor stressed importance of show "Children of Maison d'Izieu"

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann is of the opinion that "tolerance" is a number one priority (not only) in 2010. Under his aegis and at his express wish, the photo exhibition "Children of Maison d'Izieu" (see also "News from Austria" No. 24/09) is presented in numerous Austrian vocational schools until the end of 2010. The children's home founded by Sabine and Miron Zlatin in Izieu, a small town in the south of France (80 km from Lyon), accommodated more than 100 Jewish children holding different citizenships. Their parents had been deported by the Nazis between May 1943 and April 1944. On 6 April 1944, 44 children, including seven from Vienna, and their caretakers were arrested and deported on the orders of Klaus Barbie, the head of Gestapo of Lyon. Only one of the persons present managed to escape. 42 children and five adults were murdered in the gas chambers of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. Two young people and the director of the children's home were shot death in Reval (Estonia). Only caretaker Lea Feldblum survived deportation.

On 27 January 2010 the photo show "The Children of Maison d'Izieu" – conceived as a touring exhibition – was opened at Campus Längenfeld (Vienna-Meidling Adult Education Centre [VHS] and Hans Mandl Vocational School). The photos shows cheerful children with caretakers looking rather worriedly, touching children's drawings and letters to the parents. After an introductory piece performed by violinist Aliosha Biz, VHS Director Gerhard Bisovsky stated that political education – alongside with vocational training – was crucial for integration into the adult world.

Israeli Ambassador to Austria Aviv Shir-On said that millions of people could have been saved if Israel had been founded already in 1938. During the Holocaust, 1.5 million children were murdered. The cruel fate of the children of Maison d'Izieu was a warning that something like this must never happen again. French Ambassador Philippe Carré argued along a similar vein. He addressed collaboration of the Vichy regime with the Nazis and explained the difficult political situation of France as the country was divided in a northern zone occupied by the Germans and a southern zone which was to remain "independent" until 1942. In 1943 the Germans invaded the south east of France occupied by the Italians.

Carré highlighted that in April 1994 former French President François Mitterand had declared Maison d'Izieu a memorial site and inaugurated it as one of his "Grands Travaux". His "large construction sites" of a political-cultural type include the Louvre pyramid and the War Museum in Caen. Mitterand then stated: "The children of Izieu are the symbol of all Jews of France who were exterminated under the Vichy regime". Since its foundation as the first memorial site in France, Maison d'Izieu has explicitly focused on the fate of hidden and deported Jewish children.

The most remarkable keynote speaker was Beate Klarsfeld. Together with her husband Serge, she hunted Klaus Barbie for many years, who had hidden in Bolivia. Taken to court in 1987, he was sentenced to lifelong imprisonment and died in the prison of Lyon in 1991. The last speaker, Secretary of State for the Media Josef Ostermayer, focused attention on the invaluable work of Viennese exhibition-maker Milli Segal. More than two years ago, she had asked then Minister of Transport Werner Faymann for his support for the bronze sculpture "For the Child" created by British sculptor Flor Kent. It was erected in the entrance hall of Vienna's western train station in March 2008. The work of art – showing a boy sitting on a suitcase – is dedicated to the children saved from the NS dictatorship and to their rescuers. Ostermayer explained that Faymann supported the important work of Segal to the present day. More could be achieved by turning the spotlight on individual tragedies than by mentioning the huge, but rather abstract numbers of victims. As a pupil Ostermayer had listened to a lecture by Rosa Jochmann about her long detention in a concentration camp, making an indelible impression on him. It was also clear to him that unemployment was a breeding ground for intolerance and that it was vital to fight for social security in a crisis. Demagogy was unacceptable. In this context, Ostermayer also demanded "consequences" for the Third Speaker of Parliament Martin Graf, who had insulted Ariel Muzicant. He thanked Beate Klarsfeld for her commitment. By way of conclusion, Andrea Pauli of Vienna's 1st Reading Theatre (1. Wiener Lese-theater) read a moving letter of György Halpern to his mummy from Izieu. He was gassed aged 8 years. His parents searched for him for the rest of their lives and died in Haifa from a broken heart. Aliosha Biz performed the piece "Oifn Pri-etchik" ("At the fireplace"), filled with family memories of Kraków. www.milliseagal.at ■

Schmied: parents in Austria want all-day school places

A large-scale poll among parents was presented on 25 January by Minister of Education Claudia Schmied. It indicated that there was a demand for 350,000 quality all-day school places. "This is a powerful signal of the parents and a clear mandate to policy-makers. With their unequivocal vote, the parents demonstrated that the public school system has to be further developed vigorously and with firm commitment towards all-day schooling", said Schmied. The Minister of Education also welcomed the fact that a wide consensus on the necessity of financing this project had been reached in the federal government. The next step would be to present the results to the Länder, the Federation of Cities and Municipalities but also the school partners as well as the Education Committee of the National Council. She hoped to hold detailed talks with the Länder regarding a timetable and the project expenses before the summer. She also expected to receive proposals from the Länder.

Schmied stressed that Federal Chancellor Faymann and Vice Chancellor Pröll had already been informed on the findings of the largest poll ever held in Austria among parents on all-day schooling. She also emphasised that it was vital to further develop all-day schooling as a "large common project" and expressed her hope that the "squabbling of the political parties" was a thing of the past. As far as financing was concerned, she would take Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll at his word.

More than 143,000 parents had participated in the poll conducted by the polling institute IFES – about 20% of the parents invited. The study demonstrates that based on the demand for all-day schooling the number of existing all-day school places has to triple and that quality improvements are necessary as well.

The IFES study on all-day schooling is available at: www.bmukk.gv.at. ■

Museum Judenplatz: "Walls of Sound – Jewish Music Worlds"

Up to 30 May 2010 the Vienna Jewish Museum Judenplatz presents the exhibition "Walls of Sound – Jewish Music Worlds" featuring Jewish music and Jewish musicians. Only very few people are aware of the fact that many popular

melodies and compositions such as "God bless America", "The Christmas Song", "Edelweiß", "An der schönen blauen Donau", "Hello Dolly" or "My Funny Valentine" are of Jewish origin or that some of the most beautiful gospel songs of Christian Afro-American music were composed by George Gershwin.

Israeli-Austrian artist Oz Almog provides a glimpse behind the Walls of Sound to highlight the importance of Jews in the world of music. With a very extensive picture gallery, he makes the vision of Jubal come true. As the "father of all those who play the lyre and the pipe" (Genesis 4:21), he is said to have given music to humankind as a gift.

Ever since then, music has been an important stimulus for Jewish spirituality and a guide to the gates of heaven.

The torah is not merely "read", it is sung in daily sections, and each text passage has its own melody changing seasonally. The important role played by music in every-day Jewish life combined with early literacy has made Jewish people pioneers in three music genres: instrumentation, modality and notation.

Many scholars agree that both Byzantine chant from the East and Western pre-Gregorian chorales – and the music of the Occident derived from it – had their origins in the churches of Syria and Palestine, where the synagogal music tradition was omnipresent.

After Jewish music left the ghettos in the past two centuries (or was displaced from them), Jewish virtuosos, conductors, composers and librettists have come to play a leading role in the music and show business.

This is impressively demonstrated by Oz Almog in his exhibition presenting some of these wandering children of Jubal on the Walls of Sound. www.jmw.at ■

Bruno Kreisky Prize: special prize to Passagen Verlag Vienna

On 4 March 2010, the Vienna-based Passagen Verlag will be awarded a special prize in the framework of the Bruno Kreisky Prize for the Political Book 2009.

This prize for publishers will pay tribute to the outstanding editorial activities of the renowned enterprise founded in 1987. The political mission adopted by this publishing house is to stand up for diversity of thought and for tolerance.

By publishing Austrian and international authors

and their socio-critical approaches, the publishing house wants to contribute to an open and politically far-sighted climate in Austria. A wide range of subjects such as politics, art and its political, art-theoretical, social-science-based or socio-political discourse are covered on an equal footing. Passagen Verlag has produced almost 1000 titles and earned itself renown as one of the best non-commercial publishers in the German-speaking area.

The beginning of the publishing activities of Passagen Verlag was marked by the translation of key texts of postmodernism from French into German. The translation of books by Jacques Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Sarah Kofman and Jean-Luc Nancy provided text sources for developing new approaches to contemporary French philosophy.

Over the years, the publishing house issued various series (e.g. on society, economics, art, architecture, psychoanalysis, literature and politics). The wide spectrum includes authors such as Karl Acham, Hélène Cixous, Paul Feyerabend, Gundi Feyrer, FRANZOBEL, Peter Eisenman, Annette von Rantzau, Elisabeth Samsonow, Paul Virilio, James Young, Franz Vranitzky and Slavoj Žižek. www.passagen.at ■

Vienna's Kunsthalle: "Tropicália" – Brazilian art of the 1960s

The fast upswing of Brazil has been discussed in leading international media for months. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva assumed office in 2003 with a Social Democratic programme oriented towards market economy. Since then, the country has won a leading position among the most influential countries of the world – joining the Group of Twenty (G20), the twenty most important industrialised and emerging countries and playing in the same league as Russia, China and India. Lula's open policy – towards the USA, Cuba or Iran – and a weak exchange rate facilitating exports have helped Brazilian construction companies, banks and the food industry to position themselves in international markets. By the end of 2010, Brazil will be the third largest informatics market of the world, behind the USA and China.

The economic upturn also allowed Lula to keep his election promise – the successful combat of unemployment. While in 2001 35% of the population still lived under the poverty line, this share dropped to 24% in 2008. More than half of

the population is reported to have moved up to the middle class.

Lula was the centre of attention at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre titled "A Different World is Possible" – the parallel counter-event to the World Economic Forum in Davos – and was cheered on 26 January 2010.

Thanks to its excellent international reputation, Brazil was selected as the host of the Football World Cup 2014 and of the Olympic Games 2016.

In the light of this Brazil euphoria, this is the right timing for the exhibition "Tropicália" on Brazilian art in the 1960s at Vienna's Kunsthalle. As exhibition curator Thomas Mießgang briefly explained, during its heyday (approximately between 1967 and 1972) "Tropicália" was a "hippy movement on a palm-lined beach". Lacking an explicit political agenda, this movement was overflowing with vibrant energy and enjoyment of shrill spectacle. It opened up a new field of cultural action that was directed mainly against the sinister period of the Brazilian military regime that had ended the relatively democratic situation of the country with a coup d'état in 1964. The anti-art installation "Tropicália" by sculptor Hélio Oiticicas, representing pseudo-favelas with parrot cages, sand and flowerpots, had lent its name to the art movement. Although it was only short-lived, actionism became an influential art genre – in filmmaking (Glauber Rocha), photography, performance art as well as in music. Art was supposed to be an experimental exercise promoting freedom and to transform individual perception through different sensory practices. After the formal rigor of (neo-) concrete art in Brazil in the 1950s, the "tropicalistas" founded an "anti-art" that was not about representation but focused on establishing contexts for collective behavioural experiments.

The music style of the time was decisively shaped by Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, Gal Costa and Tom Zé. These artists combined dance music with bossa nova, but also with rock, reggae and funk. In 1968 Gil and Veloso went to prison for their songs and were later expelled from Brazil.

The show also traces the present-day impact of "Tropicália" on (exiled) Brazilian artists such as Ernesto Neto, Rivane Neuenschwander and Cao Guimarães. Without the Tropicalistas many things would be different in today's Brazil.

Closing 2 May 2010: www.kunsthallewien.at ■

Vancouver: high sports funding for Austrian Olympic team

The Olympic Winter Games will start in Vancouver on 12 February 2010. In late January, the 81 Austrian participants representing the nation in Canada were presented to the public. In many competitions Austria's strong team is among the top favourites, and the Ministry of Sport will play a leading role in ensuring optimal conditions. The federal government's initiative promoting high-performance sports – the RED-WHITE-RED TEAM (RWRT) – supports the country's best athletes by funding training courses, sending athletes to competitions, taking measures in the fields of sports medicine, sports science, sports psychology and through regeneration programmes for athletes. In the framework of RWRT 2009, about 850,000 euro were made available for preparing winter sports athletes for the Olympic Games in Vancouver in 2010. ■

The Austrian athletes receiving support to prepare for Vancouver

Biathlon: Tobias Eberhard, Simon Eder, Dominik Landertinger, Daniel Mesotitsch, Fritz Pinter, Christoph Sumann

Bobsleigh: Christian Hackl, Martin Lachkovics, Jürgen Loacker, Jürgen Mayer, Wolfgang Stampfer

Speed skating: Anna Rokita

Figure skating: Miriam Ziegler; Viktor Pfeifer

Freestyle: Margarita Marbler

Nordic combined: Christoph Bieler, Bernhard Gruber, David Kreiner, Mario Stecher

Luge: Veronika Halder, Nina Reithmayer; Wolfgang Kindl, Andreas Linger, Wolfgang Linger, Daniel Pfister, Manuel Pfister, Markus Schiegl, Tobias Schiegl

Shorttrack: Veronika Windisch

Skeleton: Matthias Guggenberger

Alpine skiing: Eva-Maria Brehm, Anna Fenninger, Andrea Fischbacher, Elisabeth Görgl, Michaela Kirchgasser, Marlies Schild, Kathrin Zettel; Romed Baumann, Reinfried Herbst, Marcel Hirscher, Klaus Kröll, Mario Matt, Manfred Pranger, Benjamin Raich, Hannes Reichelt, Mario Scheiber, Philipp Schörghofer, Georg Streitberger, Michael Walchhofer

Ski cross: Katharina Gutensohn, Karin Huttary, Katrin Ofner; Patrick Koller, Andreas Matt, Markus Wittner, Thomas Zangerl

Cross-country skiing: Katerina Smutna

Ski jumping: Martin Koch, Andreas Kofler, Wolfgang Loitzl, Thomas Morgenstern, Gregor Schlierenzauer

Snowboard: Doris Günther, Marion Kreiner, Doresia Krings, Heidi Neururer, Claudia Riegler, Manuela Riegler; Mario Fuchs, Siegfried Grabner, Lukas Grüner, Benjamin Karl, Andreas Prommegger, Markus Schairer, Anton Unterkofler. ■

Darabos: huge success for our team at the Handball Euro in Austria

With its sensational main round entry and ninth place in the final ranking of the European Handball Championship hosted by Austria, the Austrian handball team went down in sports history. Almost all of the six matches were enthusiastically applauded. The national team had already triumphed twice in the preliminary round in Linz with a draw against Iceland and a win over Serbia. In the main round in Vienna the Austrians delivered another brilliant performance, defeating the traditionally strong Russian team in the last match.

Minister of Sport Darabos, who watched the performance of our handballers attentively, said: "Our team scored a big hit. I am convinced that the new euphoria for handball kindled by Viktor Szilágyi and the others will have a lasting effect on domestic structures!" ■

Darabos' 1st anniversary as Minister of Sport: numerous reforms

Norbert Darabos has been Minister of Sport since 1 February 2009. Celebrating his first anniversary, he reviewed the tasks completed but also focused on those ahead. His first year in office had been under the impact of numerous reforms.

Key measures: well-aimed sports funding, the RED-WHITE-RED TEAM initiative to promote high-performance sport, exercise prescription, "Healthy kids are moving", more sports at school. Minister of Sport Darabos is very proud that at the beginning of this year anti-doping rules were again tightened: "It has not been easy to implement more stringent provisions". According to him, a "milestone" had been reached by amending the Anti-Doping Act for the second time since 2007 and treating doping as fraud under criminal law. ■