

NEWS FROM AUSTRIA

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HOME AFFAIRS**Summer review of the federal government: achieving more for Austria**

The summer review of the coalition – formed by the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the People's Party (ÖVP) – on its work during the first half of 2010 was under the motto "Achieving more together for the people in Austria". Among the successfully completed projects were especially measures to stimulate economic growth as well as to stabilise the labour market.

Among the government's top achievements were measures promoting social cohesion and transparency, including the introduction of the guaranteed minimum income and the agreement on the transparency database listing all social transfers and subsidies. In addition, a compulsory year of free pre-school education as well as a higher and means-tested childcare allowance were introduced.

As far as the health sector is concerned, the go-ahead was given for the financial consolidation of the health insurance institutions. Nursing allowances were increased, new "doctors' limited liability companies" (shared private practices) were introduced and measures to improve immission protection and traffic security were realised.

The tax reform, labour market packages, economic stimulus programmes and public investments laid the foundation for economic growth. Companies benefit from easier access to loans and a reform of the bankruptcy law. More funds were allocated to thermal rehabilitation, and an additional 760 million euro were earmarked for promoting green jobs. Thus Austria has achieved the EU's lowest unemployment rate, the second lowest youth unemployment rate as well as the shortest average duration of unemployment.

The rescue umbrella for the euro as well as the expenditure cap laid down in the budget law enhanced stability. Risky speculations in the Federal Republic were banned, rating agencies were subject to the supervision of the Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FMA). The EU Member States agreed on a financial supervision system for banks, insurers and securities. Moreover, important steps were taken to modernise the educational system, e.g. the new Middle School, the harmonised A-level exam, a "training guarantee" for teens under 18 years as well as a school development plan with a budget of more than 600 million euro.

Thanks to numerous reforms and innovative projects, security has been improved. 1,000

new police officers helped to reduce house-breaking, cross-border police cooperation was intensified. Besides reforming the legislation relating to aliens, an asylum court was established to speed up asylum proceedings (July 2008). More money has also been invested in disaster prevention.

Unemployment: positive trend but still premature to signal the all-clear

This July, the number of registered unemployed persons dropped by 8.9% or 20,728 persons to 211,659 compared to the same month of 2009. Including the 62,084 participants in training programmes, a total of 273,743 people were jobless in July. The respective labour market data were presented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in early August. If jobless persons and trainees are added up, unemployment declined by 5.1% from the level of the previous month. Minister of Social Affairs Rudolf Hundstorfer rated this as a "positive labour market trend", but said it was premature to signal the all-clear. The effects of the crisis still had to be fought but the "short-term prospects were quite promising", said Hundstorfer. This was also reflected in the strong upward trend of vacancies registered with the Public Employment Service, increasing by 30.2% to 35,177.

Youth unemployment (-10.3%) and men's unemployment (-12.9%) continue to decrease significantly. But also unemployment among women (-4.0%) and older people (-2.9%) was considerably lower than still in June of this year. The number of long-term jobless persons dropped by 7.8%. For the first time since the outbreak of the crisis, the average unemployment spell decreased by two days to 94 days.

Hundstorfer was highly pleased about the fact that also the apprenticeship market showed early signs of relaxation. In July, the number of young people looking for apprenticeship places went down by 16.4% year-on-year, while the number of vacancies for apprentices rose by 4.4%. According to Eurostat, Austria's unemployment rate of 3.9% in June 2010 was the lowest of all EU Member States.

Decline in naturalisation rates

In the first six months of 2010, a total of 2,764 persons was granted the Austrian citizenship. Compared to the same period of 2009, this corresponds to a decline by 34.9%.

In 2010, the law governing the acquisition of the Austrian citizenship has been tightened in respect of "adequate livelihood" requirements for the second time since 2006.

EUROPE INTERNATIONAL**Forum Alpbach 2010 under the motto
"Construction and Reality"**

This year's European Forum Alpbach (Tyrol), takes place under the motto "Construction and Reality" (ending on 4 September 2010). As Forum President Erhard Busek stated, the event focused on "the analysis of omnipresent tensions. Whether in research, art, politics or economy, people have always tried to progress from imagination to realisation or to reduce the gap between the two. Especially the global financial and economic crisis has shown that this remains extremely topical despite modern forecasting methodologies and a global communication network".

The Forum presents numerous top-class participants also this year, among them Federal President Heinz Fischer, who opened the Forum, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, members of the Austrian federal government as well as top politicians from abroad, among them Slovenian President Danilo Türk. Iranian Peace Nobel Prize Laureate Shirin Ebadi, EU Commissioner for Regional Affairs Johannes Hahn and Siemens Head of Personnel Brigitte Ederer will also travel to the mountain village. Prominent personalities will participate in the panel in the framework of the "Financial Market Symposium" (2 to 4 September 2010). On 4 September 2010 Ban, Fischer and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger will discuss the international financial markets crisis and the UN Millennium Goals. The Financial Market Symposium is held for the first time this year, replacing the traditional banking seminar. Against the background of the economic and financial crisis and in view of the great public interest in financial markets, the scope of the Forum was "expanded and opened", explained the organisers. The talks in Alpbach explore this subject from the perspective of health, reform, technology, politics, economy, architecture and urban planning as well as financial markets.

Subjects for discussion include the future of the euro, supervisory structures for banks and insurance companies as well as the economic future of the Central and Eastern European countries. Besides representatives of large Austrian and international banks, also the Governor of the Austrian National Bank (Oesterreichische Nationalbank/OeNB), Ewald Nowotny, Director of the Belgian Central Bank Peter Praet and President of the Hungarian National Bank Andras Simor will join in the talks. The Ministers of Finance of the

Netherlands and of Montenegro, Jan Kees de Jager and Igor Luksic, respectively, announced that they would join the event.

Before that, at the "Economic Symposium" held from 31 August to 2 September under the motto "Did we waste the crisis?", the socio-economic consequences of the economic and financial crisis are discussed. These round of talks are attended by high-ranking personalities such as former President of the European Commission and former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, Minister of Finance Josef Pröll, Minister for Economic Affairs Reinhold Mitterlehner and Minister of Transport Doris Bures.

Another traditional highlight of the European Forum Alpbach is the "Political Symposium" (29 to 31 August). In line with the theme, the focus will be turned on the relationship between political concepts and the consequential realities. Thematic priorities include the role of the United Nations and the future of the European Union. 15 years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, a panel is devoted to Bosnia, in which Foreign Minister Spindelegger, his Slovenian counterpart Samuel Zbogar, Kosovan Minister for Economic and Financial Affairs Ahmed Shala, former Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and Valentin Inzko, the international community's top representative in Bosnia will take part.

A meeting of UN ambassadors is held already for the fourth time in parallel to Forum Alpbach. This year the Security Council Retreat focuses on the protection of the civilian population in armed conflicts and the situation of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. The protection of civilians in conflict situations was one of the priorities in November of last year, when Austria chaired the supreme body of the United Nations. Austria is a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council until the end of 2010.

Besides the meeting of UN ambassadors, a summer retreat of leading UN officials will also be staged in Alpbach, which will be attended by UN Secretary-General Ban and executive staff of all organisations of the UN family.

Spindelegger described the two high-level events of the UN as "crucial to reviving Alpbach", which also demonstrated the lasting impact of Austria's membership in the Security Council.

As the Austrian Foreign Ministry informed, Ban will hold talks with Foreign Minister Spindelegger on 2 September 2010, before travelling to Alpbach.

China's Foreign Minister Yang in Salzburg

On the sidelines of the Salzburg Festival ("Salzburger Festspiele"), Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger and Salzburg's Governor Gaby Burgstaller met with Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs Jiechi Yang.

Federal President Fischer stated that the "green" light was given for the Austrian-Chinese relations, and this was also reflected in the intensive policy of mutual visits. Fischer also invited the Chinese President to pay an official visit to Austria. Yang informed that the Austrian Pavilion at the World Expo in Shanghai was received very well by the public, attracting already more than one million visitors. Austria and China planned to celebrate the 40th anniversary of mutual diplomatic relations on a high level – politically, economically and culturally.

After his meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister, Federal Chancellor Faymann stressed that the forthcoming 40th anniversary offered an opportunity for taking advantage of the positive dynamic also in the future. Faymann considers environmental technology and renewable energy one of the most important common interests of China and Austria. On the one hand, the Middle Kingdom was the future market per se for Austrian companies specialising in environmental technologies, on the other hand, Austria and the European Union had a vital interest in involving China in the current climate discussion to prepare the conference in Cancun, following up the Copenhagen meeting.

At his meeting with Yang, Foreign Minister Spindelegger addressed above all the cooperation of the two countries in the UN Security Council, notably with regard to the trouble spots Iran and North Korea. Spindelegger stressed that it was crucial to coordinate measures to safeguard stability on the Korean peninsula with China, as a very influential player in the region. In response to a question about China's relationship with North Korea, Yang stated that Beijing maintained normal relations with its neighbour. China was interested in helping to improve the living conditions of the people in this country and would continue intensifying diplomatic negotiations on the solution of the nuclear conflict. China was also making major efforts to prevent other countries from obtaining nuclear weapons. Besides, Beijing was interested in a nuclear-weapon-free

Middle East, but more efforts had to be made to convince Israel.

On 26 May 1971, a joint communiqué had been published simultaneously in Vienna and Beijing, announcing the decision to establish diplomatic relations with effect 28 May 1971. In the framework of anniversary celebrations, various cultural events are planned. To mark the occasion, Foreign Minister Spindelegger as well as Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll will pay a visit to the People's Republic of China in 2011.

China is Austria's second most important overseas market. Despite the economic crisis, Austria's exports increased by 43% during the first half of 2010. During the official visit of Chinese Minister for Economic Affairs Chen Deming to Austria in May, 17 contracts worth 900 million US dollars (724 million euro) were signed, covering above all cars and machines. However, Austria also hopes that access for Austrian food exports to the Chinese market will be facilitated.

Word Bank Group offices formally established in Vienna

Austria signed a "seat agreement" with the World Bank Group, providing diplomatic privileges to the staff of the international organisation. In this way, international organisations are to be encouraged to establish additional offices and send staff to Vienna.

The Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) and the Vienna Centre for Financial Reporting Reform (REPARIS) have already established premises in Vienna. Similar conditions were granted to the Joint Vienna Institute launched by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Ministry of Finance and the Austrian National Bank already in 1997. UN organisations have moved to Vienna since 1956, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is also headquartered in this city.

The World Bank Group comprises for example IFC (International Finance Corporation), MIGA (Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency), IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) and IDA (International Development Association).

Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Josef Pröll stated that the agreement was sending out "an important message especially at the present time" because "Austria is one of the leading countries in the discussion about restructuring the international financial architecture".

CULTURE MEDIA SCIENCE

Mexican painter Frida Kahlo at Bank Austria Kunstforum in Vienna

From 1 September to 5 December 2010, Bank Austria Kunstforum in Vienna will present the first comprehensive Frida Kahlo retrospective in Austria.

The myth around the Mexican artist (1907-1954) has taken on a global dimension over the past decades. Today Frida Kahlo is considered a symbol of Mexican identity, a pioneer of the feminist movement, the trademark of a large merchandising machinery, and last but not least the fascinating, exotic source of inspiration for Hollywood films. Her life was portrayed in several films, e.g. by Karen and David Crommie in "The Life and Death of Frida Kahlo" (1965). Before this film, the artist had been largely unknown to cinema-goers. In 1984, the Mexican Paul Leduc shot "Frida, naturaleza viva". Actress Ofelia Medina credibly portrayed Kahlo in her world of desire, pain, isolation and loneliness. The film communicates many events in Kahlo's life without words. It won renown as the most differentiated filmic presentation of Kahlo's life.

In 2001 Julie Taymor produced "Frida", starring Salma Hayek in the title role. This rather shallow Hollywood production became an international success and made the artist known to a wider public.

Frida Kahlo's art is inseparably linked with her biography. Her father, Carl Wilhelm Kahlo, was born into a bourgeois family in Pforzheim (Germany). In 1890, aged 18, he emigrated to Mexico. In Mexico City Kahlo established himself as a professional photographer and married the Mexican María Cárdena. Becoming a Mexican citizen after four years, he adopted the name Guillermo ("Wilhelm" in Spanish) Kahlo. His wife died in 1897, in 1898 he started his second family with Mathilde Calderón y Gonzáles from Oaxaca, the daughter of a photographer.

In 1904 the photo artist built a house in Coyoacán, then a suburb of the Mexican capital. Later it became the world famous "casa azul" – the "Blue House" as his daughter Frida painted it cobalt blue as a protection against evil spirits.

Frida Kahlo was born as the third child of the family in 1907, but later changed her birth date to 1910, the year of the Mexican Revolution. Her life had started with the new Mexico, Kahlo explained. At the age of 6 years, she contracted polio and was confined to bed for a

long time, this made her right leg thinner and slightly shorter.

Her father significantly shaped Frida's development. He lent her books, took her for long walks, awakened her interest in plants and animals as well as in attentive nature observation, a quality from which she was to benefit later as a painter. The "Escuela Nacional Preparatoria" ("National Preparatory School") had also a profound influence on her. The lessons provided many stimulating ideas to the girl, who was not only interested in the humanities but also in anatomy, biology and zoology. There, Frida developed the desire to study medicine.

In 1925 she was severely injured in a bus accident – a steel bar penetrated her pelvis. Bedridden – encased in plaster body casts or wearing a steel corset – she started to paint. In 1926 she created her first self-portrait. Contrary to medical opinions, Frida regained the ability to walk. However, she suffered all through her life from the consequences of the accident and could not give birth to children. She tried to overcome the trauma of several miscarriages by creating paintings such as "My Birth" (1932).

In 1929 Frida Kahlo married the 43-year-old Mexican painter Diego Rivera, who had become world famous for his huge political and revolutionary murals ("murales"). In the same year, Rivera was expelled from the Partido Comunista Mexicano (Mexican Communist Party), and also Frida left the party.

From 1930 to 1934, Kahlo and Rivera lived in the USA, where Diego Rivera accepted major commissions, such as a mural for the Rockefeller Center. It was finally destroyed as Rivera had incorporated a portrait of Lenin into the mural painting.

A painting by Frida was displayed in public for the first time: "Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera" at the "Sixth Annual Exhibition of the San Francisco Society of Women Artists".

In the 1930s, she and her husband supported the Russian revolutionary Leo Trotzki. Frida offered him accommodation in the "Blue House" in Coyoacán in 1937. She also dedicated a self-portrait to him, which shortly afterwards caught the attention of André Breton.

As a response to the Spanish Civil War, which broke out in July 1936, the painter founded together with other artists and intellectuals a solidarity committee to support the Spanish Republic.

After a dispute with Trotzki, Rivera resigned from the Fourth International. Trotzki and his

wife left the “Blue House” – but in the end failed to escape Stalin’s henchmen.

Frida Kahlo left for Paris, where she met the Surrealist circle around Breton, including Kandinsky, Picasso, Ernst, Éluard, Miró, Tanguy, Paalen.

In autumn 1939, Rivera divorced from his wife, probably also to protect her as a connection between Trotzki’s stay in the “Blue House” and his murder had been suspected. In December 1940, Diego and Frida married for the second time.

Frida Kahlo’s fame as an artist was growing. She belonged to a group of 25 artists and intellectuals who were selected by the Ministry of Education as the founding members of the Mexican Art Seminar. In 1943, she was presented in the “Exhibition by 31 Women“ in Peggy Guggenheim’s gallery “Art of This Century“ in New York. In Mexico she became a professor at the School for Painting and Sculpture of the Ministry of Education, where she taught for ten years. She had to undergo numerous difficult operations. In 1944, she started her diary, which she kept until her death.

Frida Kahlo’s works were presented for the first time in a solo exhibition in her native country in 1953. The artist died from pulmonary embolism in 1954. Suicide was rumoured but Diego Rivera refused an autopsy on his deceased wife.

Today, Frida Kahlo is one the best-known painters of Latin America. Her paintings were officially declared “national cultural heritage” by the Mexican government.

In May 2006, her full-length portrait “Roots“ was auctioned for 5.6 million US dollars, making it the most expensive painting of a Latin American artist in history.

Out of her 143 paintings, 55 are self-portraits. Stylistically, she often drew on the pre-Columbian Mexican art of the Aztecs and Maya, while also reflecting European art history. The works by the staunch Marxist cannot be separated from social and political problems. The title of one of her painting is for example: “El marxismo dará salud a los enfermos“, i.e. “Marxism will give health to the sick“ (1954).

The Frida Kahlo exhibition in Vienna has been developed in cooperation with Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, and is curated by Ingrid Brugger and Florian Steininger.

www.bankaustria-kunstforum.at

Kramar’s 3raum-anatomietheater presents Schwab’s “Die Präsidentinnen”

Writer Werner Schwab was born in Graz (Styria) in 1958 as the son of a housekeeper and a bricklayer. His father left the family soon after his birth. The mother moved back with her parents as she did not receive any maintenance payments. Having to earn her living, she put her son in foster care, lived in squalid dwellings and worked as a housekeeper until she found a job as a caretaker in the Herz-Jesu neighbourhood in Graz, which also provided her with a small one-room flat. There Werner Schwab spent his childhood with his religious mother. Later he tried to come to terms with it by creating his alter ego Herrmann Wurm in “Volksvernichtung oder meine Leber ist sinnlos” (“People Annihilation or my liver is sick”). Schwab knew from an early age that he wanted to be an artist. He started to attend a school for applied arts in Graz in 1974, where he met Ingeborg Orthofer, his future wife. After searching for an independent artistic approach for many years, Schwab was accepted as a student by Bruno Gironcoli at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna in 1978. Receiving an orphan’s allowance and the maximum grant, he moved into a flat in Graz – together with Ingeborg Orthofer – and continued to commute to Vienna.

In 1981 the couple went to live in Kohlberg (East Styria), where they had bought a farm and started to create “putrefying sculptures” from perishable material such as meat, bones and animal carcasses. Schwab started to write intensively, in the beginning mainly experimental texts.

In 1989 he became a co-founder of the artists’ group “Intro Graz Spection“ and produced his play “Kadaverstück“ for their first project: “The lively is the lifeless and the music“.

His relationship with Orthofer broke up, probably also because of his alcohol problems.

He gradually started to win recognition as a playwright. In February 1990, “Die Präsidentinnen“ (English versions: “Holy Mothers”, “The Presidents”, “First Ladies”) received its world premiere in Vienna. When Hans Gratzner became the director of “Übergewicht, unwichtig: Unform“ (Overweight, unimportant: misshape) in 1991 and the play was premiered in Vienna, he attracted attention also in Germany. He was elected “New Dramatist of the Year” and one year later “Dramatist of the Year” by “Theater heute“. He received the “Mülheim Prize for Dramatists” for “Volksvernichtung oder meine Leber ist sinnlos“, which was performed for the first time in Mu-

nich in 1991. He concentrated increasingly on writing prose.

On 1 January 1994, Werner Schwab was found dead in his flat. He had died from respiratory paralysis caused by alcohol poisoning, which he had anticipated in his drama “Endlich tot, endlich keine Luft mehr“ (literally translated as: “Finally dead, finally no air to breath”).

He developed his specific language aiming at unmasking the aesthetic literary language already in his “Arbeitertagebücher“ (“Worker’s Diaries”), which he had started to write at the age of 22 years. With coarse expressions and absurd word combinations, his language went down in literary history as “Schwabish“. Relentlessly driven to write, he created 16 full-length plays, seven of which were premiered only after his death. One of his most unforgettable works is “Die Präsidentinnen“, which – 20 years after the first performance – is staged by director Hubsi Kramar at 3raum-anatomie-theater (1030 Vienna, Beatrixgasse 11).

With Lucy McEvil, Lilly Prohaska and Roswitha Soukup, Kramar found outstanding actresses to play the role of Erna, Grete and Mariedl. They are sitting in the kitchen, engaged in monologues – while the Pope is giving his urbi et orbi blessing on TV. They explain the world, start to fantasize what kind of reward life could offer them: Erna, the miser, Grete, the funny bitch and Mariedl, the diligent soul cleaning toilets without gloves. Suffering from megalomania, the three women work themselves up into an also sexually charged frenzy, and the language is doing somersaults. In the end, Mariedl, the youngest of the three, is slaughtered but the kitchen preaching of Erna and Grete goes on as before.

As Karin Cerny wrote 2004 in a review of the radio version of the drama (published by Sessler Verlag), Werner Schwab’s “presidents” are “petty bourgeois women turned into monsters, whose metier is memory inhibition, but precisely because of their complacent bigotry the inhibited memories strike back twice as hard. They cannot escape the ‘dirt of life, where the sexual is driving out the humane from the world’“ (Schwab).

Currently, 3raum-anatomietheater is Austria’s theatre generating the most productive friction. This performance, for which Hubsi Kramar created an excellent stage design despite his modest financial resources, is heartily recommended. The optimal lighting design is by Ali Holy, the production is managed skilfully by Alexandra Reisinger.

Performances: 25 August to 4 September and 15 to 29 September, Wed. to Sat. at 8 p.m.

Information and tickets: www.3raum.or.at; phone: 0043 650/323 33 77. Tickets: EUR 18; reduced tickets; EUR 12.

www.literaturhaus.at/buch/hoerbuch/rez/schwab/

Egon Schiele’s portrait of his “Wally” back at the Leopold Museum in Vienna

Egon Schiele’s “Bildnis Wally“ (“Portrait of Wally”) arrived in an Austrian Airline plane from New York at Vienna-Schwechat Airport on 20 August 2010. Since 23 August 2010, it can again be admired at the Leopold Museum, where it forms a kind of a triptych with Schiele’s “Selbstporträt mit Lampionfrüchten“ (“Self-Portrait with Chinese Lantern Plant”) and the equally iconological work “Kardinal und Nonne“ (“Cardinal and Nun”).

The portrait Egon Schiele had painted of his long-term lover Wally Neuzil in 1912 was confiscated by the US District Court in New York after a Schiele exhibition in 1998. After a twelve-year lawsuit with the heirs of the original owners, the Leopold Foundation agreed with the heirs on a 15-million-euro settlement in July. During the Nazi regime, gallery owner Lea Bondi-Jaray had been forced to sell it under controversial circumstances and after WWII. it was restituted accidentally to the wrong owner. In 1954 it was acquired by collector Rudolf Leopold, who later contributed it to the Leopold Museum Private Foundation. (Leopold had passed away at the end of June).

www.leopoldmuseum.org

Mourning for Christoph Schlingensief

The world of theatre mourns for German director Christoph Schlingensief, who died of cancer aged 49 in Berlin on 21 August 2010.

Schlingensief worked regularly also in Austria. In December 2003, he had directed the first performance of Elfriede Jelinek’s “Bambiland“ at Vienna’s Burgtheater.

His performance “Ausländer raus – bitte liebt Österreich“ (“Foreigners out – please love Austria”), inspired in the TV programme “Big Brother“, caused a scandal. Asylum seekers moved into containers in front of Vienna State Opera, were voted out by the audience and deported during the campaign.

Nobel Prize Laureate Elfriede Jelinek was deeply shocked by the death of the stage director: “He shaped a new genre, which was beyond classification. There will be nobody like him anymore. He was actually not a director (despite Bayreuth and Parsifal), he was everything. (...) He was THE artist per se“.

SPORTS POLICY**Youth Olympic Games in Singapore: successful Austrian delegation**

Austria's small delegation does quite well at the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore. From today's perspective, the performance of the 18-year-old Tyrolian Alois Knabl has been the absolute highlight. After earning a sensational bronze medal in the individual competition on the first day of the first Youth Olympic Games (14 to 26 August), he won gold in the triathlon mixed team relay.

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos was enthusiastic about this outstanding achievement of Knabl and his partners Eszter Dudas (Hungary), Miguel Valento Fernandes (Portugal) and Fanny Beisaron (Israel).

After Alois Knabl was awarded gold and bronze, Christine Huck (aged 16) from Graz also won a bronze medal in judo (category 52 kg and below).

Other top performers in Singapore were judoka Michael Greiter ranked seventh and Stefan Leitgeb, who became ninth in table tennis. But also Lara Vadlau has so far delivered an excellent performance in sailing.

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos: "These positive developments make us look forward with great excitement to the first Youth Olympic Winter Games, which will be held in Innsbruck in 2012!"

Positive appraisal of European Swimming Championships by Minister

Minister of Sport Norbert Darabos may make a quite positive appraisal of Austria's performance at the 2010 European Swimming Championships held in Budapest in August.

Darabos, who travelled to Budapest to support our athletes during two days of the competitions, watched Markus Rogan's brave struggle for gold in the 200m individual medley on the spot. Although silver medallist Rogan was clearly disappointed, the Minister of Sport expressed his respect for his all-out efforts. Rogan also earned Austria's second medal, becoming second in the men's 200m backstroke event.

Dinko Jukic missed a medal narrowly. He turned up the heat in the finish of the men's 200m butterfly semi-final, but made it only to the unrewarding fourth place. Minister of Sport Darabos was highly pleased about the excellent fifth rank of Constantin Blaha in the men's 1m springboard diving event as well as the good results of Nina Dittrich in the finals of in the 1500m freestyle race (setting a new Austrian

record) and of synchronised swimmers Nadine Brandl and Livia Lang.

In view of these great achievements, Norbert Darabos supports Vienna's application to host the 2012 European Swimming Championships. The Minister of Sport: "We witnessed the Hungarians benefit from the home advantage. I could see for myself how great the atmosphere was at the competitions. European Championships in Austria in the preliminaries of the Olympic Games in London would probably provide additional important stimuli to the Austrian swimming sport."

Our summer athletes are highly successful on all levels

Austria's summer athletes are highly successful in various disciplines. The list of achievements is long:

31-year-old Alban Lakata from East Tyrol grabbed the long-yearned-for gold medal at the Mountain Bike Marathon Championships in St. Wendel (Germany). Stefan Raser became the gold medal winner at the Shooting Sport Championships in Munich. Federal Army athlete Corinna Kuhnle celebrated the so far greatest success in her wildwater canoeing career, winning silver in the kayak single (K1) at the European Championships in Slovakia. Yvonne Schuring and Viktoria Schwarz also made it to the pedestal, winning bronze in the K2 500m event at the Canoe Sprint World Championships in Poznań (Poland). The silver medal went to the duo Clemens Doppler/Matthias Mellitzer at the Beach Volleyball European Championships, who missed gold in the finals in Berlin very narrowly. Vanessa Bittner became dual European champion and earned two silver medals in inline speed skating.

Sailing athletes Nico Delle Karth and Niko Resch won for the first time the overall 49er World Cup.

Last but not least, our team athletes also triumphed at various sports events:

The basketball U20 national team received the gold medal at the B Group European Championships in Burgenland. Our American Football men's team was awarded bronze at the A Group European Championships in Frankfurt. The women's team came in third at the Flag Football World Cup in Canada.

Congratulations to all successful athletes!