



## **Media Monitoring**

### **Situation Report January 8, 2010**

#### *1) The reception center in Eberau*

- The Home Minister, Mrs. Fekter, has asserted that she hopes that the highest Austrian court will give the reason to her ministry concerning the construction of the reception in Eberau.
- Mr. Hofer (Freedom's Party) has announced that he will present a petition of information to Minister Fekter concerning which villages have expressed interest in Burgenland, Steiermark and Carinthia as to become the seat of the third reception center for asylum seekers.
- *Die Presse* publishes a new article on Eberau. The commission on building matters of Burgenland has recommended to change the decision concerning Eberau, as the affectation of the land would be „questionable on several grounds.“ The Governor of Burgenland, Hans Niessl (social-democrat), as well as the vice Governor Franz Steindl (people's party), who is member of the above-mentioned commission, have both spoken against the Home Minister insisting that the people was ignored on this matter. Niessl has asserted that before the referenda is taking place, an alternative place for the reception center has to be presented. The Vice-Chancellor Mr. Proell (People's Party) has replied to Steindl asserting that Eberau is still possible, but he is open to alternatives. Proell has also asserted that a referendum is not apt for such matters, position rejected by the Chancellor Faymann (Social-democrat).
- *Die Presse* includes also an article about the Freedom's Party in Burgenland, that has started a campaign against the planned reception center in Eberau, referring to the need of Burgenland abandoning the agreement among the *Bundeslandes* with the Federal State concerning hosting asylum-seekers. They assert not to question the right to apply for asylum. However, Geza Molnar, Secretary of the party in the province, has asserted that “much more than half of the asylum-seekers are bogus asylum-

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- seekers." They are spreading propaganda and gathering signatures against the reception center. "According to the discussions of the last weeks it is excluded in the near future that any village of Burgenland or any where else would postulate for such a project" asserted the same Molnar.
- *Der Standard* presents *FPÖ NÖ gegen drittes Erstaufnahmezentrum* (Freedom's Party Lower Austria against a third reception center), where it is argued that Austria does not need a third center, however, Traiskirchen should be relieved through "stopping the abuse," recommended the member of the Land parliament and chef of the Freedom's Party in Lower Austria, Mrs. Barbara Rosenkranz. She asserted clearly that a reception center is an "intolerable charge" for the people. She asserted they are "young and adventurous men that come to the country with the help of smugglers," reminding the case of October 2009 where 64 persons ethnically Kurds were found in the South Highway. 58 of them had pronounced the "magical word Asylum" but some days later they disappeared. She asserts that about 200 persons leave the camp Traiskirchen every month. She continued asserting that "the right to asylum has become an instrument for illegal immigration." She has criticized the notion of humanitarian stay as well as of tolerated stay. She asserted that "In Austria the ruling principle is: who is once there, can stay there." She has asserted that during year 2008, 9.877 persons suspected of the commission of crimes were asylum-seekers, and 12.810 new asylum petitions had been presented. In Austria 61% of the petitioners would be granted asylum, when the EU average would be 28%. She has also referred to the "considerable" amount of money spent to care for asylum-seekers and spoke for payments in specie. According to the Mr. Huber, Director of the provincial party, asserted that the third asylum-center is no solution. The reply to Mrs. Rosenkranz originated in Mr. Karner, from the People's Party in Lower Austria, who asserted that her words are a security risk: "Who speaks against the new asylum center, speaks against relieving Lower Austria and Traiskirchen, consequently, against the interest of the Land and the security of the people."

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- On the topic Eberau, the Green Human rights speaker Mrs. Korun issued a press release requesting the governing "to stop the tragicomedy" and to find a solution by consulting experienced organizations such as Caritas, the Evangelical Church and the Red Cross.

## 2) Situation of asylum-seekers in Austria

- Mr. Doerfler, Governor of Carinthia, has issued a new press release asserting that Carinthia has taken all asylum-seekers that have been assigned to them by the Home Ministry.
- Ms. Gretner from the Greens publishes an article in *Der Standard* entitled *Österreichs Asylpolitik zur Anschauung gebracht* (Austrian asylum-policy brought to the light) commenting on the concrete plan of the reception center for Eberau: "The first associations: military quarter, prison, punishment camp....Here the picture indicates clearly the need to observe people, 'to keep them together,' to administer them. It is a common combination of housing and control device. The planning duty of preparing a place to live for asylum-seekers would have been managed with more feelings by a person five years old....Nobody is ashamed, that the attitude concerning asylum-seekers as potential criminals is violating their human rights..."
- *Kurier* reproduces the assertions of Chancellor Faymann who would be for the application of sanctions to the provinces that do not respect the agreement on reception of asylum-seekers, particularly, the quotas.
- Mr. Scheuch, leader of the Freedom's Party in Carinthia, has issued a press release against the Green asylum policy asserting that the opinion of Mrs. Glawischnig to recognize climate refugees as "absolute nonsense" ("Ein völliger Holler") "Glawischnig has abandoned completely policies that are near the citizen. Traiskirchen is full. We do not find any place for a new reception center. However, the Green wants to open the doors even more and more. To invite asylum-seekers? That is absolutely irresponsible...On one hand, Glawischnig wants to bring more asylum-seekers, on the other hand she wants no new reception center. And please, does she think where to host all of



them? With her at home? In the Central Office of the Green Party? It is to laugh. So you do not do politics. The citizens have deserved more feeling of responsibility... the asylum problem [SIC] has to be solved already at the border, with target action of the Executive and stronger border controls..."

### *3) Homophobic expressions*

The Freedom's Party member of parliament Werner Königshofer published in his weblog homophobic comments concerning the member of the Tirolean parliament (Green) Mr. Gebi Mair. Two members of parliament of the social-democracy reacted critically (Mrs. Prammer and Mrs. Heinisch-Hosek) Prammer asserted that the fight against every form of discrimination is an obligation and this includes not to tolerate homophobic insults. The same Prammer asserted that "Discrimination begins with language and politicians must play an exemplary role." The Minister competent for discrimination issues, Ms. Heinisch-Hosek asserted that the formula used by Königshofer was discriminatory and humiliating: "Such expressions reveal an intolerant and anti-democratic attitude and can not be ignored." They have both requested at least apologies by Mr. Koenigshofer.

### *4) Punishment of racially-motivated assault or torture*

*Der Standard* publishes an article *Misshandelter Schubhäftling Fall Bakary J.: Zwei Beamte Entlassen* (Mistreated administrative detainee case Bakary J: two officers released), decision of the disciplinary commission, further policeman must pay a high fine; retired officer has loss rights related to the public office.

"Concerning the case in which four officers WEGA (Alarm division group of operations from Wien) that mistreated in April 2006 the administrative detainee Bakary J. there is now a final decision of the Disciplinary Upper-Commission of the Office of the Federal Chancellor: two policemen were set free, one has received a high fine of five salaries and can only provide internal services and a third policemen, in the meantime in pension, has lost all the rights and benefits derived from the public service relation. The four persons could have presented a remedy against this decision of November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009 to



the highest Administrative Court, within six weeks, that are now over, according to the speaker of the press of the Police of Vienna.

Mistreatment of a detained person

According to criminal law, the policemen were judged for mistreatment of a detained person to conditional penalties of between six and eight months. The Gambian citizen that could not be deported suffered several broken bones..." The case is also followed by *Krone Zeitung*.

Mrs. Korun, speaker on human rights from the Green party, has asserted in a press release that it is still missing that Austria includes the prohibition of torture in the Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch), and that Austria is still breaching the obligation in this regard under the UN Convention against Torture. A project would have been already presented by her party.

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