



Viennese Initiative "*Hunger for Art and Culture*" A Model for Europe

The sociocultural project "*Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur*" (lit. transl.: Hunger for Art and Culture) was initiated in Vienna by the *Schauspielhaus Wien* (Airan Berg) and the *Armutskonferenz* (Martin Schenk) and now has around 20,000 cultural pass holders, who are granted free admission to over 120 Viennese cultural institutions. The German cities of Frankfurt and Jena have already followed this successful model, as have several Austrian provinces. Darmstadt, Stuttgart and Luxembourg will be implementing such models shortly. Hamburg and Leipzig have also expressed an interest.

The initiative *Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur* has made it possible for people living in precarious financial circumstances to have free access to art and culture. It has already become an important model on an international scope.

"International interest indicates that this was the right idea and that the campaign is important," says Monika Wagner, business director of *Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur*. Viennese cultural alderman Andreas Mailath-Pokorny is also pleased about the model initiative, which he is supporting. "A Viennese initiative has become an important contribution towards increased social justice in the area of arts and culture, and is developing an impressive international career."

In Frankfurt, cultural passes have been given to "*Hartz IV*" recipients, pensioners living on minimum benefits, as well as social security recipients, since autumn of 2008.

Jena has been issuing cultural passes to people of limited financial means, in concordance with the Viennese model.

In Darmstadt the association "*Dabei sein*" was founded and has been given the mandate to create a cultural pass according to the Viennese model beginning in the fall of 2009.

Stuttgart has formed a working group, following a constructive meeting with the association *Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur*, with the goal of adapting the Viennese model to the circumstances in Stuttgart.

Luxembourg is working intensively on implementing a "*pass culturel*." The launch is planned for October 2009. The initiative came from the report made by *Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur* at a round table last year.

Hamburg and Leipzig are also interested in the idea and are in touch with the Viennese organization *Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur*.



The Viennese Campaign

20,000 cultural pass holders have enjoyed making use of the wide scope of events taking place in theater, film, fine arts, dance and music. The number of cultural pass holders is growing daily. "There's no reason why people should not have access to art and culture, just because they don't have the financial means," states Martin Schenk from the *Armuskonferenz* on the importance of this campaign. "The financial crisis may even worsen the situation. In Vienna 137,000 people are currently affected by poverty."

In 2003 the only organization involved was the *Schauspielhaus*, but now more than 120 large, medium-sized and small cultural institutions in and around Vienna have joined the initiative, a cross-section of the various fields of art and culture. 169 social and charity organizations (NGOs, the job market service and social centers) have been issuing cultural passes to persons living below the poverty level, including those receiving welfare benefits, minimum pensions or social security, as well as refugees. 25,000 tickets are issued annually to the 20,000 cultural pass holders in Vienna. The City of Vienna has been supporting this campaign since 2007.

The Austrian provinces of Salzburg, Styria, Upper Austria, Tyrol and Vorarlberg have already copied the Viennese model.

Hunger auf Kunst und Kultur
Gumpendorferstraße 9/10
A-1060 Vienna
Tel: +43-1/3190239
monika.wagner@hungeraufkunstundkultur.at
www.hungeraufkunstundkultur.at

PR Agent:
Elke Weilharter
SKYunlimited
Burggasse 28-32/9
A-1070 Vienna
Tel: +43-664/4111773
elke.weilharter@skyunlimited.at

Translated by Renée von Paschen
Art.Translation@chello.at
www.art-translation.net