

## PRESS RELEASE

**The Vienna based checkpointmedia AG designs multimedia stations in the Austrian parliament's new visitors' centre and in the nearby Epstein Palace.**

**This multimedia opening of the parliament building under the artistic direction of Oscar candidate Virgil Widrich uses state-of-the-art media stations.**

**Vienna, November 2, 2005** – The new main entrance to the parliament's visitors' centre reflects the new openness of the building on the Ring. Not only has the building itself been refurbished, but communication with the citizens has also been redesigned. By using modern media to provide information, the parliament building extends its appeal to young people. The parliamentary committee aims to explain the history and function of parliamentarianism in Austria in an innovative way.

Parliament has become a place where politics is visible. The house's opening as expressed through the architecture of Geiswinkler & Geiswinkler is continued in the multimedia presentation by checkpointmedia.

A team of up to 50 software and hardware specialists worked for a whole year under the artistic direction of Virgil Widrich, who was nominated for an Oscar in 2002 in the category "Short Films" for "Copy Shop", on the creation of informative worlds of discovery and the purchase of the most innovative equipment available, whether this is currently to be found in Korea, Japan or Italy. The result can legitimately be described as unique: in combination with the architecture the possibilities offered by "new media" open new windows onto and into the parliament as a building and an institution. The multimedia facilities are also available in English for international visitors.

Fifteen individually designed media stations have been seamlessly incorporated into the modern layout of the three floors. Powered by hidden technology they offer a wide range of information and entertainment that will entice visitors to come back for more. A multi-purpose function and conference room is available to visitors for use as a lounge, and can serve as a room for press conferences, lectures and receptions should the need arise.

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## **The individual media stations**

### **"Visitor information"**

On going in, the visitor's gaze is caught by two large-format displays by the reception desk which provide clear information on scheduled events and tours. This information is fed directly from the parliament computer network's database system and can be overridden locally if changes or announcements are made at short notice.

Along the passages leading to the parliament building proper displays offer instructions in several languages in the use of the pocket scanners.

### **"Overture"**

As they go down to the lower levels, visitors are greeted by the large media wall (made up of 24 rear projection units with an overall surface of 6 x 3.2 m) on which an "overture" in the form of a film introduces the main areas of interest in the visitors' centre. The media wall – together with the hidden sound system in the visitors' area – can also be used to show films or to broadcast sittings live from the chamber, thus enabling the general public to experience parliamentarianism as it happens.

### **"Legislation"**

Parliament's chief task – legislation – is explained in simple and easy-to-understand terms on three synchronized monitors. Using a specific example, the individual steps towards legislation can be traced – in keeping with the dynamics of the procedure – from one monitor to the next until a law is finally passed.

### **"Parliamentary democracy"**

This interactive installation explains the basic concepts of parliamentary democracy in Austria. The four basic elements "Citizens" – "Members of Parliament" – "Laws" – "Enforcement" are arranged in a circle with further information available on each topic.

### **"EU"**

Using an interactive menu visitors can discover the essentials of the European Union and cooperation between the European and Austrian parliaments. A "news ticker" keeps them up to date with the latest news from Brussels.

### **"Infrastructure"**

A video clip allows visitors a look behind the scenes in parliament, offering them a glimpse of the day-to-day routine of MPs. Various figures relating to their work – such as distances travelled, how high their mountains of files are – are arrestingly illustrated.

### **"Wheel of time and time machine"**

The wheel of time offers an overview of the historical landmarks of parliamentary life in Austria by means of a video clip. Visitors can travel along a timeline by turning a large, mechanical wheel. The clip can only be viewed and listened to inside an alcove so that visitors using nearby stations are not disturbed.

The time machine makes use of the large screen and sound system in the lecture theatre to show these films in an attractive "trptych" arrangement which allows large groups of people to discover the history of parliamentarianism in an atmosphere reminiscent of cinema. The time machine is operated by means of a self-explanatory set of keys.



### **"Parliamentary magnifying glass"**

This multimedia installation, of which there are two models, allows visitors to see particular elements of the architecture of the parliament's façade in close-up by moving a virtual magnifying glass over an image of the building. In addition, they can take a look into the rooms behind these elements. By touching the more than 30 "hot spots" in the virtual interior and exterior levels additional information on the architecture, history and function of the selected parts of the building can be viewed.

### **"Who's Who 1907 - 1918 and 1918 to the present"**

Among other things, these three stations offer encyclopaedic access to information on members of parliament by means of an interactive seating plan. In a special statistics section this extensive data has been edited for the use of the public for the first time. In addition, every parliamentary term includes a historical summary.

### **"Research terminals"**

On three work stations selected websites are available to visitors for research purposes. In addition, a 3D model of the parliament building invites them on a virtual tour. A specially compiled quiz for young people – with animated quizmasters – helps to consolidate in an entertaining way the knowledge gained during the tour.

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### **Photos / Graphics files**

Photos / Graphics files in printing quality are available for download at:

[www.checkpointmedia.com](http://www.checkpointmedia.com)

Please mind the source information indicated in the photos.