

## **Annual Meeting of the Weltbund der Auslandsösterreicher (AÖWB) – The Global Association of Austrians Living Abroad**

**Salzburg, September 7 – 10, 2017**

This year, I was fortunate enough to join the annual meetings of the AÖWB that were held in Salzburg, the jewel in the crown of Austrian cities. The beauty of the city was further enhanced by a stretch of spectacular fall weather.

There are at present about 550,000 “passport-carrying” Austrians living all over the world, plus an estimated 500,000 so-called “Herzensösterreicher” Austrians of the Heart – people of either Austrian descent who, for whatever reason, had to relinquish their passports or simply individuals who love Austria and are interested in all things Austrian. The Auslandsösterreicher are also known as the 10<sup>th</sup> Bundesland of Austria

The annual gatherings of the Weltbund are hosted every year during the first week of September, on a rotational basis, by one of the nine federal capitals – Vienna, St. Pölten, Eisenstadt, Graz, Klagenfurt, Innsbruck, Linz, Bregenz [Feldkirch] and Salzburg.

This year’s meeting attracted well over 450 Auslandsösterreicher and their guests, coming from all over the globe – spanning from Japan, Brazil, Sweden, Italy and England, just to mention a few.

The Salzburg program consisted of an official proceeding – the General Assembly of members, honoring participants from various Austrian clubs and organizations in different countries for their respective contributions, and a wide array of social and cultural events: guided tours of the city, visits to the various artistic venues of the fabled annual Salzburger Festspiele (Salzburg Music Festival), a dinner hosted by Austrian Foreign Minister Kurz, receptions at the spectacular Residenz building, and a final ball at the Salzburg Kongress Haus.

Moreover, the “Auslandsösterreicherin of the Year” – Professor Dr. Pascale Ehrenfreund, a distinguished Austrian female scholar and astrophysicist who discovered an asteroid which was named in her honor (main-belt asteroid 9826 Ehrenfreund), and is the CEO of the German Aerospace Center, was honored in a festive ceremony at the University of Salzburg.

Next year’s annual meeting will take place in beautiful Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol, from September 6 – 9, 2018.

We encourage all friends of Austria to participate. The annual gatherings of the AÖWB provide a unique opportunity to meet Austrians living around the globe and to share and exchange experiences and form new friendships – or, indeed, renew old ones.

You may acquire / renew your AÖWB membership through the American-Austrian Cultural Society of Washington DC.

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