

Press conference of the Bundestheater-Holding, February 14, 2025

**Austrian federal theaters on course for success
Record attendance and new concept to combat the shortage of skilled workers**

The artistic and economic results of the 2023/24 season of the Austrian Federal Theatres are more than pleasing. The audience response at Burgtheater, Volksoper Vienna and Vienna State Opera was higher than it has been for many years. Despite massive general inflation, ticket sales and capacity utilization increased in all theatres.

This trend in audience popularity is also continuing in the current season. It is not only at the Vienna State Opera that seat occupancy in the first few months of the current season is 100% for many productions, some productions at the Burgtheater and the Volksoper Vienna also have been sold out for months.

One of the most important investments for the coming years is the newly founded *Academy for Theater Crafts*, where up to 50 apprentices are to be trained each year.

The 2023/24 season was characterized by increases in almost all artistic and economic areas. In the 2023/24 season, a total of 1,315,955 visitors (previous year: 1,225,114) were welcomed to 1,674 performances (previous year: 1,612). The audience is also reflected in the seat occupancy rate. In the reporting year, the Vienna State Opera was almost 100% (99.4%) full, the Volksoper Vienna 83.9% (previous year: 78.0%) and the Burgtheater 71.6% (previous year: 69.5%). With an increase in visitors of 7% compared to the previous year, income from ticket sales also rose by 14%. Ticket revenue in the reporting year rose to EUR 62.3 million (previous year: EUR 54.5 million). Sales revenue for the entire Bundestheater Group amounted to EUR 85.3 million in the reporting year (previous year: EUR 76.9 million). At EUR 37.3 million (previous year: EUR 31.6 million), investments were also higher than they have been for a long time.

For Christian Kircher, Managing Director of Bundestheater-Holding, there are several reasons for the artistic and economic success of the Austrian Federal Theatres: "Firstly, the programming is right and the three theaters are secured with long-term contracts at artistic management level. This means they can plan for several years. In addition, the well-established cooperation at commercial level and the division of tasks between the Bundestheater-Holding and the individual theaters create the space for artistic work.

As the parent company, Bundestheater-Holding ensures stability, security and ongoing improvements through the provision of various services. "The simplified ticketing system and the renovation measures in the theatres, such as the new seating in the Akademietheater last year, contribute to a positive theater experience."

"In addition," says Kircher, "we take our role model function seriously. The Austrian Federal Theatres are setting new standards in many areas, such as apprentice training and compliance culture, and are therefore playing a pioneering role in the cultural sector."

Maintaining the value of basic compensation and the shortage of skilled workers as challenges

Nevertheless, there are currently two major challenges. Kircher: “On the one hand, there is the lack of value retention of the basic compensation in the form of automatic inflation adjustment. This requires the support of the owner. The Bundestheater-Holding is conducting ongoing budget negotiations in order to guarantee planning security for all companies by means of three-year budgets.”

On the other hand, the shortage of skilled workers on the current job market and the promotion of young talent, particularly in technical professions, is an urgent issue, and not just for the Austrian Federal Theaters. “With the founding of the *Academy for Theatre Crafts*, we are setting a milestone that will not only benefit our theatres,” emphasizes Kircher, “and the apprenticeship campaign supported by all companies of the Austrian Federal Theatres is already showing initial success. We have already received over 100 applications for our apprenticeships in the theater trade.”

“The great interest with which audiences are responding to the current offerings of all three theatres and our innovations such as the new *Academy for Theater Crafts* speak for the fact that the Austrian Federal Theatres are currently doing a lot of things right,” concludes Kircher.