

## **Babel Wien – Newsletter (September/October 2011)**

**After well-deserved summer holidays, our Babel Wien team is back in the Austrian capital and ready for a new year of European discussion and debate. We have a newly elected board and plenty of fresh ideas for the coming year’s work plan, how to design our blog and how to attract new - creative, critical, optimistic, pessimistic, multicultural and multilingual, both EU-enthusiasts and EU-skeptics, but always dynamic and motivated Babelians.**

**Our first step towards refreshing the team is to set up a bimonthly newsletter in which we will include recently published articles and some additional updates on the team and our activities. In this very first Babel Wien newsletter we introduce to you our new board and the articles published last month. The complete articles can be found on the blog at: <http://wien.cafebabel.com/>.**

**Last month we refreshed our memories about 9/11 in the Teutoburg forest, and we discovered the many faces of volunteering in the context of the European year of volunteering. We are also glad to present a new section of the blog: “What’s hot and what’s not” that aims to publish opinion pieces on what’s going on in the world news - particularly what’s happening in Vienna – and what outrages us or makes us react.**

**We hope you enjoy reading and maybe even feel inspired to come up with new ideas on how to improve Babel Wien’s work. Why not join our weekly *Gehirnsturm* sessions? We are always happy to welcome new faces!!**

**Happy reading!  
The Babel Wien team**

## Board presentation

On August 30<sup>th</sup> Babel Wien elected its new board. New positions were created in order to allow a better division of labour. Below are brief presentations of the new board members:



**Sheena Keller, Co-president:**

Sheena is a development economist, a researcher, a human rights activist and a global European. After travelling the world, she finally landed in Vienna and joined Babel Wien in early 2010. She quickly became swept up by the idea of a pan-European network and the passion and diversity within the Babel Wien group. Since then, she has become an active member, participating in Cafebabel network events across Europe and organising two debates for Babel Wien: the Orient Express Reporter project on *“Do the Balkans Begin in Vienna?”* and the Green Europe on the Ground debate on *“The Danube Strategy: Prosperity through Environmental Management.”* Babel Wien has helped Vienna to feel like home for Sheena and has proven to be an important outlet for sharing ideas and creating change through active citizenship.



**Claudia Müllauer, Co-president:**

Vienna has been Claudia's home for the past 3,5 years. It stands in line with Lahore, Munich, Seoul, Tokyo and Cologne, where she spent a considerable amount of her awake and asleep time. Being a city girl with a love for outdoor activities she was enchanted by the symbiosis of nature and urban life in Vienna. The original plan of just finishing her Master's thesis in political science and then moving to another place was superseded by renovating her apartment, co-founding Babel Wien and continuing her research in the PhD program of the social science department at the University of Vienna. She is a strong believer in dialogue and debate and is especially interested in the topic of migration and integration. Furthermore, she is on a mission to find the ultimate cure for blisters so that she can continue her passion for hiking. The members of Babel Wien have become Claudia's Viennese family and she is thrilled to start the 3rd Babelian year in Vienna.



**Daniel Spichtinger, Secretary:**

As a Viennese, Daniel brings some much needed grumpiness to Babel Wien. He does have a soft spot for llamas and also for European policy – a somewhat odd combination but at least it gives him something to talk about at parties. Daniel joined Babel Wien early on and has been involved in writing articles (check out his contribution about volunteering in this issue) as well as supporting the organization of several Babel debates. He originally studied English and a combination of History and Media Science at the University of Vienna and obtained a degree in EU politics from the University of Bath (UK). Since then he has been working in the management and the communication of EU funded projects in research, most recently in a global network on food safety. He also enjoys reading and watching Science Fiction and hiking – which he defines as a leisurely walk between two *Heurigen*, though.



**John Hodgshon, Editorial and Blog administrator:**

Forced to leave England due to his involvement in the 'June 3<sup>rd</sup>' events, he settled in Austria, where he maintains an outwardly respectable façade by working as an English trainer and translator. Somehow he has so far managed to avoid the attentions of the Austrian authorities.

Café Babel Wien became aware of him through his activities with 'Biber', a government funded body who publish a German speaking magazine for immigrants to Vienna. He was quickly initiated into the group in Summer 2011 and has since risen to the rank of 'Blog Administrator'. Only time will tell if this satisfies his lust for power, or if the group will one day come to regret their decision to involve him....

John has travelled widely throughout Europe and has a special interest in riding around on old-fashioned trains, preferably whilst wearing a fedora.

John has a strong belief in the tenets of pan-Europeanism and dreams of the day when all the peoples of Europe will march under his....err, *this* banner.

John would like to categorically state that it is *not* his greatest dream in life to stand on a balcony wearing a military uniform, aviator shades and stupidly big cap whilst aeroplanes spell his name in the sky.



**Marie Krpata, Communications, Outreach and Marketing Representative:**

Marie sometimes is Austrian (for the Apfelstrudl) and sometimes she's French (when the discussion's about red wine). Increasingly she even feels Belgian (and hopes that this will not be seen as an act of betrayal). You'll find her in museums, especially in exhibitions about abstract expressionism (which arguably doesn't happen often enough in Vienna). She also likes photography, languages, travelling, reading, and cooking, especially Asian spicy dishes. During her school-, university- and training years she was in Austria, crossed France and went to England, where she had a hard time with the "rostbifs". She's now back in her birth city but doesn't know for how long... As long as she's working for Babel Wien she's however determined to leave a footprint in the association's work.

## Pictures from the General Assembly



## Angenehm Überrascht....

von John Hodgshon



(Photo: Marie Krpata)

Ich komme zurück, nach einem Monat schönen Urlaub und Wien zeigt sich nicht von seiner besten Seite... unzufriedene, raunzende Wiener („dass is a Geeeeehsteeeeeig!“), Alltagsrassismus (wusstest du, dass die schlechten Ausländer im 17. Bezirk wohnen, die guten im 15.?- im Ernst), das Gefühl, dass in dieser Stadt nichts los ist und dass alle abhauen - Verdammt, es ist wie in der DDR, nur gibt's hier keine Mauer.

You are welcome to read the whole article on our [blog](#).

## Battle of the Teutoburg Forest- 2002 years on- Rome's 9/11.

By John Hodgshon



(Photo: Kaptain Kobold on Flickr)

Today is the 2002nd anniversary of the Battle of Teutoburg forest. How has this battle changed the world? What affects has it left on those who took part in it? One thing is sure- the world has never been the same since then.

You are welcome to read the whole article on our [blog](#).

## Vienna- What's hot and what's not (week 1)

By John Hodgshon

(this article can be found on our blog in [German](#) and in its [original version](#))



(Photo: Will Spaetzel on Flickr)

Hot- Corruption or, as it's called in Austria- the 'cozy Mafia'.

Do you lack any kind of useful skill, but have lots of influential friends? If so, then you could earn bags of money- it's so easy! Just organise a hunting weekend, or wait till a state property gets sold off, and the money's yours for the taking! Just write an invoice and put any number you like on it- it's all legal, and no-one can prove that that two hour seminar didn't cost 1,000€. But remember, maybe it's called corruption in other countries, but here in Austria we like to say 'social partnership'. After all, we're not in the Balkans.

Cold-

Being a middle Eastern dictator is sooooo 1970s. Out go military parades, silly military uniforms and massive palaces and in comes democratic change, power-sharing and hiding in a hole in the ground.

This season everyone's taking to the streets to overthrow the hated tyrant!

## The many faces of volunteering: European and Austrian perspectives

By Daniel Spichtinger



In case you haven't notice yet- the EU has declared 2011 the European Year of Volunteering. But what does it mean to volunteer? And is everything about volunteering nice and shiny or are there also some potential pitfalls and problems associated with it?

You are welcome to read the whole article on our [blog](#).

## Vienna- What's hot and what's not (week 2)

By John Hodgshon



(Photo: Daniel Spichtinger)

Hot!

Sturm- The official description is 'an alcoholic beverage, made from fermented freshly pressed grape juice and with an average volume of 4%'. I, on the other hand, prefer to refer to it as a drink which you can drink without feeling any ill effects until you stand up.

Yes, its Sturm time again. Weaker than wine and less heavy going than beer, Sturm's a good refreshing drink with the great advantage (or disadvantage, depending on how you look at it), that you don't notice how drunk you're getting until you either stop or stand up. Ideal for amazing your friends by behaving in a calm and collected manner at the table but then start falling about and telling complete strangers you love them when you stand up. Ah Sturm, responsible for many happy evenings....

Cold

Vienna beer festival.

Does Austria really need another beer festival? Aren't there enough events involving Lederhosen, Dirndl and drinking ridiculous amounts of beer in Austria and Bavaria anyway?

I mean, if I want to drink overpriced beer, get drunk, have a fight and be sick, then I'll just go back home to England. Oh wait sorry, I'm forgetting, because you're doing it whilst wearing traditional dress and listening to Austrian folk music (shudder), its acceptable. I'll bear that in mind next time I'm drunk and disorderly on the street and take an 'emergency lederhosen' kit with me. If the police stop me I'll just quickly whip it out, put it on and et voila! Everything's ok, because its *traditional*.

## **ABOUT BABEL WIEN**

Babel Wien is the local city blog of Cafebabel.com, a pan-European network and online magazine for the Eurogeneration and European issues that aims to bring European topics closer to EU citizens. Babel Wien is a legally registered association in the city of Vienna. Founded in 2009, our goal is to highlight aspects of Europe that are not often covered by other media, to talk about Europe from a fresh and original perspective and to offer a wide range of discussion topics and interactive debates. Naturally, we also focus on Vienna and bring both the Austrian perspective into the European debate, as well as bringing Europe closer to our local level. We believe that the diversity of our backgrounds is a major factor in the heterogeneity of our work and makes Babel Wien a dynamic organization

Babel Wien is part of a large network of associations around Europe, connected by the umbrella association, Cafebabel.com, which is situated in Paris. The network enables us to include a focus on our local city, as well as building on our outward contacts to have the opportunity to make short-term staff exchanges and meet from time to time with the members of other editorial teams . On several occasions a year, the Babel Wien team also meets with the staff of the Cafebabel.com headquarters when the network has its General Assembly in Paris. We also regularly meet with members across the network at the annual “Babel Academy” when new projects for the coming year are announced across the network.

All members of the Cafebabel.com editorial teams and local blogs are volunteers, and every member contributes to the level they can afford. What motivates us at Babel Wien is the feeling of community, the meeting of minds, and a shared passion for discussion, active citizenship and for Europe. We bring together many different perspectives, backgrounds and opinions in the spirit of fostering productive debate. Underlying all our work is the objective to answer or define: “Is there something like a Eurogeneration and in what way?”

## **ON THE BLOG...**

We very much appreciate a plurality of opinions, and therefore would like to draw the attention of our readers to the comments function they can make use of at the bottom of each article. We consider it fruitful to gather as many opinions as possible, in view of an interaction and of communication in both senses, not only unilaterally. This is possible through the blog format of our medium.

## LANGUAGES

The articles on our blog can be read in German, English and French and we insist on the importance of multilinguism as the expression of our different cultural backgrounds. Achieving this goal means we also need translators to keep our blog up to date in our three working languages.

## SUBSCRIBING

If you wish to subscribe to our newsletter, please send an email to [babelwien@gmail.com](mailto:babelwien@gmail.com)

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter or from our bulk emailing list, please send us an email to [babelwien@gmail.com](mailto:babelwien@gmail.com) specifying whether you want to unsubscribe from the newsletter and/or our bulk emailing list. For further information on our work please visit our blog: <http://wien.cafebabel.com/>.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Join us on our first annual retreat on **23.10.2011** where we will go on a nice hiking tour in the Viennese vineyards, which will offer a wonderful sight on the Austrian capital. We will meet at **11 am** at the **tram station at Schottentor** where our socializing will start. We will have time to get to know each other better as we take the public transport to the start of our hiking tour, facing the challenge of the steep Viennese hills, going beyond our physical capacities and finally satisfying our thirst for adventure. At the end of our tour, we intend to relax and refresh ourselves in a *Heurigen* (around 2 pm) where the well deserved Sturm and Apfelstrudl will wait for us and where we will be able to discover our underestimated and hidden culinary aptitudes on an open-ended basis. We can't wait to see you! Please don't forget to bring your sneakers, a huge portion of creativeness and fresh ideas, a big appetite for Austrian food as well as the necessary intercultural curiosity and openness to enrich our discussions!

N.B. This Babel Wien event is aimed at creating an intensive discussion on the goals and strategy development of Babel Wien, including brainstorming on topics for new articles, recruitment strategies for attracting new members and kicking off the organization of our next big debate: „Multikulti on the ground“ which will take place in spring 2012.

If you are interested in joining the retreat, please send an email to: [babelwien@gmail.com](mailto:babelwien@gmail.com) which will help us organizing the event and making the necessary reservations.

All are welcome!