

Klosterneuburg, April 19th 2009

Essl Social Prize 2010 – Prize Winner Bill Drayton

The Essl Social Prize, the first international prize for social initiatives, will be awarded for the third time in 2010. The prize money of 1 million euro will go to American Bill Drayton. He is the founder and CEO of Ashoka, an international non-profit organisation whose goal is to foster social entrepreneurship world-wide.

Bill Drayton, the US-born pioneer among social entrepreneurs, founded Ashoka in 1980. A lawyer and historian by training, he thus created the first and biggest international organisation to promote social entrepreneurs. In fact, he even coined the phrase "social entrepreneur" to denote the initiators of entrepreneurial projects who use their business ideas in an endeavour to solve social problems.

In Ashoka, he succeeded in building a world-wide network of social entrepreneurship. Ashoka and its so-called "Fellows" are active in about 60 countries on five continents. Ever since its inception, the organisation has supported the work of more than 2,000 social entrepreneurs all over the world.

Bill Drayton is awarded the Essl Social Prize 2010 for his lifetime achievement. The prize money will be used to create, in cooperation with Ashoka, an international platform to contribute to the globalisation of tried and tested social projects. The prize-giving ceremony will take place in April next year.

The Essl Social Prize is the first international prize for exemplary private social initiatives; it is awarded annually. Its special feature is that the projects are developed in cooperation with the prize-winners and followed through. This ensures professional management and enables an exchange of social and business skills.