



Karlheinz Böhm's Äthiopienhilfe

Press Release

High prize-money peace award for Karlheinz Böhm

- **Balzan-Prize to benefit *Menschen für Menschen* projects in Ethiopia**

(Bern, 23. November 2007) For his life's work serving humanity and peace, Karlheinz Böhm, founder of the humanitarian organisation Menschen für Menschen, was awarded this year's Balzan Prize. During a festive ceremony at Bern City Hall, Swiss Bundesrat Vice President and Head of Swiss Home Department, Pascal Couchepin, will personally hand over the award to Karlheinz Böhm. The Balzan Prize for "Humanity, Peace and Brotherhood among Peoples" is awarded every three to five years only. With a prize money of 2 Million Swiss Francs (1,2 Million Euro) it is the highest amount awarded for a peace prize. The prize money will go to Menschen für Menschen projects in Ethiopia.

With this award, the International Balzan Prize Foundation honours Karlheinz Böhm for his "life's work serving humanity and peace, for his extraordinary personal commitment, for the successful, outstanding network of activities he has created to support concrete affirmative action in Ethiopia, a country with one of the most ancient cultures in the world, but one of the poorest. In the middle of a highly successful career as an actor, Karlheinz Böhm decided to break with his usual life and engage in a great humanitarian project in Ethiopia which he himself built up from scratch.

Karlheinz Böhm on winning this award: "I accept the prize as it honours all those who help me to support poor people". The prize money will be used for his very successful development projects in Ethiopia, which follow the principle to "help those who help themselves". Since 1981, these activities include the construction of 173 schools, 79 health stations, 4 polyclinics and 3 hospitals. Meanwhile, the organisation's projects cover an area of 47,400 square km, an area bigger than that of the German Federal State of Lower Saxony.

The International Balzan Prize ranks among the highest awards for science, culture and humanitarian achievement in the world. Other noted recipients of the "Balzan Prize for Humanity, Peace and Brotherhood among Peoples" are Pope John XXIII (1962) and Mother Theresa (1978).

The International Balzan Prize Foundation was established in 1956, three years after the death of Italian journalist and industrial magnate Eugenio Francesco Balzan, following instructions of his daughter Angela Lina Balzan, to use the substantial inheritance for humanitarian purposes. Ever since, the foundation honours outstanding achievements made in the field of science, culture and humanities. Every year, the Foundation awards four prizes in the eligible categories. Every three to four years only, the foundation also awards the "Balzan Prize for

"Humanity, Peace and Brotherhood among Peoples" to either people or organisations for their outstanding endeavours for peace and humanities. Böhm, who will be 80 years old in 2008, was given the German Bundesverdienstkreuz in



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2001, an award of the highest importance. The Ethiopian universities in Jimma and Alemaya awarded him two honorary doctorates in 2003. The Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, made Karlheinz Böhm the first to receive Ethiopian honorary citizenship in October 2003.

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