

## In brief

**Goodyear** cuts Production for one week in Colmar Berg The Luxembourg Minister for Employment, Francois Biltgen confirmed this week in Parliament that the Goodyear Tyre plant in Colmar Berg would be stopping production for seven days starting the weekend of 22 November. This decision was said to be taken as a result of falling demand for commercial vehicle tyres and follows two earlier announcements in October that the plant's Saturday and Sunday shift was being suspended.

Goodyear Luxembourg employs around 3,300 people.

**STATEC** economic predictions for 2009 Luxembourg statistic office STATEC presented its new economic predictions for growth in the Luxembourg economy. STATEC no longer believes that the Luxembourg economy will shrink in the coming year. The statistical forecasts for 2009 range between minus 0.4% and 0.5% growth. The growth predictions for 2008 are between 1.7% and 2%. The rate of employment for 2008 is expected to be around 4.4% and the figure for 2009 is forecast to rise to 5.5%. These figures were revealed on Friday afternoon in a meeting of the Finance and Budget Commission of the Luxembourg Parliament. STATEC will publish its figures on 8 December.

**ASTRON BUILDINGS** announced that it is putting in place a restructuring and cost control programme. In the context of the current economic situation and to ensure the company's future competitiveness, Astron Buildings has decided to implement a policy to reduce fixed costs. These measures include staff reductions of approximately 60 people out of the 325 employees in total who work in Dierkirch, the headquarters of Astron Buildings. Astron Buildings employs 1,000 people in Europe. CEO, Venant Krier also said "The rumors following which the company will close its plant in Dierkirch are totally unfounded."

## President of the Republic of Finland, Tarja Halonen visits Luxembourg



The Finnish and Luxembourgish heads of state share a bite

At the invitation of His Royal Highness the Grand Duke Henri and Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess Maria Teresa, Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, and her husband Dr. Pentti Arajärvi carried out a state visit to Luxembourg from 24 to 26 November 2008. They were accompanied by Tuija Brax, Finland's Minister of Justice.

Among the many official activities during the hectic three day visit will include laying a wreath at the Monument of National Solidarity with Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, the defence Minister, Jean-Louis Schiltz and Chief of Staff General Gaston Reinig. Luxembourg Mayor, Paul Helminger will accompany the Finnish delegation on a visit to the Finnish market on the Place Guillaume.

A gala dinner hosted by the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess in the Grand Ducal Palace will close the first day of the official visit. On 25 November, the two heads of state will attend an economic and financial seminar entitled "Energy, environment and innovation - new opportunities for business" in the Chamber of Commerce, in the



Tarja Halonen meets and greets

presence of Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade, Jeannot Krecké. There will also be representatives from Luxembourg's economic and financial sectors. The objective of this seminar is to strengthen trade relations between the Finland and Luxembourg.

The Finnish delegation, accompanied by the grand ducal couple, visited the National Museum of mines at Rumelange where they were welcomed by the Minister of Culture, Higher Education and Research, François Biltgen. They

had the opportunity to visit the galleries and learn about the tools, machines and devices used in the exploitation of iron ore in Luxembourg since the mid nineteenth century until the 1980s.

The second day of the visit will conclude with the inauguration of the exhibition of glass works of art entitled "Finns at Venini" at the Museum of Modern Art (MUDAM). The state visit will end on November 26 with the traditional ceremony of departure in front of the Grand Ducal Palace.