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Approx. 215 million US dollars paid out to around 25,000 beneficiaries

23 May 2019

On 30 April 2019 the period for collecting payments from the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism ended.

By early May the Fund had sent 24,706 beneficiaries closing payment offers, as a result of which it was able to make 22,281 payments. By this time around 53.4 million US dollars had been disbursed in the form of closing payments; by early May the General Settlement had made payments totaling 214.9 million US dollars.

Around 1,200 applications could not be paid out in full, which corresponds to a sum of approx. 1.9 million US dollars. These applications have now fallen under the statute of limitations. The General Settlement Fund Law stipulates that the remaining money be assigned to the National Fund. Due to the fact that the 210 million US dollar with which the Fund was originally endowed was fully disbursed and that the government provided an additional approx. 4.5 million US dollars on the basis of the amendment to the law (Federal Law Gazette I 54/2009), this provision is no longer applicable.

Once all 20,702 applications for financial compensation received by the General Settlement Fund had been ruled on by 2012, the competent body in this matter, the Claims Committee, determined that all decisions that could not be served by 31 December 2013 would be served by means of deposit with the Office of the Secretary General. Around 500 decisions were deposited on this basis on 31 December 2013.

An amendment to the General Settlement Fund Law (Federal Law Gazette I 9/2013) set out the limitation period on payments from the General Settlement Fund. According to this amendment, entitled beneficiaries could claim the amounts awarded within a period of five years after the service of the decision, no earlier, however, than 31 December 2017. The majority of applications that were not paid out in full fell under the statute of limitations on 31 December 2017: The final limitation period expired on 30 April 2019.

Besides providing information about the expiration of the claims the General Settlement Fund also intensified its efforts to trace people who were entitled to receive the payments. The applicants, or those who were eligible to enter into the proceedings in their place, were contacted in writing and by telephone and informed that the period for collecting their payments would soon lapse. As a result of these and other efforts, such as making announcements and undertaking other publicity measures, between deposit of the decisions that could not be served in late 2013 and the expiration of the last date for collecting the payments on 30 April 2019 a total of around 4.1 million US dollars could be disbursed to applicants or persons eligible to enter the proceedings in their place.

Year	**Amount disbursed**
2014	774,851.30 US dollars
2015	789,836.45 US dollars
2016	690,952.59 US dollars
2017	1,010,838.27 US dollars
2018	578,742.41 US dollars
2019	291,651.15 US dollars

It now remains for the General Settlement Fund to publish the Claims Committee’s Final Report in bilingual (German and English) book form. The Fund shall also continue to function as the apparatus of the Arbitration Panel, which submitted its Final Report in 2018 and still has a number of proceedings with open deadlines for reopening applications. Moreover, the databases, files and the materials and documents created and collected since 2001 within the scope of the Fund’s assistance provided to the Claims Committee and the Arbitration Panel must be secured and documented.

Administrative preparations are now underway to wind down the General Settlement Fund. These include terminating contracts entered into by the Fund and the final account for the Fund’s means. Once the General Settlement Fund has completed its tasks it will be deemed dissolved.