

Newsletter June 2019

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On 17 June 2019, a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria, the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism and the Fund for the Restoration of Jewish Cemeteries took place on the premises of the Austrian Parliament.

As a result of the changes in government, six new members are represented on the Board of Trustees: Federal Chancellor Brigitte Bierlein, Vice-Chancellor Clemens Jabloner, Federal Minister of Finance Eduard Müller, Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research Iris Eliisa Rauskala, Federal Minister of Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs Alexander Schallenberg and Federal Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection Brigitte Zarfl.

The meeting was chaired by the President of the National Council, Wolfgang Sobotka. Among other things, the annual reports and financial statements of the three funds for the year 2018 were adopted.

National Fund

At its meeting on 17 June 2019, the Board of Trustees of the National Fund decided to support 99 projects. These are two social projects, 25 projects from the field of education, research and science, which serve to research and communicate the history of Nazism, 30 projects relating to events (theater, exhibitions, symposia/seminars or concerts), 18 projects relating to memorial sites or commemorative events and 24 projects to promote books, films and other media. In addition, the Board of Trustees has approved eight social and medical programs for the benefit of Nazi victims from residual funds pursuant to § 2b (6) of the National Fund Law. To date, the National Fund has supported a total of around 2,100 projects and programs with a total volume of around EUR 31 million.

The projects supported also include memorials in memory of the Austrian Nazi victims, such as the "Massif of Names" opened in March 2019 on the site of the former Maly Trostinets extermination site near Minsk, where some 9,700 Austrian Jews were murdered between 1941 and 1944. Another project that has been supported by the National Fund for years is the Shoah wall of names for the murdered Jewish men, women and children from Austria, which will be installed in Ostarrichi Park in the 9th district of Vienna. In June 2019, the City of Vienna also fixed the location for the permanent monument to the victims of homosexual persecution during the Nazi era. The scientific basis for this was developed on the basis of the list of names of the homosexual and transgender victims of Nazi persecution, supported by the National Fund. The new monument is subsidized by the City of Vienna and the National Fund; a total budget of 300,000 euros is available for the design competition and the realization of the winning design.

The tender procedure to find a general contractor for the renovation of Block 17 in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which began at the end of 2018, is well advanced. The listed building will have to be renovated before the new Austrian regional exhibition can be integrated into it.

Since April 2019, thanks to a cooperation with Compass-Verlag GmbH, registered users of the *Findbuch* have been able to search the "*Zentralblatt für die Eintragungen in das österreichischen Handelsregister*" from 1933 to 1955 free of charge. The "*Zentralblatt*" provides detailed information on companies and individuals for this period. Through cooperation with the Styrian Provincial Archives and the Lower Austrian Provincial Archives, data on relevant records of the two provincial archives will in future be accessible via the *Findbuch*.

General Settlement Fund

On 30 April 2019, the last deadlines for the receipt of payments from the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism expired. The payments for around 1,200 applications, which correspond to a total amount of around 1.9 million US dollars, could not be paid out in full and are therefore time-barred. As a result of attempts to trace people, publications and other publicity measures, a total of approximately 4.1 million US dollars could be paid to applicants or persons entitled to continue the proceedings between the deposit of the non-deliverable decisions at the end of 2013 and the end of the last limitation period on 30 April 2019. A total of approximately 215 million US dollars was disbursed to approximately 25,000 beneficiaries as part of the compensation measure.

The processing of all 2,307 applications for *in rem* restitution has been completed since 30 November 2018, with some periods for filing applications to reopen proceedings still open until the end of August 2020. In 2018, the Arbitration Panel for *In Rem* Restitution submitted its Final Report, which will be published as a book. At its meeting on 17 June 2019, the Board of Trustees of the General Settlement Fund acknowledged receipt of the Final Report of the Arbitration Panel and will forward it to the Main Committee of the National Council. After the Final Report has been received by the Main Committee, the Arbitration Panel will be dissolved.

Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries

At its meeting on 17 June 2019, the Board of Trustees of the Cemeteries Fund approved five project applications for the restoration of the Jewish cemeteries in Mistelbach and at the Vienna Central Cemetery Gates I and IV for a total amount of around 500,000 euros. The majority of the funding, around 300,000 euros, will be spent on the Tahara House at the Central Cemetery Tor IV. In addition, infrastructure master plans and a replacement planting concept for the grove structure of the Jewish departments of the Vienna Central Cemetery will be subsidized. Earthworks and the renovation of the retaining wall will be funded at the Jewish cemetery in Mistelbach.

Since 2011, federal funding of around 6.1 million euros has enabled measures to be taken to preserve the Jewish cemeteries in Baden, Deutschkreutz, Göttsbach/Ybbs, Graz, Hohenems, Klosterneuburg, Kobersdorf, Lackenbach, Stockerau, Währing and, at the Vienna Central Cemetery, Gates I and IV. All restoration projects are documented on the website of the Fund for the Restoration of Jewish Cemeteries in Austria.