


# Statute of Limitations Time Limit for Collecting Payments from the General Settlement Fund Expires at the End of 2017

07 Dec 2017

All 20,702 applications for compensation received by the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism had been decided by 2012. In the amendment to the General Settlement Fund Law (Federal Law Gazette I 9/2913) the legislator stipulated that these payments could be collected by the entitled beneficiaries within five years of the service of the decision. Monies still held by the Fund upon expiration of this five-year period would be transferred to the National Fund for the Republic of Austria for programs that benefit the victims of National Socialism.

For all decisions that had already been served at the time of the entry into legal force of this statutory provision on 1 January 2013, the five-year period commenced on this date and therefore expires on 31 December 2017. This applies to the vast majority of the 1,297 applications that have not yet been disbursed in full (as per 6 December 2017).

For decisions that were served between 1 January and 31 December 2013, the opportunity to collect awarded payments ends five years after the expiration of the time limits stated in the decision.

In cases where it was not possible to serve the decisions on the entitled beneficiaries, they were deposited with the Secretary General on 1 January 2014. One month later the deposited decisions were deemed served. Once the designated periods for recourse or for including co-heirs had expired these decisions became legally final. Upon expiration of these periods the five-year period under the Statute of Limitations commenced.

The General Settlement Fund has taken a range of steps to inform the entitled beneficiaries of the upcoming expiration of their claims under the Statute of Limitations. The Fund's Claims Committee published an announcement in the Official Gazette of the Republic (*Wiener Zeitung*, 1st/2nd February edition) about the deposit of the decisions and the time limit under the Statute of Limitations. In 2014 the Fund also informed the media and victims' organizations about the expiration of the claims under the Statute of Limitations. Furthermore the Austrian diplomatic missions abroad were informed so that in the event that they received enquiries these could be referred to the Fund.

In addition, information about the expiration of the claims was published on the Fund's website on a number of occasions: on 27 June 2013 the deposit of decisions that could not be served was signaled and on 1 January 2014 it was announced that the decisions had now been deposited. On 4 February 2014 the Fund published information on the completed service of all deposited decisions. Most recently, in April 2017, the regulations surrounding the Statute of Limitations were published on the occasion of the dissolution of the Claims Committee.

The search for entitled beneficiaries was further intensified. Over 500 letters about the time limit expiration were sent to applicants or their heirs. Countless emails were sent and phone calls made in order to inform the individual beneficiaries. So far, 213.7 million US dollars have been disbursed from the General Settlement Fund: 18,169 payments took the form of an advance payment, 22,079 constituted closing payments.

**If you have filed a claim for compensation of assets with the General Settlement Fund or are the heir of such a person and you have not yet received a closing payment, please contact the General Settlement Fund as soon as possible.**

Enquiries:

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