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Renate S. Meissner und Christine Schwab receive award for services to the Republic of Austria

28 Aug 2017

National Council President Doris Bures today awarded Renate S. Meissner, Deputy Secretary General of the National Fund of the Republic, and Christine Schwab, Deputy Secretary General of the General Settlement Fund the Gold Decoration of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria.



Taken from the Parliamentary correspondence no. 933/2017:

National Council President Doris Bures today awarded Renate S. Meissner, Deputy Secretary General and Director of the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, and Christine Schwab, Deputy Secretary General and Director of the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism the Gold Decoration of Honor for Services to the Republic of Austria, an award bestowed by Federal President Alexander van der Bellen. Paying tribute to them, Bures declared that much had been achieved in recent years to deal with Austria's Nazi past; these successes would not have been possible without the tireless work and dedication of Ms. Meissner and Ms. Schwab, whom she held in highest esteem. The pioneering groundwork and development of the National Fund and General Settlement Fund had been carried out by a small group of strong and dedicated women.

As the longest serving of the pair, Meissner played a key role in setting up and developing the National Fund with Secretary General Hannah Lessing and in 2001 she was appointed as the Fund's Director. She is also in charge of overseeing the payment of compensation for seized tenancy rights as set out in the Washington Agreement and since 2006 she has also occupied the role of Scientific Director of the National Fund. Also under her aegis, the life stories of the victims of National Socialism are recorded and editorially prepared to meet academic standards. This not only ensures that they are accessible to a wider audience; they are also important contemporary historical documents and a serve as a warning for future generations. Meissner also voiced the hope that the National Fund "may continue to shine as a bright light of the Republic".

Christine Schwab worked at the National Fund from 1995 and in 2001 she was appointed as Deputy Secretary General and Director of the General Settlement Fund for Victims of National Socialism. As a jurist, she played an active role in the creation of the statutory bases for the General Settlement Fund and the compensation of seized tenancy rights; she also helped develop the procedure for processing and disbursing the compensation payments. The work was not always easy when faced with the life stories of the victims of the Nazis, said Schwab, she was grateful, however, that she had had the opportunity to work for the National Fund and General Settlement Fund as she had been able to meet many wonderful people through her work.

The award was presented during a ceremony at Palais Epstein. Musical accompaniment was provided by Shira Epstein (violin) and Roland Lindenthal (cello).