

Restored Jewish cemetery in Stockerau transfered to the Municipality of Stockerau

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National Council President transfers the restored Jewish cemetery in Stockerau to the Municipality of Stockerau for Care and Upkeep. The restoration of the cemetery was achieved within the scope of three sub-projects, starting in 2011, with the help of subsidies of approx. 102,500 euros from the Fund and 39,500 euros from the Province of Lower Austria.



Taken from the Parliament correspondence No. 941/2017:

“We remember those laid to rest here and, at the same time, send a signal for an active and responsible approach to dealing with our Nazi past”, said National Council President today at the opening ceremony for the Jewish cemetery in Stockerau. In her role as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria (Jewish Cemeteries Fund), Bures was able to officially hand over the cemetery to the Municipality of Stockerau, which therewith became responsible for its upkeep. The cemetery was established in 1874; in 1938 it was shut down by the Nazis. “Jewish cemeteries play a very special role in our culture of remembrance – we must never let them be earthed over, they must continue to stand forever”, said the National Council President.

The restoration of the cemetery was achieved within the scope of three sub-projects, starting in 2001, with the help of subsidies of approx. 102,500 euros from the Fund and 39,500 euros from the Province of Lower Austria. In December 2016 the Jewish Cemeteries Fund and the Jewish Community (IKG) Vienna approved the restoration work carried out in Stockerau and at the Jewish cemetery in Deutschkreutz, with the respective municipalities undertaking to ensure their upkeep for the next 20 years. The projects in Deutschkreutz and Stockerau were carried out in close consultation with the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments.

Bures: Jewish cemeteries are historical locations that must be saved for posterity

“Cemeteries are places for all eternity. The right of the dead to rest in peace should be sacrosanct and yet, under the years of Nazi rule, it was not only disturbed: the last resting places of the dead were trampled and desecrated. Countless graves were destroyed, the names of the dead erased,” said National Council President Bures. It is only recently that Jewish cemeteries have gradually begun to be understood as places with a history that must be saved for posterity, she continued. Austria has begun to take steps to counter the destruction and neglect with these signs of responsibility and respect.

The Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries is established with the National Council and was set up in 2010 to safeguard the cemeteries and, with them, the memory of centuries of Jewish history in Austria. The Fund will provide a total of 20 million euros over a period of 20 years. The restorations are then carried out with additional funds from the cemetery owners and other subsidies. The National Council receives an annual report on the Fund’s work.

Increasing numbers of restoration projects undertaken since 2015

“I am especially pleased by the fact that funding has been requested for an increased number of restoration projects since the guidelines for funding were revised, which was in fact of great importance to me as chairperson of the Fund. To date almost 2.5 million euros has been resolved for funding,” said the National Council President.
In Stockerau, Doris Bures expressed her thanks to all those who had worked on the restoration: the architect Wolfgang Brenner and his staff; the President of the Jewish Community, Oskar Deutsch; the Province of Lower Austria; and the Secretary General of the National Fund, Hannah Lessing. She also expressed especially warm thanks to the Mayer of Stockerau, Helmut Laab, who had at an early stage already declared that the municipality would assume responsibility for the upkeep of the cemetery. “By doing so, the municipality is making an immensely important contribution towards bearing Austria’s historical responsibility,” Bures added.

Helmut Laab: A once blossoming Jewish community cannot be allowed to slip into oblivion

Helmut Laab, Bürgermeister der Stadtgemeinde Stockerau, sagte zum neu eröffneten Friedhof: "Sowohl der Stadtgemeinde Stockerau als auch mir persönlich war es immer ein wichtiges Anliegen, den jüdischen Friedhof Stockerau in gutem Zustand zu erhalten und so auch die MitbürgerInnen der einstmals blühenden jüdischen Gemeinde nicht in Vergessenheit geraten zu lassen. Da war es nur logisch, dass Stockerau als erste Gemeinde außerhalb Wiens im Jahr 2004 dem Washingtoner Abkommen beigetreten ist und schließlich auch als erste Gemeinde Niederösterreichs die neue Pflegevereinbarung für den jüdischen Friedhof Stockerau unterschrieben hat. Besonders stolz bin ich darauf, dass alle Beschlüsse in diesem Zusammenhang mit überwältigender Mehrheit gefasst wurden. Das zeigt die breite Mehrheit und die Selbstverständlichkeit, mit der in Stockerau mit diesem Thema umgegangen wird."

Helmut Laab, the Mayor of Stockerau, said of the newly-opened cemetery: “It was of great importance to both the Municipality of Stockerau and to me personally, that the Jewish cemetery in Stockerau be kept in a good condition so that our fellow citizens of the once flourishing Jewish community may not be allowed to slip into oblivion. It was therefore only natural that Stockerau was the first municipality outside of Vienna to sign up to the Washington Agreement in 2004 and was ultimately also the first municipality in Lower Austria to sign the new upkeep agreement for Stockerau’s Jewish cemetery. I am particularly proud that all of the resolutions that have been passed on this matter did so with an overwhelming majority. This demonstrates the broad consensus and the self-evidence that this subject is accorded in Stockerau.”

Oskar Deutsch. The support of the Jewish Cemeteries Fund is helping return cemeteries to a worthy condition

The statutory basis for the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria was created in December 2010 in order to comply with Austria’s obligation under international law to restore and maintain known and unknown Jewish cemeteries in Austria, as set out in the Washington Agreement.

Jewish cemeteries are not only special places of remembrance; many of them are also of cultural and historical value. According to Jewish tradition, cemeteries are intended to exist forever.

“After the expulsion and murder of the members of Jewish communities throughout Austria, the Jewish cemeteries fell into a state of disrepair,” stated the President of the Jewish Community, Oskar Deutsch. “New and comparatively small communities were only established in Vienna and the provincial capitals. Many years later, it has been possible to arrive at a statutory basis and find a way of tackling the task together in order to

return the cemeteries to a worthy condition.”

Im Auftrag der der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien, die großteils Eigentümerin der jüdischen Friedhöfe ist, wurden diese systematisch erfasst. Das Bundesdenkmalamt überprüfte zudem die Friedhöfe auf ihre Denkmalwürdigkeit und nahm über 60 davon in die so genannte § 2a-Verordnung des Bundesdenkmalamtes auf, wodurch sie unter Schutz gestellt sind. Die Friedhöfe umfassen jeweils zwischen zehn und mehreren hundert Grabstellen, die Grabsteine datieren aus dem 15. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert. Mit Unterstützung des Fonds können diese Friedhöfe vor dem Verfall bewahrt werden.

The Jewish Community Vienna, which is the owner of the majority of the Jewish cemeteries commissioned a systematic survey of the cemeteries. The Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments also examined the cemeteries to assess whether they were worthy of special protection and subjected over 60 of them to the so-called Sec. 2a Ordinance of the Federal Office for the Protection of Monuments, thus according them protected status. The cemeteries each contain between ten and several hundred graves; these date from the 15th century into the 20th century. With the support of the Fund these can now be saved from falling to ruin.

Further information on the Cemeteries Fund can be found here: https://www.friedhofsfonds.org/startseite.html.

Links

- Restoration of the Jewish Cemetery Stockerau
- Restoration of the Jewish Cemetery Deutschkreutz
- Overview regarding the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria
- Press Release regarding the completion of the restoration in Stockerau and Deutschkreutz