



10th Anniversary of the Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria

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Ten years ago, on 14 December 2010, a legal basis was created for the long-term restoration of the Jewish cemeteries in Austria.

“The Fund for the Restoration of the Jewish Cemeteries in Austria was established with the National Council in December 2010 to spare the more than 60 Jewish cemeteries throughout Austria from falling to ruin. As such, for the last ten years, the Cemeteries Fund has not only made an important contribution towards preserving Jewish cultural heritage for future generations, but also signifies a political commitment to the historical role of Jewish culture and the preservation of Jewish heritage in Austria,” says National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka, acknowledging the many facets of the Fund’s significance.

For a long time, the Jewish cemeteries in Austria were left to decay. In 2001, Austria took on the international legal obligation within the framework of the Washington Agreement to facilitate their restoration and preservation. In 2010, the Fund, which is administered by the National Fund, was able to begin its work. Since then, the Cemeteries Fund has subsidized around 50 restoration projects at 13 Jewish cemeteries throughout Austria with a total of around 7.3 million euros.

Currently, restoration work is underway in Baden, Graz, Hohenems, Mistelbach, Vienna’s Währing as well as at Gates 1 and 4 of the Vienna Central Cemetery. At the large Jewish cemetery in Währing, for example, six restoration projects have been carried out in recent years with total funding of around 1.02 million euros. In cooperation with the cemetery owner, the Jewish Community Vienna, essential work was carried out to ensure the continued existence of this cemetery, which is of great cultural and historical importance. The renovations of the Jewish cemeteries in the Burgenland municipalities of Deutschkreutz, Lackenbach and Kobersdorf as well as in Lower Austria at the cemeteries in Klosterneuburg and Stockerau have already been successfully completed. Via FOGIS, the National Fund’s geo-information portal, all Jewish cemeteries in Austria are visible on an interactive website.

For Hannah Lessing, Secretary General of the Fund, it is important to anchor the Jewish cemeteries in the collective consciousness: “After the renovation, the local municipalities take over the further upkeep and, as such, make a significant contribution towards preserving the Jewish cemeteries in Austria as part of our shared history.”