



National Council Unanimously Resolves to Revise the Tasks of the National Fund

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Legislation has been passed to redefine and expand the set of tasks assigned to the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism.

Firstly, the National Fund's activities surrounding the renewal of the Austrian exhibition at the concentration camp memorial Auschwitz-Birkenau will be extended to include the operation of the new exhibition and management of the old exhibition: Until now the National Fund was tasked with coordinating the renewal of the Austrian permanent exhibition, which opened in 1978, and overseeing all work related to this undertaking, such as the renovation of the building accommodating the exhibition. This mandate will now be extended to include responsibility for running the exhibition following its opening and for managing the original exhibition: this involves both content-related management and technical maintenance of the new exhibition, conservational care of the artifacts, administering payments to contracting partners and ensuring compliance with the rights and responsibilities set out in the endowment agreement with the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation. The National Fund will also be responsible for responding to inquiries about the new and old exhibitions and about the conglomerate of themes that make up the subject "Austria-Auschwitz". Finally, it shall be responsible for the technical operation and contents of the exhibition website.

Secondly, the wording of the new amendment will enshrine in law the provision of support and advice to the victims of National Socialism and their families; the fostering and dissemination of knowledge about Nazism, its consequences and the fates of its victims; and the undertaking to uphold the commemoration of the victims: Due to the foundation of mutual trust that has developed between the National Fund and many of its applicants and their families, including subsequent generations, people with a wide range of different inquiries about Austria can and do use the Fund as an information and service point. By providing them with support and answering their questions the National Fund is honoring Austria's special responsibility in a way that goes beyond mere material considerations.

The amendment also provides the National Fund with an explicit mandate to foster and disseminate knowledge about Nazism, its consequences and the fates of its victims, and to uphold the commemoration of the victims. This includes the systematic recording and storage of the procedural documents and the persecution documentation produced and procured by the National Fund and the General Settlement Fund; the collection, scientific research on and documentation of autobiographical testimonies by the victims of National Socialism; the provision and dissemination of information about National Socialism and compensation and restitution to the general public, and the facilitation of access to the relevant materials; response to inquiries relating to Nazism and its consequences in Austria and cooperation with national and international organizations and research and remembrance institutions.

Hannah Lessing, the Secretary General of the National Fund stated: "I am pleased that Austria continues to honor its responsibility to the victims of National Socialism and remains willing to hear their concerns and those of their families. By extending the scope and more closely specifying the nature of its tasks, the National Fund will be able to meet the challenges presented by the transition from a community who experienced events to a community of remembrance, in order that the victims' legacy be kept safe and passed on to subsequent generations."

Inquiries

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