

**Information on the policy of the Government of the Slovak Republic  
regarding combating Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Remembrance in the SR**

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# **1. Holocaust-Era Assets – Indemnification of Holocaust Victims in the Slovak Republic, Combating Anti-Semitism and Holocaust Remembrance in the SR**

## **1.1. Introduction**

The population of the Jewish community in Slovakia before World War 2 was approximately 89,000 people (according to the 1930 census in it was approximately 135,000 people but approximately 40,000 Jews resided in territories acquired by Hungary after the First Vienna Arbitration in November 1938). From 1942 to 1944 almost 72,000 citizens of Jewish origin were deported to the concentration camps from the Slovak State. Approximately 10,000 fled to neighboring Hungary or hid on the territory of Slovakia to avoid deportation. Many of the Jewish citizens were saved from deportations thanks to the selfless help of the Slovak population. Prior to the mass deportations from the Slovak State from 1942 to 1944, segregation measures were introduced and Jewish assets were liquidated and “aryanized”.

According to official data from 2001, a total of 218 persons claim Jewish nationality and 2,310 persons claim the Jewish religion. More than 2,000 persons are registered in Jewish religious communities in the SR. The Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the SR (hereinafter the “Central Union”) is the umbrella organization of Jewish communities that has registered 13 Jewish religious communities and 15 other locations in which persons practicing Jewish religious life reside.

The submitted document constitutes basic information in connection with the complex process of the mitigation of non-property and property injustices caused to Holocaust victims or their families. The document describes the basic mechanisms (legislative and non-legislative) of indemnification in the Slovak Republic and the programs and projects targeted on ensuring the basic needs of Holocaust survivors. The survey of activities and projects oriented on Holocaust education, remembrance and research and combating anti-Semitism in the SR constitutes a separate chapter. Thus the report describes the basic steps carried out by the Slovak Republic in relation to the conclusions adopted within the framework of the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets (1998) and the Vilnius International Forum on Holocaust-Era Looted Cultural Assets (2000).

## **1.2. Indemnification of Holocaust Victims in the Slovak Republic**

The following chapters describe the basic legislative and non-legislative instruments and mechanisms of indemnification of Holocaust victims in the Slovak Republic in relation to national and international undertakings in this field.

### **1.2.1. Agreement between the Slovak Government and the Central Union on the Partial Indemnification of Holocaust Victims in the SR**

On September 18, 2002, the Government of the Slovak Republic through its Resolution No. 1027, approved *The Proposal for the Partial Indemnification of Jewish Holocaust Victims* and subsequently the *Agreement between the Slovak Republic Government and the Central Union on the Partial Financial Indemnification of Holocaust Victims in the SR* (hereinafter the “Agreement”) was signed on October 9, 2002 which was consequently amended by three riders.

Pursuant to the Agreement, the Council for the Indemnification of Holocaust Victims in the SR (hereinafter the “Council”) was established. It is composed of four representatives appointed by the Central Union and three representatives appointed by the Slovak Government (based on the proposal of the deputy prime minister, the minister of finance and the minister of foreign affairs). František Alexander, Chair of the Central Union, is currently the Council Chair. The main task of the Council is to ensure the implementing of the process of the partial indemnification of Holocaust victims in the SR. Pursuant to Article 5 of the Agreement, a principal in the amount of EUR 28,214,831 was remitted to the special account of the Central Union in the National Bank of Slovakia, from which the annual yield in the course of 10 years will be used for the purposes of the indemnification of Holocaust victims. The above mentioned sum was determined as 1/10 of the estimated value of the assets that changed ownership due to racial laws, liquidation or Aryanizing<sup>1</sup>. The reason for the conclusion of the Agreement was, besides others, to compensate for the loss of certain assets, which in the course of the World War 2 became state property and were not returned even after the war.

The Council implements the partial financial indemnification of Holocaust victims in the SR and the financing of social and cultural needs projects of the Jewish community in the SR. In justified cases over the course of the ten year period, it is possible to use up to one third of the principal, i.e., EUR 9,393,879, for the partial financial indemnification of Holocaust victims. The principal bank balance will be used by the Central Union after the expiration of the ten year period, i.e., after December 31, 2012.

The Council makes decisions regarding the provision of financial allowances in the process of the partial indemnification of Holocaust victims in the SR:

- 1) to natural persons, whose assets were neither returned nor indemnified in any way, for the purpose of the mitigation of certain asset injustices caused by the Holocaust;
- 2) for social-health care projects with special consideration for the needs of Holocaust survivors;
- 3) for the reconstruction, renewal and maintenance of immovable and movable Jewish monuments on the territory of the SR;
- 4) for projects dedicated to the dignified memory of Holocaust victims;
- 5) for support of social, cultural and education activities in the field of Judaism.

The Council Office elaborates a draft annual report on its activities and those of the Council. The following table incorporates the state of drawing of funds pursuant to the Agreement as of the end of 2008.

<b>Form</b>	<b>Sum (EUR)</b>
Partial indemnification of Holocaust victims	9,460,266

<sup>1</sup> The estimate was created based on period materials on aryanizing – the estimate included the value of the aryanized enterprises, blocked bank deposits and unpaid policies in insurance companies and the prices of some movable assets (such as livestock). The following formed the working group of historians, established for these purposes: Katarína Závacká (Institute of State and Law of the Slovak Academy of Sciences), Katarína Hradská (Historical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences), Ľudovít Hallon (economic historian) and Eduard Nižňanský (Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University). The sum in the period currency estimated in such way was subsequently recalculated in today’s currency. The consensus outcome determining the value of the assets; the compensation is related to the assets in the value of today’s EUR 28,214,831.

Project activities	730,266
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The Council funds several activities targeted on combating anti-Semitism, Holocaust remembrance and activities targeted on ensuring the social needs of Holocaust victims in the SR. The activities of the Holocaust Documentation Center, which is one of the prominent and key organizations professionally dealing with the issues related to Holocaust history in Slovakia, and the operation of the Home for retired persons/ Holocaust victims and the National Center of Health and Social Aid (see chapter 2.8) are also co-financed from Council funds.

### 1.2.2. Indemnification pursuant to the Act on Mitigation of Certain Assets Injustices Caused to Churches and Religious Communities

The rationale for the passing Act on the Mitigation of Certain Asset Injustices Caused to Churches and Religious Communities<sup>2</sup> that entered into effect on January 1, 1994 was to partially compensate for the consequences of certain asset injustices caused to churches and religious communities through the deprivation their ownership rights towards movable and immovable objects based on the decisions of state authorities in civil and administrative acts issued contravening the principles of a democratic society in the period from May 8, 1945 (Jewish religious communities from November 2, 1938) until January 1, 1990. Restitution of property<sup>3</sup> could be applied for within a period of 12 months (from January 1, 2004 – December 31, 2004) otherwise the right expired and the proceedings related to the restitution of property were exempted from administration and court fees.

Pursuant to the above mentioned act, The Jewish communities in Slovakia, in cooperation with the experts of the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO)<sup>4</sup> prepared a list of communal and public assets belonging to the Jewish community in Slovakia. The Central Union submitted over 500 applications for the restitution of property (including cemeteries) and more than 300 objects were restituted, most of them cemeteries. Some applications are currently under proceedings in Slovak courts.

Most of the Jewish religious assets remained in the hands of natural persons. Other movable assets were sold to legal entities from 1945 to 1990, i.e., to the state administration authorities or state enterprises and parts were developed, i.e., not subject to restitution pursuant to the above mentioned Act.

### 1.2.3. Indemnification Pursuant to the Act on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices to Persons Deported to Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps

Pursuant to the Act on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices to Persons Deported to Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps<sup>5</sup> an indemnification was awarded not only for the reasons of political, national, racial and religious persecution in camps outside the territory of the SR<sup>6</sup>,

<sup>2</sup> Act No. 282/1993 Coll. on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices Caused to Churches and Religious Communities as amended.

<sup>3</sup> Within the framework of the Act, several restrictions related to the rendering of later built structures on lands or lands used in the public interest and others are in force.

<sup>4</sup> World Jewish Restitution Organization.

<sup>5</sup> Act No. 305/1999 Coll. on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices to Persons Deported to Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps as amended.

<sup>6</sup> “Persons deported from the territory of the Slovak Republic or the territory of the former Protectorate of Czech Lands and Moravia from the period from 1939 to 1945 to a concentration camp and prison camp established on the territory of the Great German Reich or on the other territories.”

but also for detention and concentration in the camps on the territory of the SR in the period from 1939 to 1945<sup>7</sup>. Pursuant to the Act, persons who were hidden throughout this period due to racial or religious persecution may also be indemnified.

This Act was amended<sup>8</sup> in 2002 for the purpose of extending the number of persons eligible for indemnification. This is because the original Act did not indemnify the persons living on the territory that belongs/belonged to current and pre-war era Slovakia, but which was under the administration of Hungary in the period from 1939 to 1945. Thus, based on the amended regulation, it is also possible to indemnify those citizens of the SR, who at the time of their deportation were officially citizens of Hungary<sup>9</sup> and were deported from the territories of the Czechoslovak Republic from the period from 1918 to 1938. At the same time, the Act will indemnify spouses and children of deceased persons deported to the prison camps and the survivors of the persons deported to the concentration camps from the territory of the former Protectorate of the Czech Lands and Moravia or after the modification of the current territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, which was not possible under the currently valid legal regulation.

Pursuant to the above mentioned Act, a concerned person is entitled to financial compensation for each started month of deportation or hiding in the amount of EUR 99.60, and in the event that the person died during deportation or hiding, the surviving relatives of the victim<sup>10</sup> are entitled to a single indemnification in the amount of EUR 3,319.40.

The following table incorporates the number of submitted applications for indemnification of this kind, the number of applications acknowledged by the Ministry of Justice and the volume of paid financial means for the period from January 1, 1999 to April 29, 2008:

<b>Number of Discussed Applications</b>	<b>Number of Acknowledged Applications</b>	<b>Means Paid within the framework of Indemnification (EUR)</b>
20,803	11,652	13,726,492

In connection with the above mentioned data, it is necessary to take into consideration the fact that the Act on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices to Persons Deported to Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps is targeted on the acknowledgment of indemnification to Holocaust victims and to the persons or their survivors deported to German prison camps (this category of aggrieved persons can not be considered as Holocaust victims).

<sup>7</sup> Including the time of the return from the concentration and prison camp to homeland.

<sup>8</sup> Act No. 126/2002 Coll. that changes and amends Act No. 305/1999 Coll. on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices to Persons Deported to Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps

<sup>9</sup> It especially pertains to the persons who did not submit a claim for the acknowledgment of indemnification from the Republic of Hungary or submitted this claim after its legal deadline. Pursuant to the valid laws, the Republic of Hungary settled the claims of 533 persons who applied for indemnification from the overall number of 839 submitted applications. The Czech Republic indemnified only persons who were their citizens, by means of which a group of persons was subject neither to the Czech legislation nor could they submit their claim in the SR.

<sup>10</sup> In the following order: a) spouse and children of the eligible person all equal shares, and if there is none b) parents of the eligible person.

#### 1.2.4. Holocaust-Era Looted Works of Art

Pursuant to Resolution No. 109/1999,<sup>11</sup> the Slovak Government authorized the Ministry of Culture to process the database of works of art alienated from the territory of the SR throughout and after World War 2. The assigned task was implemented in cooperation with the Slovak National Gallery and the Slovak National Museum.

In Phase 1, in May 1999, the Ministry of Culture addressed all state collection institutions with art collections with the request for their revision from the aspect of their acquisition or for the provision of information on any collections that included objects from the assets of Jewish citizens who were deported from the territory of the SR during World War 2. A total of 44 of the 61 addressed museums and 9 of the 21 addressed galleries responded to the Ministry request. Except for the Ľubovniansky Region Museum in Stará Ľubovňa,<sup>12</sup> all addressed organizations responded negatively.

At the same time, the Ministry of Culture of the SR addressed the Ministry of Interior of the SR<sup>13</sup> for their cooperation in analyzing the archive documents on the auctions of the assets of Jewish citizens in Slovakia during the Holocaust era. Based on the response of the Ministry of Interior, several funds regarding Holocaust issues are located in the Slovak National Archive. However it is impossible to determine definitely, which of them, if any, incorporates the lists of the works of art – cultural objects that constituted part of the auctions of the assets of Jewish citizens in Slovakia during the Holocaust era. In order to find out the relevant information regarding works of art (cultural objects) in the archive documents, it would be necessary to carry out detailed research of the archive funds almost on the level of the individual archive documents. However, the overall volume is enormous – 4,427 archive boxes, i.e., approximately 553 common meters (all relevant archive documents are accessible to the general public pursuant to valid legislation in the SR).

In May 2007, a meeting of the representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Slovak National Museum, the Slovak National Gallery, the Ministry of Interior, the Central Union and the WJRO and CJMCG<sup>14</sup> regarding the issues related to works of art and other assets of a cultural artistic character looted from the territory of Slovakia during and after World War 2 took place. Based on the conclusions of the working meeting, the Ministry of Culture again addressed all Slovak museums and galleries with a request to provide information on the collection items that constituted assets of deported citizens of Jewish origin. 57 museums (of the 86 addressed) and 11 galleries (of the 25 addressed) responded to this request. The addressed organizations responded negatively regarding the subject matter, i.e., according to the available documentation and records on the method of acquisition, none of the registered collection objects was identified as objects coming from the assets of deported Jewish citizens. The outcomes of both above mentioned surveys were also publicized on the website of the Ministry of Culture<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Slovak Republic Government Resolution No. 109 of February 10, 1999 regarding the report on the participation of the Slovak Republic delegation at the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets.

<sup>12</sup> The works of art were returned pursuant to the valid legislation.

<sup>13</sup> Department of archives and records services.

<sup>14</sup> Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.culture.gov.sk/kulturne-dedicstvo/muzea-a-galerie/umeleck-diela-odcudzen-z-zemia-sr-poas-a-po-skonen-ii.-svetovej-vojny>.

However, it is necessary to state that as opposed to other European countries where during and after the Holocaust era, the auctions of valuable works of art confiscated from Jewish citizens assets were frequently organized and thus in some cases documented in auction catalogues, the situation in Slovakia was entirely different. It not known that any separate auctions of works of art were organized. Works of art from the assets of Slovak Jews did not become part of independent auctions of works of art; they were taken from Jewish citizens pursuant to the valid laws at that time and found their way to the interiors of houses, villas and apartments. Due to the above mentioned facts, no necessary materials exist for the elaboration of the database of works of art looted from the territory of Slovakia during and after the Holocaust era. The absence of relevant documents is also confirmed by the Central Union.

#### 1.2.5. Jewish Cultural Assets and Judaica

Within the framework of the above mentioned meeting at the Ministry of Culture (May 2007) regarding the issues of art objects and other assets of cultural artistic character looted during and after the Holocaust, the possibilities for establishing an internet location where information on the origin of the collection objects of the Slovak museums and galleries would be available, the creation of a database of Judaica in Slovakia and making the archive funds related to Holocaust issues or the question of further historical research in the Slovak archive funds were discussed. In continuation of this discussion, the Ministry of Culture undertook to create conditions for the completion of the electronic form of the central register of the collection objects in museums and galleries in Slovakia, which is implemented by the Slovak National Museum and the Slovak National Gallery. Making the electronic form of the register available to the general public is also included in the above mentioned project. At the same time, the above mentioned register will be within the framework of the *European Digital Library Network*, a European Union project, whose goal, besides others, is to preserve digital collections and to make the European digital cultural heritage accessible.

The possibility of creating a register and database of Judaica in Slovakia will be further discussed between the CJMCG and the Central Union and the Slovak National Museum – Museum of Jewish Culture.

As in the case of the works of art and other Jewish cultural assets and Judaica, the archive funds of the Slovak Republic connected with the period from 1933 to 1948 are accessible to the general public. The relevant archive collections constitute the long-term research of, besides others, the Holocaust Museum in Washington. However, in order to find out any information on works of art or cultural items in the archive documents, detailed research of the archive funds must be carried out all the way down to the level of individual archive documents.

In connection with the issue of documenting Jewish cultural heritage in Slovakia, it is also necessary to mention the project of the Slovak Jewish Cultural Heritage Center, which for a long time has carried out documentation activities targeted on creating a database of preserved Jewish buildings and monuments in Slovakia. The outcomes of the *Synagoga Slovaca* project (a database of photographs and other documents related to Jewish Cultural heritage in Slovakia) are accessible and continuously updated on the website [www.slovak-jewish-heritage.org](http://www.slovak-jewish-heritage.org).

### 1.2.6. Unpaid Insurance Policies

Due to the fact that claims for the payment of the unpaid insurance policies of Holocaust victims in Slovakia were individually resolved by Holocaust victims or their descendants, the SR has no official statistics on the returned means. ICHEIC<sup>16</sup> which established an office in Bratislava, assisted in the recovery of unpaid insurance policies to the individual applicants and has exact statistics on the recovered unpaid insurance policies from the Holocaust era.

### 1.2.7. Publicizing Information on Liquidated and Aryanized Jewish Assets

The aryanization and liquidation of Jewish enterprises was part of the process of the elimination of Jews from the economic and social life of the Slovak Republic in the period from 1939 to 1945. The term aryanizing describes the dispossession and transfer of assets of Jews to citizens of non-Jewish origin (“Aryans” in the period terminology). The liquidation of enterprises entailed the seizure, inventory, appraisal and sale of the movable assets of the original owner. In both cases, the original owner was deprived of the possibility of doing business and of the enterprise itself without any compensation.

Aryanization and liquidation affected all types of assets of Jews (capital assets, houses, enterprises, etc.) From the overall number of approximately 12,300 enterprises in the ownership of Jews, more than 2,000 enterprises were aryanized and more than 10,000 were liquidated in those years. This process was managed by the Central Economic Authority.

Since December 2005, The National Memory Institute (ÚPN)<sup>17</sup> has gradually made public the register of liquidated and aryanized Jewish assets from the Holocaust era. The ÚPN website<sup>18</sup> currently includes the lists of liquidated and aryanized assets including the basic data on the owner of the enterprise, the nature and location of the business and the information on its liquidator<sup>19</sup> or aryanizer<sup>20</sup>.

### 1.2.8. Social Security of Holocaust Survivors

The National Center of Health and Social Aid (hereinafter the “Center”) is the key organization in the field of ensuring social and health care and assistance for holocaust survivors in the SR. It was established in Bratislava in 2000 based on the initiative of the Central Union in cooperation with individual Jewish religious communities, the Ezra Foundation and Hidden Child Slovensko<sup>21</sup>. It was established to implement the program OR CHAIM (Light of Life) – assistance to Holocaust victims. The first phase of this project included creating a database of all persons, within the framework of Jewish communities and others who survived the Holocaust (according to data at that time, there were approximately

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<sup>16</sup> The International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims

<sup>17</sup> The leading institution in the SR in the field of making the facts on the activities of the repressive authorities from 1939 to 1989 accessible. The National Memory Institute launched its activities in 2003.

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.upn.gov.sk/arizacie/> a <http://www.upn.gov.sk/likvidacie/>

<sup>19</sup> Persons entitled to carry out the liquidation (sale) of enterprises. The liquidator was entitled to pertinent financial remuneration for the execution of the liquidation.

<sup>20</sup> Persons authorized to take over the enterprise.

<sup>21</sup> The *Kuratorium* (Curatory) is the top body of the Center, composed of employees of the Central Union, some Jewish religious communities and representatives of The Hidden Child Slovakia organization. *Kuratórium* approves the criteria for the provision of allowances and budgets and monitors the drawing of the funds, etc.



1,400 survivors and more than 880 of them were in database). The Center, besides others, provides contributions for medication, health aids, glasses, dental treatment, nursing service, therapeutic-rehabilitation care, and reconstruction of apartments into barrier-free apartments, social assistance, transport to healthcare facilities, treatment in private facilities and individual assistance to people in extraordinary situations.

The Center's activities are financed from several international sources (the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims and others) but also from the funds of the Council, which pursuant to the Agreement, may be used, besides others, also for the support of social and health care projects with special regard to the needs of Holocaust survivors (see Chapter 1.1). Currently more than 900 clients have entered the Center from the overall number of 1,220 survivors in Slovakia. The day sanatorium in Bratislava, which is visited by approximately 10 to 12 people daily, operates as part of the Center. The sanatorium provides a daily program consisting of a social component and therapeutic and work rehabilitation. Telephone help lines in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Košice were established within the framework of the Center.

Besides the Center, the OHEL DAVID, home for retired Holocaust survivors also operates in Bratislava. Currently 25 people live there. The activities of this home are predominantly financed from the funds of the Council.

The fixed supplementary sum to the monthly pension pursuant to the Act on the Mitigation of Certain Injustices of Persons Deported to Nazi Concentration and Prison Camps<sup>22</sup> constitutes a separate chapter within the framework of the social security of Holocaust survivors.

#### 1.2.9. Litigation of the Central Union and Germany in the Case of the Acknowledgement of Compensation for the "Settlement Fee"

In 2000, the Central Union filed a petition against the Federal Republic of Germany in the case of acknowledging the compensation for the "settlement fee", i.e., the fee for the compulsory transfer of Jews from Slovakia and their settlement on German territory. Based on an agreement with the Third Reich, the Slovak State paid 500 Reich Marks<sup>23</sup> for each deported Slovak citizen of Jewish origin. In 1942, a total of 57,628 persons of Jewish origin were deported to Nazi concentration camps (only 282 persons survived). It means that the total sum paid was 28,918 Reich Marks. Based on the preserved historical documents, it is obvious that the money that Slovakia provided in settlement fees came from the aryanized or liquidated Jewish assets<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> An eligible person included in § 2 Section 3 of the concerned Act, who is awarded indemnification, is entitled to a supplementary sum for each even started month of deportation to the pension in the amount EUR 1 monthly in case of the old age pension, disability pension, partial disability pension, special retirement pension and disability special retirement pension.

<sup>23</sup> The war-era Slovak Republic was the only state that paid the Nazis for the deportation of its own citizens of Jewish origin.

<sup>24</sup> Originally these confiscated assets were to be transported to the Slovak State and that is why the agreement on settlement fees was concluded. However Nazi Germany refused to surrender the confiscated assets to Bratislava. Even later (when the majority of deported Jews were dead) the German party requested another increase of the fee because this was not sufficient according to them for the settlement and re-qualification of the deported Jews.

The Central Union filed the petition due to its failure in attempts to acquire compensation and achieve reconciliation with German authorities<sup>25</sup>. No agreement on indemnification similar to the one between Germany and Czech Republic<sup>26</sup> was concluded between Slovakia and Germany, despite the fact that both countries are successors of the former Czechoslovakia.

The Central Union lost the court litigation of the first and second level including the appeal to the Constitutional Court. According to the justification of the German Constitutional Court, the Central Union today does not have any authorization to represent the victims of deportations (or their descendants). As a result, the German Constitutional Court considers the lack of legitimacy of the Central Union as the fundamental procedural obstacle in the further continuation of court litigation<sup>27</sup>. The Central Union considers the settlement in this litigation as a moral claim since the deportations led to the decline of the vast majority of Slovak Judaism.

On May 20, 2001, the Slovak Government in its standpoint towards the legal status of the Central Union in connection with the court proceedings against the Federal Republic of Germany confirmed that it considered the Central Union as the only legitimate subject in the SR eligible to apply claims for the return of property gains acquired by the payment of the “settlement fee” towards the Federal Republic of Germany.

#### 1.2.10. International Funds for Indemnification and the Needs of Holocaust Victims

To begin, it is necessary to state that the adequate indemnification of Slovak Holocaust victims by Germany was never reached. However, the German government did reach an indemnification agreement with the Czech Republic. This is in spite of the fact that both countries are successors of the former Czechoslovakia. This is another reason why the Central Union is considering further legal steps towards Germany regarding the “settlement fee” (see Chapter 2.9).

The Swiss Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust<sup>28</sup> and the Hirsch Initiative of German Federal Parliament in cooperation with the International Red Cross also participate in the indemnification or partial ensuring of the needs of Holocaust victims. In the second case, a one time allowance in the amount of EUR 500 was paid within the framework of assistance to eligible applicants. Victims could request the allowance through authorized organizations. However the assistance that some of the Nazi victims in Slovakia got in the 1990s within the framework of the Hirsch Initiative can not be considered as the resolution of the issue of German indemnification of Slovak victims of Nazi persecution itself.

More than 1,500,000 EUR was paid in several phases to Slovak victims from the Swiss Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust. The Swiss Fund is an instrument of social

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<sup>25</sup> Germany referred the Central Union to the established fund Memory, Responsibility, Future.

<sup>26</sup> by creating the Future Fund.

<sup>27</sup> However the law is that in 1946 the Central Union of the Jewish Religious Communities in the SR (Slovak National Council Order No. 114/1946) became the legal successor of *Ústredňa židov* (Center of Jews) which as the only organization that was authorized to represent and coordinate all affairs of Jews in the Slovak State. *Ústredňa židov* was established in September 1940 based on Government Order No. 234/1940.

<sup>28</sup> The Swiss Fund for Needy Victims of the Holocaust/Shoa. The Fund was established based on the initiative of the Swiss government to help in the fulfillment of the needs of Holocaust victims.

assistance but under no circumstances can it be considered as an instrument of indemnification.

### **1.3. Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. Combating Anti-Semitism**

The Slovak Republic is fully aware of its undertakings in the field of combating anti-Semitism and Holocaust education, remembrance and research. It is obvious that these areas can not be separated. The following points constitute some of the initiatives and projects recently implemented in these areas in Slovakia.

#### **1.3.1. Holocaust Remembrance**

On December 20, 1990, the National Council of the SR and the Government of the SR passed a proclamation regarding the deportations of Jews from the territory of Slovakia during World War 2 in which they expressed regret and apology for these events.

On May 3, 1995, the National Council of the Slovak Republic passed a proclamation on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the World War 2 and victory over fascism in which it mentioned the already adopted proclamation and expressed its intention not to be indifferent to any manifestations of fascism and racial, religious and class hatred.

In 2001, the National Council of the Slovak Republic approved the establishment of September 9 as the Memorial Day of Holocaust Victims and Racial Violence<sup>29</sup>. The declaration was supported by the vast majority of the deputies and several commemorative events take place annually on this day with the active participation of the top state representatives.

Several organizations and institutions are active in the remembrance of the Holocaust in Slovakia (and Holocaust education). They include the Central Union, the Museum of Jewish Culture, the Holocaust Documentation Center, the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising, the Milan Šimečka Foundation, the Slovak Union of Anti-Fascist Warriors and others. Several activities are supported or directly implemented by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the Government Office of the SR. The Documentation Center and the Council have long supported activities oriented on the remembrance of the Holocaust on the national and regional and local levels. The activities targeted on Holocaust remembrance and education are also supported within the framework of *The Action Plan for Preventing All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance* (hereinafter the "Action Plan") coordinated by the Government Office of the SR since 2000.

The following Holocaust remembrance activities were implemented or have recently been implemented in Slovakia:

1. In cooperation with Holland, Poland and Israel, Slovakia is implementing the project for the renewal of the memorial site at the former Nazi liquidation camp in Sobibor. The rationale of this project is to create a dignified memorial site and adequate information and educational capacities at the Sobibor camp by 2011. Slovak participation in the project is coordinated by the Government Office of the SR.

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<sup>29</sup> Parliament chose September 9 as the date of memorial because on that day in 1941 the Slovak State adopted the Jewish Codex, which launched the process of persecution of Jews in Slovakia.

2. The Ministry of Culture is currently preparing the creation of a Holocaust Museum in the buildings of the former prison and transit camp in Sered'. The Museum together with the education center will constitute the first facility of its kind in Slovakia.
3. In 2007, the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising prepared a traveling exhibition with the title *PROJEKT VAGÓN* (PROJECT TRAIN CAR) which introduced an authentic train car designated for the transport of Jews to the concentration camps during World War 2. The exhibition could be seen at train stations in several Slovak towns and after its resounding success was subsequently transferred to the Czech Republic.
4. In May 2008, the Government Office of the SR in cooperation with the Ravensbruck International Committee implemented a week long world meeting of former female prisoners from the Ravensbruck concentration camp. This meeting, the first of its kind in Slovakia, was highly praised by its participants.
5. In 2008, the Days of Jewish Culture, which featured several cultural and commemorative activities, took place in Giraltovce under the auspices of Dušan Čaplovič, Deputy Prime Minister for Knowledge-based Society, European Affairs, Human Rights and Minorities. Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič was also present at the unveiling of the memorial tablet to Holocaust victims in Medzilaborce which included the presence of the descendents of Holocaust victims from the USA, Israel and Belgium.

The above mentioned survey of activities and projects is illustrative and does not constitute all of the activities implemented in Slovakia in this area. As it can be seen, many Holocaust remembrance activities also target education.

### 1.3.2. Education and Research; Combating Anti-Semitism

Combating manifestations of anti-Semitism can not be lead only on a repressive basis in the form of penalties<sup>30</sup>. On the contrary, it must be preventative and proactive. Permanent education on the Holocaust and its research constitute an inseparable part of combating anti-Semitism and the Slovak Republic uses all available instruments to improve the level of educating and informing the general public regarding this issue. The following projects and activities constitute recent examples of Holocaust education, research and combating anti-Semitism in Slovakia:

1. The Museum of Jewish Culture is annually visited by organized groups of students (4,000 to 5,000) and thus is one of the key educational institutions on Holocaust history through experience. Expositions dedicated to Holocaust history are also located in other local or regional museums, frequently established in former Jewish buildings (Nitra, Trnava, Prešov, and others).
2. Student excursions are relatively frequently organized for the purpose of visiting authentic historical sites in Slovakia and abroad (such as Kremnička and Nemecká in Slovakia and Terezín in the Czech Republic and Auschwitz in Poland).
3. In 2007, the international expert conference *The Holocaust as a Historical and Moral Problem in the Past and Present* took place in Mojmirovce. It was organized by the Holocaust Documentation Center in cooperation with the Milan Šimečka Foundation

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<sup>30</sup> Pursuant to the Criminal Code, any person who publicly demonstrates his/her sympathy to movements through violence, the threat of violence or the threat of other severe harm aiming at the oppression of basic rights and freedom of persons as well as any person, who publicly denies, questions, approves of or tries to justify the Holocaust, may be punished by imprisonment of up to three years.

and the Museum of Jewish Culture. The conference proceedings – one of the largest of its kind in Slovakia – were published within the framework of the publishing activities of the Government Office of the SR.

4. In 2008, *Holocaust Phenomenon*, the national expert conference took place under the auspices of Deputy Prime Minister Čaplovič and with participation of prominent Slovak historians. The conference was co-financed from the reserved funds of Robert Fico, Prime Minister. The conference proceedings were published within the framework of the publishing activities of the Government Office of the SR.
5. The Museum of Jewish Culture in cooperation with the CENTROPA international organization implements the project entitled, *The Library of Saved Memories*. This pan-European project is dedicated to implementing educational programs for secondary school teachers in the interest of preserving part of Slovak Jewish history. A total of 60 research interviews with survivors were recorded within the framework of this project and more than 1,500 family photographs were digitalized. Thus, valuable sources for learning about the life of Jewish communities in the pre-war era, the Holocaust era and the post-Holocaust era were acquired. The historical archive processed in the museum will be publicly presented at a later date.
6. The project of the Milan Šimečka Foundation entailing the production and distribution of modern educational materials on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism for secondary schools in the SR was also supported within the framework of the Action Plan in 2008. The materials based on well-proven methods from abroad are distributed for free based on the requests of individual schools. These materials extend the spectrum of existing educational materials on Holocaust history used within the framework of teaching at elementary and secondary schools.
7. Since 2000, the Slovak Center of Slovak Jewish Heritage has carried out documentation activities within the framework of the *Synagoga Slovaca* project. These activities are targeted on establishing a database of preserved Jewish buildings and monuments in Slovakia. The outcomes of this project and the collection of photographs and other documents related to Jewish cultural heritage in Slovakia are accessible at the website [www.slovak-jewish-heritage.org](http://www.slovak-jewish-heritage.org). The database is continuously updated. Education and consulting activities in the field of Jewish monument protection also constitute a significant part of the Center's work.
8. Education projects for members of the police force in the field of combating extremism, racism and anti-Semitism have long been supported within the framework of the Action Plan. The aim of this education is to improve the ability of the police force to identify, among others, crimes with an anti-Semitic background.
9. In 2005, the project *Anne Frank: Legacy of History for Today* – a traveling exhibition presented at secondary schools throughout Slovakia, was supported within the framework of the Action Plan. This successful project was also implemented in subsequent years. The project *Lost Neighbors– Forgotten History* was also supported within the framework of the Action Plan. It concerned local research implemented by students for the purpose of learning about the fate of local Holocaust victims or survivors. It directly involved young people, thus creating the possibility of affecting their future attitudes and opinions. Students and their teachers presented the outcomes of their research within the framework of several common workshops. The project constitutes an example of best practice and may also be implemented in the future.
10. The National Memory Institute is gradually making public the register of liquidated and aryanized Jewish assets in the Holocaust era. The Institute's website includes the publicized lists of liquidated and aryanized assets, including basic data on the owner

of the enterprise, the nature and location of the business and the information on its liquidator or aryanizer.

11. In 2007, the Multidisciplinary Expert Group for the Study and Elimination of Racially Motivated Crime and Extremism (including anti-Semitism) was established at the Ministry of Interior. The group is composed of experts from the governmental and non-governmental sectors. Its goal is to deal with current issues in the area of hate-motivated activities (such as manifestations of anti-Semitism at football stadiums). The group operates as an advisory body to the Minister of Interior and may comment on proposed legislation; it also creates strategic documents in the above mentioned areas itself.
12. Since 2005, Slovakia has been an active member of the Working Group for International Cooperation in the Field of Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research<sup>31</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research