

Central Themes of the EVZ Foundation

Adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ) on 20th January 2005

1. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future testifies to the political and moral responsibility of the state, industry and society for the injustice of National Socialism. This responsibility is expressed concretely in the law that set up this foundation, making possible a humanitarian gesture toward surviving slave and forced laborers and other victims of National Socialism.

The funds were raised through a joint initiative of industry, state and society, unprecedented in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is an expression of responsibility, as well as of remembrance of the persecuted and deported forced laborers and slave laborers, of the murdered Jews, Sinti and Roma whose ways of life, cultures and philosophies were intended to be extinguished forever. This applies particularly to those who died as a result of the National Socialist policy of “extermination through labor”.

With the consent of all parties involved in its establishment, seven percent of the Foundation’s capital has been made available to a charitable fund whose enduring existence and funding activities express Germany’s historical responsibility. The fund also represents those victims of forced labor who did not live to see the establishment of the Foundation. The Foundation supports exemplary projects that – in light of remembrance of the horrors of National Socialist crimes – draw lessons for today and tomorrow out of the past.

2. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future keeps alive the memory of the victims of National Socialism for future generations – particularly through projects for survivors. It supports projects that promote more profound encounters with the past for the younger generations and encourage practical democratic actions. In that sense the Foundation’s role is first and foremost to focus on the active confrontation with the National Socialist period: through personal contact with witnesses and intergenerational conversations, through the use of new media, but also through appropriate training of “multipliers” – for example educators.

The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future contributes to the task of facing the crimes of National Socialism, above all the history of slave and forced labor, in that it supports documentation of the diverse life stories of survivors. Firsthand remembrances will be made available to the public and serve as a basis for the transmission of the lessons of the Holocaust.

In addition, the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future will encourage projects that enable Holocaust survivors to inspire the younger generation to commit themselves to focusing on such issues in a lasting way. The Foundation can in justified cases support academic projects; its primary role is to promote the historical-political education of youth. Thus it also incorporates the period after 1945, during which important lessons were drawn – in Germany as well as other countries – from the National Socialist period.

The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future will see to it that its work not only transmits knowledge about National Socialism, the Holocaust and the Second World War in schools and in non school related youth programmes, but also that its funding activities will focus on encouraging the practice of democracy, shared responsibility for community and

respect for human rights, against the background of past injustice. The Foundation will contribute toward development of an understanding of history that touches on common values.

3. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future encourages international and intercultural projects that grapple – in a critically differentiated manner – with the roots and methods of National Socialist ideology and the threat and results of totalitarian and tyrannical regimes.

The National Socialists persecuted people by denigrating them on the basis of their supposed race or ethnic background, language, religion, worldview, disability, gender or sexual identity, or social status. The Foundation therefore promotes initiatives which lend themselves to strengthening people's dignity and rights, thereby furthering their emancipation. The resurgence of anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial, xenophobia and extremist groups today underscores the urgency of further developing appropriate educational programmes about World War II and the Holocaust geared to the needs of various audiences. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future will commit itself to supporting educational projects that reach a high number of "multipliers." The Foundation builds a bridge from the past to the future, in that it encourages people to act with awareness of history, in support of understanding between peoples, democracy, human rights and understanding between peoples. This includes the common struggle against all forms of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia. And it includes the confrontation with questions about preserving the peace and protecting the constitutional state. It is necessary to decisively oppose smouldering nationalism and growing religious intolerance.

4. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future encourages international humanitarian projects that above all serve survivors of the National Socialist tyranny. The projects should enable young volunteers to become involved. At the same time the Foundation aims to produce lasting effects through support for exemplary, model projects.

The Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" wishes to strengthen initiatives that build further practical solidarity with older people who suffered under the horrors of National Socialist rule and under other dictatorships. The Foundation will refer to the situation of survivors in the focal countries and will support international exchange on the experience of working with survivors. Through start-up financing, the Foundation can encourage people to help themselves and can strengthen the societal solidarity within these countries.

5. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future can contribute to preserving historical documents related to the Holocaust and Jewish life before the Holocaust. In this context, public access to these documents is of great significance.

It is highly important for the descendants of the slave and forced laborers to learn their history and to transmit the culture that was to have been destroyed to future generations in Europe, Israel, in the United States and in the entire world. In this way the building – or rebuilding – of the structures of European Jewish life, laid waste by the Nazi dictatorship, can be strengthened.

6. The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future is distinguished from other public or private funding organizations through its international reach: Its intention is to build relationships and mutually beneficial cooperation between people in Germany and those in

Central- and Eastern-European countries that suffered particularly under the National Socialists, as well as with Israel, the USA and other countries that nowadays are home to many survivors and their descendants. At the same time, the Foundation seeks close cooperation with other foundations and organizations.

The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future presents, with its funding programmes in Germany and in the affected countries, an additional opportunity for youth to strengthen their intercultural competence and to use modern forms of communication. Particular attention should be given to inter-religious and intergenerational dialogue.

7. A significant lesson from history is that the structure of a civil society provides important guarantees for democracy, human rights and understanding between peoples. The Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” thus encourages civic engagement across borders. Through international networks of citizens’ initiatives and through support of civic engagement on the “grass-roots level,” the Foundation will provide a specific contribution to the creation of a civil society that stands for concrete cooperation and solidarity.