

**I. Why and how does the Foundation EVZ, when funding projects, enhance the cooperation between state and civil society?**

The Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and Future” (Foundation EVZ) yearly supports about 100 to 120 humanitarian projects. It is presently supporting Civil Society Organizations (NGO) in seven countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Israel and Germany. The projects are addressing different needs of approximately 30.000 victims of National Socialism. The NGOs are reacting on very specific needs of the highly aged persons. Projects are involving former forced laborers of the Nazi Regime, Jewish survivors, elderly Roma, or other groups like the survivors of the Leningrad siege or survivors of the villages burnt down by Nazi-occupants. Most of the projects invite young or elderly volunteers who help to overcome the loneliness, many of the Nazi-victims are suffering from. Their life experiences are an indispensable resource for current and future generations. But in return, society has a responsibility to give back to these victims and care about them.

**How does EVZ enhance co-operation between state and civil society?**

The Foundation pursues the approach of “responsibility in partnership”: Satisfying the basic needs such as food, shelter and medical care, is first and foremost the responsibility of the social systems in each current country of residence. EVZ encourages the cooperation of civil society initiatives and government agencies on local, regional and national level toward a dignified life for victims of National Socialism. I would like to give five examples with potential for further development:

1. In The program “Dialogue Forum” which is implemented in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, we encourage cooperation projects of state agencies and NGOs. For example, EVZ funds equipment and running costs of meeting places for Nazi victims, and local state agencies provide the premises, where the survivors can come together. This approach was quite successful. Our implementing partners in Ukraine and Belarus are even invited to consult their Ministries of Social affairs regarding new programs or strategies for elderly.

2. NGOs can also play an important role to ensure that government funding is made available to survivors. In Poland, we are supporting a consultancy project of the Foundation Polish-German Reconciliation, where Nazi-victims are helped to receive the welfare services and payments, they are entitled to.
3. We encourage NGOs to look for additional funding to continue their project. The Czech government, for example, after initial funding of EVZ, recognized the important work of Živá Paměť, and is now supporting their work.
4. The German government has a program for young volunteers who want to engage abroad. EVZ is co-funding such a project with the German NGO Aktion Sühnezeichen - Friedensdienste (ASF). They are yearly sending volunteers abroad, who are working in social projects for survivors.
5. EVZ supports the critical examination of history of so called “forgotten victims”, as well as public discussions initiated by NGOs who are advocating their interests. The Berlin NGO Kontakte-Kontakty e.V. for many years attracted public attention to a mostly forgotten victims group, the former soviet prisoners of war. By the end of May – 70 years after the liberation from the Nazi Regime – the German Bundestag agreed to pay symbolic compensations to the last survivors of the soviet prisoners of World War II.
6. EVZ also finances international exchange of experience – like this conference, or trainings and networking meetings on national level. Such public events can show that NGOs, which are addressing the survivor’s needs, are fulfilling an important public task. And that they deserve support. They can also draw public attention to the fact that the survivors are still among us and that they need all support available so that they can spend the rest of their life in dignity.

The above mentioned examples are so far not the rule. We invest in money, patience and experience to build up long term partnerships based on trust, cooperation and understanding.

## **II. Which kind of support do NGOs, caring for victims of Nazi-persecution, need? Where do you see the mutual benefit for state agencies and NGOs?**

There are different levels how governments should support NGOs:

- 1. NGOs need a positive political environment where they feel welcome to do their most valuable work for victims of National Socialism.**
- 2. Organizations caring for NS-survivors also need ideal support so that volunteers feel encouraged to join them and victims of Nazi-persecution feel recognized and welcome in a safe and stable environment.**
- 3. But NGOs also need a stable core funding to hire qualified staff and finance institutional costs of the organization, in order to be able to raise additional third party funding to implement sustainable projects for our target group.**

I would like to come back to the concept of "responsibility in partnership". Taking care of the basic needs of elderly people, and also of survivors, is foremost the responsibility of each government. Basic care for elderly cannot be replaced by volunteer services. Nevertheless, civil society can provide very important additional services which are not provided by governments. Let me give you some examples:

1. NGOs are a valuable resource to fight loneliness – which is one of the biggest problems of elderly survivors. Between 2009 and 2012, an international team of Gerontologists of the Heidelberg University have made a long term evaluation of EVZ funded projects. They found out that informal projects for intergenerational dialogue contribute to the realization of potentials of active ageing. The projects improved the self-acceptance of the elderly survivors, their well-being and satisfaction with life and attitudes towards own ageing. Funding such intergenerational projects with self-initiated informal exchange on self-chosen historical or societal topics is a promising measure to litigate the problems of ageing societies.

2. Victims of National Socialism do not only have to bear the burden of old age. They also have to cope with diseases which are caused or aggravated by surfacing traumata. These special problems are usually ignored by state care services. Here NGOs can fill an important gap. Organizations like Amcha in Israel have skilled and empathic social workers, psychologists and other staff, who know about the special needs of traumatized survivors and can thus provide for a professional, sensitive and adequate support.
3. This knowledge can also be transferred. Today, European social service systems are again confronted with victims of war and persecution. Care-personnel and social workers need special competences to deal with these issues. Governments should include basic competences on how to work with traumatized victims into the curricula for care and social workers. And NGOs can provide this invaluable experience in specialized training programs.
4. In Post-Soviet countries, the comprehensive day and home care services of the Jewish Hesed-agencies in Russia or the Ukrainian Caritas could serve as models for the development of government social and home care services for elderly. Sometimes Hesedim open their services to non-jewish victims of the Nazi regime, like a project the Foundation EVZ is supporting in Tula.

**Many projects demonstrate the great potential and the professional capacity of civil society initiatives for the care of this highly aged population. But often these organizations are depending on third party funding, only. We expect that Governments take into account and actively support these initiatives and multiply their projects. We would like to give a signal of cooperation to all sectors of society: local citizens' initiatives, competent NGOs, foundations (like ours) and public social systems to enhance cooperation and reinforce their action for the common good. The survivors have only little time left. We have to combine and to coordinate our efforts now in order to act as effectively and as quickly as possible.**

## **Annex: The Foundation "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future"**

The Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future had been established in 2000. Its first purpose was to give an at least symbolic recognition to former forced laborers of the Nazi-Regime who had been neglected for decades. This recognition was given by humanitarian payments to more than 1.6 Mio persons – Jewish and non-Jewish; east and west. The payments programs were completed in 2007. The Foundation's capital of EUR 5.2 billion was provided by the German Government and German industry.

The Foundation's second task is to continue in this line by supporting projects. A total of EUR 358 million was set aside as Endowment in order to finance project support. The Foundation finances its long-term funding activities out of the income generated by this capital.

The Foundation EVZ is active in three fields:

- It supports the critical examination of the history of forced labor and want to keep memories relevant to younger generations.
- It supports work for human rights as a lesson learnt from our historical responsibility.
- It supports the commitment for victims of national socialisms and mobilizes resources for survivors of the holocaust and other Nazi persecution;

The Foundation EVZ spends more than 40 percent of its yearly revenues to finance humanitarian projects towards victims of National Socialism.

The Foundation is thus an expression of the continuing political and moral responsibility of the state, industry and society for the wrongs committed in the name of National Socialism.

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